

Interview of Warren Himmelberger by Elizabeth Bettenhausen January 16, 1998

Elizabeth [00:00:01] The conversation with Warren Himmelberger and we're talking about the shelter at University Lutheran Church and some interpretations of whether it is simply perpetuating the problem of homelessness or helping to solve it, or a wholly different angle on it, which Warren just articulated. So if you would pick up on that, I'd be interested to hear how your.

Warren [00:00:30] It was about maybe 14 or 15 years ago [1983] a need was seen for homeless people to go. Sometime during the winter. 15 years ago was 1982.

Warren [00:00:56] Who is pastor then? I think it was Fred. Fred was here then? Well, anyway, so they said, Well, we have this basement and we could have people stay there overnight and give them breakfast. Wow. Cambridge City Council said that that's in violation of the zoning laws and violation of the [??] laws, of housing laws. And they were going to take us to court. This is a true story. And by then it was April 15th and they closed it down, so it was dropped. The next year: Going to have the shelter again. Again, same Cambridge City Council said that that's illegal. We're going to stop it. And I went round and round and. Apparently nothing ever did. I don't know how they managed to keep it going. And about the fourth year shelters became popular. And the fourth year, the Cambridge City. "Oh, yes, we have a shelter. University Lutheran Church." That was a good thing.

Warren [00:02:19] [Poet] James Russell Lowell had this in his "The Present Crisis" [published 1845] about people who see the advantages of something before it's popular until the crowd. Goes in "the Present Crisis is one of my favorite. poems. And when John F. Kennedy was shot at the next Sunday, I read The Present Crisis. In the Forum. You know, it's a tremendous powerful. Well anyway, it's, there's a point in there to have the courage to do something before it's popular. So you did it. Give Fred Reisz or anyone else credit and we continue. Twenty three is no magic number. It's just a number of cots, I guess they had.

Elizabeth [00:03:18] Let me come back to the Shelter, but I want to pick up something about that little poem. Have there been other occasions in your experience of University Lutheran Church where the people here have been ahead of time in taking a position either within the church, nationally or within society,

Warren [00:03:46] With the national church having different forms of the liturgy as I suppose, forward looking. The fact and the fact that we've stuck with the dual pastor, female, male, very important. That was a kind of a beacon to the church at large.

Warren [00:04:10] There were others. UniLu was not alone in that. There were other places that were in the forefront when the Vietnam thing was going on. I was asked to moderate a discussion because this divided people across not only UniLu, but people. I tried to be neutral and but people were on both sides. The idea was to let people get let off steam there. But again, UniLu was not...

Warren [00:04:45] We had some of the pastors would go up in Harvard Square and hand out pamphlets and things. But a congregation, a community cannot really [be] a vehicle for change in the sense that it's a community and you can't just pick one way to go unless you have everybody behind you. And something like the Vietnam thing where people felt one way and half the other or whatever, even two thirds, one third. The church probably should not be political. The church should be moral. Maybe that's political, but that's another topic. But if the church preaches justice, I think then the "us" peasants can go out and do our thing.

Elizabeth [00:05:55] What form might that take to come back to the shelter example with the preaching of justice within the church, with and then with the shelter in the basement? What kind of concrete forms then would take place in the behavior of people in society with regard to homelessness or the cost of housing? Or how would you describe this now?

Warren [00:06:21] I couldn't I don't think I could give a rational answer. That's that's very complex. I think most of the people think that homeless people should be helped. But if you ask, well, now, how is that going to happen concretely? Well, most of us are wrapped up in our daily lives of living. So most of us are not on the forefront. Like, who is that guy at the Shaker Village? Brock. Bronson Alcott. We can't be. Most of us don't want to be Bronson Alcott and leave your wife and children to poverty while you go off and go to Brook down there and Jamaica Plain or go off to the town of Harvard or wherever. So most of us think that we have a responsibility with our family and so on. And so we don't. Most of us don't get out there, the cutting edge. When I look, I've done a lot of things, and sometimes I neglected [?] my family, but that's a little scary. But I never went off on a tangent where it would be nice to be a leader and push. But most of us. I have inertia and we do it intellectually and maybe step gingerly into it, but.,

Elizabeth [00:08:18] One of the things that intrigues me in just the fairly initial information I have now about your intriguingly rich experience in this regard, I mean, rich in the sense of ample that you have a sense of the importance of public discussion of issues in your letters to the editor, as well as the forums you've described your NAACP work. And so setting aside an option of going off for cutting edge, you have an engagement in the civil order. As a citizen, that is possible for just about everybody if they choose it. So I'm intrigued with how you've known to take this course of engagement in a very significant way.,

Warren [00:09:13] There was one time in junior high school in Natick, the principal was formerly going to be a brother in some Catholic religious group, but he was very concerned about justice and things like that. And during the height of the Vietnam controversy He had the idea. Maybe somebody gave it to him that there should be a discussion with the Student Council on Vietnam. Now the person who would lead this should be the head of the Social Studies department. But as head of the Math Department, I was asked to lead it. The reason for that is the head of the Social Studies Department was a flag waving patriot. "America is right." And this guy thought that would be wrong for the Student Council. So I was rather open. I tried. I gave them something. Sort of a summary without trying to say what they should believe. But maybe I was a little leaned a little, but the idea there is that I was asked and because it was thought that I could give a rational view of what was going on. So I thought that was I give credit to the principal for doing that because the head of the Social Studies wasn't too happy..

Elizabeth [00:10:55] I'm going to draw an interesting--interesting to me anyhow--possible connection here apart from Luther siding with the Princes against the peasants, which I agree was a huge error, but.,

Warren [00:11:07] he made other errors. Okay.

Warren [00:11:10] Okay, here's a big one.

Elizabeth [00:11:13] before you hit the other errors of Luther, I want to just check something whether your sense of this open conversation, this open engagement has any relationship with your identity and Lutheran tradition?

Warren [00:11:27] No.

Elizabeth [00:11:28] Okay.

Warren [00:11:29] I'm a Lutheran because it's like Winston Churchill talked about democracy. There are a lot of problems with it, but there hasn't been anything better. So there's a lot that I don't agree with in the Lutheran Doctrine, but I don't see any other group doing any better. But the biggest problem, the biggest fault of Luther was not the one with the Princes. But later in a meeting with Zwingli. He refused even to shake Zwingli's hand, refused to cooperate and set back the cause of Protestantism by...many people died because Luther would not cooperate. I don't know. You can. You may be a historian on this. What Luther was. He did some very bad things that. He had the bully pulpit. He could have really turned things around. And he refused to associate with these lesser peoples. This is almost a Missouri Synod view rather than associate with us Lutherans. They'd rather go down fighting than winning the battle..

Elizabeth [00:12:58] Let me ask not a 16th century question, but a 20th or late almost in the 21st. Would there be any issues? And I'm thinking now back to the initial part of our conversation, and I'm trying to connect some of these themes of this open minded future orientation. Would there be any issues on which you would not want to say that the other side has an equally meritorious position or an equally just position. Are there certain places where you aren't going to give? Certain territory.,

Warren [00:13:44] Maybe I'm like these people that pick their battles that I feel that at least I understand what the components are. And I'm not going to have thoughts about things that I don't know anything about or...abortion would be a good issue? I have my own private view about abortion. I don't like abortion, but I also don't like the conservatives who say that you can't have abortions, that there. So you see, that's a very divisive issue and I would not want to push my point of view on other people because people on both sides.

Elizabeth [00:14:38] you saying that you like issues that are not too significantly divided or.

Warren [00:14:44] I don't like issues, period. I would rather that there weren't any issues. I would rather that everything were perfect. I don't like controversy, but if I get involved with controversy, I don't back down. I stand up for my convictions. Assuming that I know what I'm doing.

Elizabeth [00:15:07] So your disagreement with Luther and the parenthetical is. Well, that would be a wonderfully long, intriguing.

Warren [00:15:15] It's just that he could have done so much more. And then the Holy Roman Empire got power and started killing people. And he could have done better. But anyway. Well, I belong to or associate with this Bible study group that you've heard about. The Gilmans...

Elizabeth [00:15:39] The current one.

Warren [00:15:40] The Kappleins. Who used to be members here, ones who used to be Earnestine [Kuehnle] and Evelyn [Bonander], and we discussed things other than the Bible. Also we discussed other writers, religious writers. So we there are on the cutting edge of we studied Spong Red Spong and also John Dominic Crossan and also the guy on Oregon or Washington, the Lutheran who's written books on modern scholarship. We've read all of those books and I think we at least some of us have, and we're not studying Acts and Paul is doing that. We have a different view of Scripture than the traditional Lutheran church. We have studied enough that we think we understand how the Bible, how the New Testament was written, why it was written perhaps.

Elizabeth [00:17:06] a different view sort of from immigrant US Lutheran.

Elizabeth [00:17:16] But let me ask a question about that group. I think that open mindedness is intriguing, but are there ever any real conflicts that emerge in that group of interpretation or,

Warren [00:17:34] Well, sometimes some of us have a less benign view of the Pharisees and maybe 1 or 2 people trying to say, Well, the Pharisees weren't so bad, but things like that.

Elizabeth [00:17:49] there much a disagreement ever about issues of social policy?

Warren [00:17:55] No.. In fact, I think most of the people feel that.. social fabric is something that's very important.

Elizabeth [00:18:10] I'll back up a bit. Because the question was one of my biases, which I celebrate. Like I celebrate chocolate sundaes, maybe because I think that often conflict discloses some issues intensely that we otherwise sort of don't really engage. And growing up in the church, I found that conflict was often discussed by my parents. My dad was a UCC minister, so they would discuss the conflict at home in the parsonage. But often the church felt that it wasn't the place to have conflict. In the history of UniLu. Have there been times when conflict has been public and part of the deliberation of how we're the expression of the Gospel or the body of Christ, or how does anybody ever engage there?

Warren [00:19:10] don't think so.

Elizabeth [00:19:12] there ever been conflict that got shoved under the rug then, or did it just never show up?

Warren [00:19:20] There might have been. There were times when there wer problems that shouldn't have been, but problems with the associate pastors, for example. Without getting into all of that, those were unfortunate. And those people left and continued.... there have been some times, but usually this was handled. Congegational meetings aren't too bad. The biggest argument was over common communion cups or individual glasses. I remember that.

Elizabeth [00:20:13] When was that?,

Warren [00:20:14] When the people went to Episcopal Chapel.

Elizabeth [00:20:22] while this building was being built.

Warren [00:20:24] They could only use the common cup. There was no place to wash. So when they got back here, the question was, should we have individual cups or common? And some people felt very strongly in this, I could never understand. They were missing the point of communion.

Elizabeth [00:20:47] so you could never understand the individual cup?

Warren [00:20:51] No. I could never understand either one.. I mean, why not? Well, of course, they have both now. And I guess they voted for both, but Communion, it seemed to me, was more than just whether it was a common cup or Individual cup. It was a symbolism and not the vehicle, but to some people.

Elizabeth [00:21:22] in your view of it or your understanding of it, there is there can be a separation between the vehicle and the symbolism.

Warren [00:21:29] Yeah.

Elizabeth [00:21:30] So you can have a vehicle that is rather inconsistent with the symbol or,

Warren [00:21:35] I could see either one common cup or individual cups. But to fight over it or argue or get emotionally upset. That to me is wrong. But there were some people.

Elizabeth [00:21:54] If somebody came in today and wanted to know what this communion is, somebody who doesn't who isn't in the Christian tradition at all that is really interested in what's here. What is that communion to which you're referring?

Warren [00:22:09] It's a symbol of Jesus sharing a meal with his disciples. it's nothing more or less than that. And to make it anything else, I think you're violating the scripture. So this consubstantiation transubstantiation, those battles were terrible. Had nothing to do with the symbolism of community and the reason to have it. In my opinion. In Erasmus's opinion.

Elizabeth [00:22:54] So if Erasmus showed up along with Aquinas and a few others from the medieval tradition and they said, well con- or tran-substantiation, but what's really the question here is how is God present with us? Would you want to say any more than Jesus sharing the meal with us? In answer to that question?

Warren [00:23:20] That's enough.

Elizabeth [00:23:23] Who's Jesus?

[00:23:25] I know who Jesus is

Elizabeth [00:23:28] Who? I'm the person who's walked in, who's ignorant but curious.

Warren [00:23:32] Crossan said, he's the poor Mediterranean peasant. Who had a life of ministry was killed by the Romans and he preached certain things. And then you elaborate on these. And if you believe in what he preached, then you would become a follower.

Warren [00:24:00] If you didn't think he was right. Well, then you would dismiss him.

Elizabeth [00:24:05] Do you agree with Crossan sort of concrete specifics about what Jesus preached about economic justice and that kind of.,

Warren [00:24:14] I don't know if Crossan goes into all of that, but some.

Elizabeth [00:24:19] Do you think about that when you come to communion about Jesus being specifically of a particular political and economic persuasion?

Warren [00:24:31] I don't think it, I just accept that. I just believe that that's the way things should be.

Warren [00:24:42] Did that play a role in your becoming engaged with NAACP?

Warren [00:24:47] I just wanted to find someplace where I could do something, as a white person for racial justice and the NAACP is one of the few interracial groups who would accept a white person as a part of it. So I was able to do certain things there that I thought were right that I wanted to do. And they allowed me to do it.

Warren [00:25:19] I did some very [interesting things.] For example, there was a house in Holliston that was trashed after a black couple bought it before they moved in. They turned on water and ruined the floors and so on. And it was brought to the attention of the branch. And one of the men who like men who lived in Hollis and said that the police in Holliston don't care about blacks. And I spoke up. I said, I lived in Holliston at one time. And I knew some police said, that doesn't sound right to me. I said, as far as I know, the police are doing their job right. And I thought I would get silenced, said the president said, We'll invite the man whose house was vandalized to come in a week or so later, and they had another meeting. First question was he asked the guy, are the police helping? Oh, yes. The police have been trying to do everything. Well, at that time, somebody even firebombed the police station. They had some problems in Holliston with some punks. But the point is that I was able to speak up and say the [wealth??] of police. Holliston police were doing the right thing. And then the guy came in. They never did find out who vandalized it, but it was a racial incident. But if I felt that somebody was wrong, I don't care who it is.

Warren [00:26:52] Got away with these things. Don't get sat on. First time I came in, there was a guy, the president who was later chairman of the Board of Aldermen of Newton a man, who was an electrician at General Motors. And somebody complained that he was offered a job. And then turned down at General Motors. They had a hearing at the old executive hearing. And I thought, well, the guy came in and said this. And I thought, well, gee, they're going to get excited about it. President said. That doesn't sound right. I don't think he's telling the truth. This is another black. Well, I think I never did find [a storm??], but I think the guy had been on drugs and they found that out and they wouldn't hire him. But the NAACP would always say, let's hear the other side. And that's the sort of thing that I believe in. They would never go off half-cocked just because somebody came in with a complaint and get lost. You wait until now. Somebody ignored a whole bunch of traffic summons. You brought this all on yourself. Don't expect the NAACP to bail you out. Goodbye.

Elizabeth [00:28:10] It's things like this.

Warren [00:28:12] So they always were very careful now. They saw injustice. Okay. They'll spend money and.,

Elizabeth [00:28:19] Let me ask about perhaps analogous situation. In whatever it was, '88 or so here within University Lutheran Church, when the discussion took place and the decision was made whether or not to be a Reconciled in Christ congregation, I think looking at racism within isn't analogous. But for a group that's sort of marginalized by a theological definition in the church might be equivalent to the racial distinction in society. What happened? What's your recollection of that conversation? Was that a time of conflict?

Warren [00:28:57] '88?

Elizabeth [00:28:58] When the decision was made to become a reconciled in Christ congregation.

Warren [00:29:05] I was out of it. I don't recall that.

Elizabeth [00:29:09] There was an annual meeting that the vote took place then.

Warren [00:29:14] Didn't make a big impression anyway.

Elizabeth [00:29:16] When you read in the bulletin every Sunday that that's what it is. Does that convey anything out of what?

Warren [00:29:26] This is news to me. Huh? You see, some of us are oblivious to what's around us. And I can be that way as well as anybody else.

Elizabeth [00:29:37] checking to see.

Warren [00:29:38] I don't know what reconciled in Christ means.

Elizabeth [00:29:41] not reconciled in Christ is that kind of congregation within Lutherans Concerned, which talks about a material form of welcome so that it's welcoming persons who are lesbian or gay or bi-.

Warren [00:29:56] is that right? Oh that didn't register. Uh huh.

Elizabeth [00:30:02] that's not.

Warren [00:30:04] Bob Flannery, I think is one of the most devoted members of Uni Lu and so does Ann. So this isn't a problem for us, but it's not a problem so that we don't not even I'm not even aware of that the distinction Reconciled in Christ.

Warren [00:30:25] just assume that Bob Flannery is as good a member of this congregation. Maybe better than I am.,

Elizabeth [00:30:34] without comparing particular individuals. So I was thinking back about an hour ago talking about racism in UniLu. Just asking questions about that. On how welcoming the church is and how do we express welcoming to different groups. So I think growing up, how would there was no snowball's chance that in the congregation I grew up in, we would welcome the Roman Catholics across the block, before Vatican II. So how do we welcome groups who aren't presently in the community?

Warren [00:31:10] Only if they come here voluntarily.,

Elizabeth [00:31:13] that's an interesting.

Warren [00:31:15] this, you can argue, lets us off the hook. But that's the way UniLu is set up as a ministry to students and it was never meant to go out and proselytize and try to get people from the community to be members, like a local congregation. It was a ministry. Outreach to students and not trying to gather this, different parts of the community in. So that's not our mission.

Elizabeth [00:31:53] that's an intriguing and I'm too ignorant of that history. Were there certain assumptions then about the students being Lutheran already?

Warren [00:32:05] No. Well, yeah, there was that assumption. But if you weren't a Lutheran that didn't make any difference. We never questioned here whether someone was a Lutheran or a Baptist

or a Congregationalist. If we had, I wouldn't be married because my first wife was a Congregationalist. My second wife was a Baptist, and they were welcomed in here. Your pedigree doesn't count here.

Elizabeth [00:32:36] interesting to me how that welcome is clearly universal, but the response to it flows in certain patterns. But that's sort of a.

Warren [00:32:49] I think in the case of the Baptists, the Baptists are still. Well, my wife has a little problem with them. Her father is still very active in that. Maybe Joan first wife was. Maybe she had some questions about the congregational church. I don't know. But both of them found the student group. The ministry here. The ministry and it's very vital. Very. Much what they could identify with. And lesbians and gays. It's not a big deal. I mean, what's the big deal about it?

Elizabeth [00:33:34] yeah, I think one of the intriguing things about the tradition of UniLu in terms of inclusive language. Or about Lutherans Concerned and Reconciled in Christ. Now is that there have been there has been strong theological opposition to inclusive language historically.

Warren [00:33:59] Well, you always have those people.,

[00:34:01] But I mean, officially in the church now there's I mean it's officially impossible to be a gay man such as Bob and be ordained.

Warren [00:34:14] Well, I know. What can you do?

[00:34:18] I want to ask slightly to a different angle here. If you think about having been at UniLu throughout the whole history of this building and think now about what we're immersed in in the capital campaign. And the 2.2 I'm referring to is a million. When the renovation is done and it's speculative, you know, when it's done in however many years, 2 or 3. When you walk in for the first time after it's done, what will you look at? The first in the renovated building.

Warren [00:35:02] Probably nothing. I just accept whatever's going to come.

Elizabeth [00:35:07] There's no aspect of

Warren [00:35:09] I don't have any strong feelings. I accept what's going on. Other than that, I guess I'm not., Bob Halfman and Anne [Himmelberger] are on a team to visit people. And Bob said that I was supposed to be on his list. I said, Well, Bob, you'd be just wasting your time. So finally, Bob and now knowing you so. I did not get visited.

Elizabeth [00:35:47] quite apart from the solicitation process.

Warren [00:35:49] other words, we decided what we're going to do. So it wasn't any already done it.

Elizabeth [00:35:58] the question differently, and I'll say the question, but I want to ask another one also retrospectively. But I have a sneaking suspicion you're a more prospective and retrospective visionary, so I'll ask the vision question first. But looking ahead, if you without worrying about constraints of time or energy that people have any practical restraints at the moment, but just envisioning or imagining dreaming the next five years at University Lutheran, what would you like to see happen in the next five years?

Warren [00:36:39] I have no view

Elizabeth [00:36:42] And that's because.

Warren [00:36:44] At 75 If one is put aside all involvement in most civic activities. Then one just lives and accepts. What happens? So I have no axes to grind or no worlds to conquer. I resigned from all of that.

Elizabeth [00:37:12] If you don't think of that dreaming as primarily a question of your own agency or participation actively and have no but dreaming what you hope the community will create.

Warren [00:37:28] I have no view on that. I think that that belongs to younger people.,

Elizabeth [00:37:33] Why?

Warren [00:37:38] I'll give an illustration. Young people should be asked this and they should be the ones that direct the future. Not old fogies.

Elizabeth [00:37:52] Why not in cooperation?.,

Warren [00:37:54] No. Old people tend to. Too many of us are. We just shouldn't be involved. My father would be an example in the church in Lebanon [NH?]. He was superintendent of the Sunday School for 25 years. My mother was a teacher there for probably 50 years. But at one time after World War Two, they were looking for a 15 man council. My mother may have been the first woman, but then there were 15 on the church council and they asked my father to suggest some candidates. And so he suggested two guys of my age. In fact, they were classmates. Oh, well, they're too young. I said to you. He said, There's 15 people here. 13 and two. They're not going to ruin things here, but they may learn.,

Warren [00:38:54] it didn't agree with them, but they did put them on the council. These guys were then 25. Too young. Well, one was treasurer of that church for the next 40 years and is still a lay pastor. The other one became superintendent of the Sunday School until his job moved into Georgia. And he still active. Why not put young people and have them make..leadership

Elizabeth [00:39:20] but maybe I'm going to play.

Warren [00:39:22] That's my background for a moment. Isn't that a good story?.,

Elizabeth [00:39:25] But I want to ask a certain question about that, because I think back then there was exactly that bias that you had to be at least 45 or 50 to be really human in one sense, and that much of an adult. But I wonder if there hasn't been such a dramatic shift biased in favor of youth in the dominant culture and in the church youth being basically somebody who's maybe 18 to 30, given the sort of underrepresented group that we are biased against people who are over 65.,

Warren [00:40:03] I don't know. I don't think we still are listening to the young people. But I believe that at my age I should not be giving my opinions because they are they're structured in a previous age and I'm out of it.

Elizabeth [00:40:21] well. The Bible was structured in a previous age or..

Warren [00:40:26] but anyway, I applaud the youth and I applaud young people. I think it's tremendous that the present president accountable, Larry, and some of the previous ones. And Susan: these people are younger. They're in their late 20s or maybe early 30s now and they are leaders in the congregation. Isn't that wonderful? [?] Susan Worst?

Elizabeth [00:40:56] But it would be a grave mistake, in my judgment, if we didn't also look to the earliest in Sunday School. And I think that this place maybe Ernestine is the oldest in her 90s. I want a simultaneous engagement of all the generations in this reflection of what it means to be the body of Christ. Rather than saying that some people are too old.,

Warren [00:41:27] I go along with Susan. I think she's done a tremendous job. I respect her. I might even... I haven't said very many things to her, suggestions. You're not going to get me to disagree with it. I mean, to agree with you because I think that, and Martin Gilman said the same thing just recently, that he wanted to get out from under me. He said, You need other people doing this at 82 or 83. Sure, he could continue, but why not have younger people do some of these things? And I think he's right on that. I think But even more than that, I don't even pretend to be able to advise these people because they know far more than I do about the present scene.,

Elizabeth [00:42:16] I'm going to disagree with, you know, with you personally on your evaluation of what you know about say, just take one issue of issues of race justice or civil rights, however it gets labeled.

Warren [00:42:34] be willing to write about it as I have and given you all that I know. And if somebody asks me, I'll give it to them.

Elizabeth [00:42:41] It's marvelous to have that voice as part of the discussion. It would be it would be tremendously unfortunate if your position were not voiced there.,

Warren [00:42:54] it may happen because.

[00:43:00] Gisela has suggested a couple of times that she would like suggestions for the Forum, and I told her now twice, Gisela, I'd be willing to talk about, Bellah's civil religion [Robert Bellah, Civil Religion in America, 1966] and also what we should be doing, what people from UniLu should be doing and so on, and have an open discussion. So that may happen. I have two folders so that if she decides that will happen, but it's not what I think. Here is possibilities.

Elizabeth [00:43:40] The cassette tape will not be able to pick up the smile on my face at the moment. So I will say simply that.

Warren [00:43:48] But you see that's a little different.

Elizabeth [00:43:50] That's initiating a topic of conversation. It is in my book a tremendous act of leadership.

Warren [00:43:58] I don't know how it should go.

Elizabeth [00:43:59] I hope not. God only knows the outcome. Yeah. So that kind of dreaming.

Warren [00:44:07] That may happen. I mean, I have thought about it, but I think very highly of Bellah's civil religion, which is, you know, he's against the Manifest Destiny. I'm reading a book now

about how we treated the Indians back in the 1745 to 1750 and got some of these books. And I hope to write this book on the history of the Pennsylvania Germans. That's why I dropped out of a lot of the activities I was in.

Elizabeth [00:44:45] Have you been looking at the Moravian aspect of that missionary movement among the Indians?,

Warren [00:44:51] That is part of it, yeah. They did a good job. And up in the northern part of Pennsylvania, Conrad Weiser and so on and the Muhlenberg Boys. And so I look forward, but it's going to be anecdotal. This guy that I'm reading now wrote a narrative which is filling in the history with how it might have been. He has the facts and then he puts in how people reacted, how the traders reacted to the Indians and so on. Well, anyway, that's what I'm doing now.

Elizabeth [00:45:28] What got you interested in that particular subject?

[00:45:33] See the underdog, the Pennsylvania Germans were never given a space in history commensurate to their contribution. You can read history and you find if you ask 10,000 people who was the first speaker of the House of Representatives.

Elizabeth [00:46:00] who know that the speaker.

Warren [00:46:02] a Pennsylvania German to start with or because his name is never mentioned. And you look at the Revolutionary War. Probably one of the six most ablest, most able generals. One was Peter Muhlenberg. You'll never find his name listed anywhere.

Elizabeth [00:46:24] Even in official military records?

Warren [00:46:27] Well, it's there, but it's not in the popular history books.

Elizabeth [00:46:30] But even in the Muhlenberg family, there was a little conflict on which role to take. I mean, they didn't all agree necessarily.

Warren [00:46:41] Henry thought that ministry was the top thing. I think he was more concerned about Frederick's going to Hades even then, Peter, because politics was just about the most evil thing you could get into. So he was very disturbed that Frederick gave up the ministry after he was kicked out. I mean, he was a patriot in New York. And when the British landed in 17'73 or 1774, he had to leave and his family had to leave. And so he had nothing else to do. He had to find another parish in Pennsylvania and he gravitated into politics. He was chairman of the Pennsylvania assembly for three years. And when he was there, he was chairman of the ratifying Convention of the Constitution. He was chairman or he became first speaker of the House and so on. But this isn't mentioned anywhere. I'm reading this book about the Indians and so on. Conrad Weiser is barely mentioned. It's all Mr. Johnson up in New York State. They mentioned Weiser once or twice, but so these people were lost to history. So it's that sort of thing..

Elizabeth [00:48:01] And now we could carry on that conversation a long time about about the emergence finally now of printed versions of oral traditions of all the different Native nations, that just didn't show up in the white history books at all.

Warren [00:48:19] You mentioned the Moravians and William Penn and Conrad Weiser. They tried to treat the Indians fairly. They were an exception. And then [that] the Moravian Indians were killed by other Indians was very tragic.

Elizabeth [00:48:39] Is there anything else you want to say about University Lutheran on the.,

Warren [00:48:44] it's been an anchor or a foundation. And I've been fortunate that both Joan and Anne were very much interested in UniLu.

Warren [00:49:03] In fact, I think Ann is a better Lutheran than I am. Maybe if you are from another congregation. When she was teaching, she taught about 12 years, fourth grade. Old Testament stories and so on. And the Sunday School. And when Roger Johnson came here, she knew that he was professor at Boston College. So I guess Roger had some of his kids in the class. So she said, Well, Roger, I have a theological question. Roger ran out the door so fast. He didn't want to get involved with that. You're doing fine.

Elizabeth [00:49:49] I think some of the most exciting theological issues come up in teaching Sunday School. Yeah..

Warren [00:49:53] And did a good job. And I give her credit. And she thought that Seder should be mentioned in the fourth grade. So she went to Newton, one of the Newton temples, and had somebody come over here and do a Seder. And then she got David Breakstone interested. And David led Seders for about 6 or 7 years, I guess. We had 100 and some down in the basement, a real Seder, one of the largest in Boston.

Elizabeth [00:50:24] Was that in the 80s? .

Warren [00:50:27] The 70s. And when Henry Horn retired, it sort of got busy with other things. And so there wasn't any push. It takes a little work to prepare the food, to prepare the whole thing. But David did a good job.

Warren [00:50:51] It.'s a little bit emotional that I think the last year they had the Seder he publicly recognized Ann as the one that initiated it. I thought that was nice of him..

Elizabeth [00:51:08] Did she after your marriage, join the Lutheran. You can switch traditions then.

Warren [00:51:17] She never liked the Baptist hymns. She does. The one problem that UniLu has is that children being here do not be. Most of them don't become active in UniLu. There are very few children in the congregation who ever became active. And it's true in my family and a lot of other things. My daughter is the one who is active in. But that's not in a Lutheran church. She was active with Park Street and so on. The boys. Well, now the oldest son is active in the Catholic Church.

Warren [00:52:12] That's very interesting, too, because that. They're very active. They both had been divorced. Divorced people are not supposed to be active. Well, both of them made a mistake and didn't have children. And they're the best people you could find. So they don't know that they had been divorced. So they're accepted as pure Catholics. That's almost as bad as the Lutheran. Conservatives except the priests in the suburbs are not like Cardinal Law.

Elizabeth [00:52:56] I think the official high up roles often impose more constraint that people don't enact when they're a little lower in the hierarchy.

Warren [00:53:06] Even the Lutheran Church has wrestled with divorce. I think they. In the case of my son. He just this woman was strange. She'd come to our house, wouldn't talk to anybody. I don't know what her problem was. Well, it didn't work.

Elizabeth [00:53:28] is interesting how there's more of an Not ecumenical in an organizational sense, but how we have really reduced these boundaries of denominations in terms of marriage, in terms of moving from one to another. I think just what's happened in the past three decades is quite astonishing for the Christian church in this country, that post Vatican II and after intense ecumenical councils. Of National Council and others. It just is really a different situation.

Warren [00:54:08] the older grandchildren, granddaughters, my daughter's children, two daughters are very active in the church in New Jersey and one's at Dartmouth now. And then the oldest son's three children are active in the Catholic Church in Medway. Now, I don't know how the next three are going to fare, the next three children, whether they will be involved in the church or not. But that's up to them. We don't give any direction. Once kids are 18, they're on their own.

Elizabeth [00:54:50] But the first 18 years are important.

Warren [00:54:53] Exactly. Some parents try to do things after that. It's wrong..

Elizabeth [00:55:02] Well, anything else about UniLu?

Warren [00:55:08] No, Very happy here. And happy, too, because I know you're interested in a lot of different things, and I'm very happy to give you these other. Maybe it's a little propaganda on my part. About the suffrage movement and so on. I took a course. I was taking courses at Wellesley College mostly to have a library card, but several of them were very interesting, and one dealt a guy named Jonathan Knudson, an excellent historian, but he had a seminar with about ten. I gave a little propaganda that some of that which I turned over to you about the suffrage movement, which I looked at and researched. I thought these young ladies should get more involved with the history of the suffrage movement..

Elizabeth [00:55:58] When did you find out that your mother was involved in it? How old were you when you found that out?.

Warren [00:56:07] Sixty? I don't know. After she died.

Elizabeth [00:56:12] You never had a conversation with her about it?

Warren [00:56:15] She died in 1973. So that's 25 years ago. And then I saw some of the most of the program and so on, because I was surprised that. Kutztown, Keystone Normal School in Kutztown, which is in the heart of the Pennsylvania German that they would have. Something like that in 1912. The rights of women. This is pretty daring.,

Elizabeth [00:56:44] I think that given the emergence of this wave of the women's movement in the late 60s, early 70s, when it started again, I think there was a tendency for it to be construed as sort of the first time. And we really hadn't learned in history classes in school of the intensity of the first movement.

Warren [00:57:06] Those women who did this

Warren [00:57:09] this in Washington, D.C., the courage they had more courage than I would have.

Elizabeth [00:57:14] The women in Great Britain this force feeding and locking themselves to the fences, that there was a very radical corporate activity by many, many women. And many of them were doing it out of Christian tradition. Some were would reject that completely. But I think that we just didn't learn that you could be a radical feminist and be a Christian in 1890. That never would have occurred to history book writers to put in. So finding out that your mother was doing this must... what was your reaction when you realized?

Warren [00:57:54] I thought that was wonderful. She used Tennyson and I wondered why she used Tennyson. So I had to go back and read that he became poet laureate of England and he wrote The Princess, which said that women could learn just as well as men. And this was anathema in England in the 1850s, he was really criticized, but the women. And by the turn of the century, there were a lot of women in high school, perhaps more than men, eventually.

Elizabeth [00:58:27] So you know, one of the first people who argued that there ought to be public equal public education of girls and boys.

Warren [00:58:35] No.

Elizabeth [00:58:35] Martin Luther. Oh, I had to just throw that in. In fact, he was very adamant about it so that they could be good citizens. And as well. So that was the free. Okay,,

Warren [00:58:52] I hope this is helpful. It's been interesting for me to share with you.

Elizabeth [00:58:59] think it was immensely and I look forward to a conversation at some point about Erasmus and Luther. Well.

Warren [00:59:08] Erasmus didn't have a good public relations and he never had a following that he should have had. His way would have been better.

Elizabeth [00:59:23] Who would have his way?

Warren [00:59:25] His way would have saved countless lives. There were a lot of people killed. The Protestant-Catholic wars.

Warren [00:59:35] It was terrible. That's why the Pennsylvania Germans came over, migrated from the Rhine Valley because the French invaded them. And part of it was the Holy Roman Empire. I think they are terrible.

Elizabeth Thank you.

Warren [00:59:52] Okay. You're welcome.