

FAITH & FAMILY

Church Services

Trinity Lutheran Church
Pastor Steve Rasmussen
 507-829-9164
Sunday, July 7
 10 a.m. Communal
 Worship at Victory
 Christian
 Christian

Sillerud Lutheran Church
Pastor Steve Rasmussen
 507-829-9164
Sunday, July 7
 No Church at Sillerud
 Community Worship to be
 held at Victory Christian
 Church in Balaton
Monday, July 8
 Quilting 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Balaton United
 Methodist Church**
Pastor Lori VonHoltum
 507-734-4811 Church
 507-734-4101 Parsonage
 507-220-3557 Pastor's
 cell phone
www.balatonumc.org
Sunday, July 7
 9 a.m. Worship followed by
 Coffee and Fellowship

Skandia Free Church
**Ryan Petersen, Senior
 Pastor**
 507-734-4944
Wednesdays
 5:30 p.m. F5 (free meal
 6:15 p.m. AWANA clubs,
 Skandia Youth Group and
 Adult Bible Studies
Sundays
 9:30 a.m. Worship Service
 10:45 a.m. Sunday School
 and Adult Education

**St. Mary's Catholic
 Church**
 Tracy, MN
Fr. Mark Steffl
Fr. Mark Mallak,
Associate Pastor
Fridays
 8:30 a.m. School Mass
Sundays
 10:30 a.m. Mass

Victory Christian Church
Pastor Mike Nelson
 507-734-2771 Church
 507-734-4942 Home
Pastor Robert Fricke
 507-828-7115
Pastor Casie Bangasser
 507-626-1497
Website: vccbalaton.org
Sunday, July 7
 10 a.m. Community
 Worship

**St. Peter's Evangelical
 Lutheran Church**
Vacancy Pastor
Schreinner
Home: 507-626-1541
Cell: 507-626-4476
Sunday, July 7
 11 a.m. Worship

Tyler Alliance Church
Pastor Wayde Kenneke
Sunday, July 7
 9:15 a.m. Coffee
 Fellowship
 10 a.m. Worship

Dial a Devotion 734-6521

Chuck Childs: The whole world was involved with this

Continued from page one

chuckle out of that. He figured it would never work."

The Berlin Airlift takes Flight

Despite being outnumbered, the Americans stood their ground when the Russians tried to push them out of West Berlin. Childs said that while many top U.S. officials thought it best to relinquish control of West Berlin to Russia, Pres. Truman, General Lucius Clay, General William Tunner and Defense Secretary James Forrestal didn't agree.

"Now if we'd have gone to war, which we were very close to doing, Russia had about 1.5 million troops," Childs said. "We had 9,000. They would have walked all over us. But Truman was pretty smart. He said, 'We are not going to leave Berlin.' So, they kept flying the C-47s until Truman reached out and got every C-54 pilot he could find — including myself."

The deliveries of much-needed food and supplies increased significantly when there was a switch from using C-47s, which could only carry 3,000 tons, to the C-54s, which carried 10,000 tons. After a rocky start to the airlift effort, Tunner shut it down for three days and put together a more efficient plan.

"Even in the sunshine or



Riley Kirk

when the weather was bad, we had to be at a certain spot at a certain time," Childs said. "Everything had to be just exact, and that's how we flew from there on out. Flying into Tempelhof, an airplane landed every three minutes for 11 months. It was like a conveyor belt. At all times, there were about 40 airplanes flying in that corridor. There was only 500 feet between myself and the airplane above me, so we really had to watch what we were doing."

Childs said that the Russians oftentimes tried to harass the pilots in the air.

"We had more than 760 incidents from the Russians," he said. "But anything they did, we just kept flying. If they would have hit any of us, we would have been in World War III."

Flying in to Tempelhof was no easy feat as the runway was old and short, with tall buildings around it.

"We were only 17 feet above the building," Childs said. "Then we'd dive down, pull back and hit the runway. We



After giving a presentation on the Berlin Airlift recently in Balaton, 99-year-old Chuck Childs engages in conversation with Dave and Joan Baack. Dave Baack, who had a 20-year career in the military as well, recalled some of the places Childs talked about in his presentation. Photo by Jenny Kirk

had to be ready to land because there was a lot of turbulence with the high buildings. And of course, we broke the runway up quite bit because we were pretty heavy."

Childs said the pilots learned to trust the Ground Control Approach (GCA) operators.

"I sat back like I was in a rocking chair and did everything they said," Childs said. "We made landings between 150 feet, 100 feet. One time, I landed in 50 feet. They were the greatest guys in the world."

While large numbers of the Berlin men had been killed or were prisoners of war, those remaining oftentimes helped unload the planes. Women also assisted, especially with patching up the runway. For their contributions, they were given extra rations.

"The poor people, they were just starving and freezing to death, and yet they would not go over to East Berlin to be with the communists," Childs said. "They wanted to stick with the Americans. They helped us unload the coal, food or supplies and they patched the runway. When an airplane would land, these women would run out and try to patch it up. Then they'd run off and another plane would land. This happened 24/7."

The West Berliners also helped build a new runway.

"They did that in three months, out of the brick that they salvaged from bombed-out buildings," Childs said. "They did anything they could



Pam Johnson

to help — and it might just be for a meager bowl of soup."

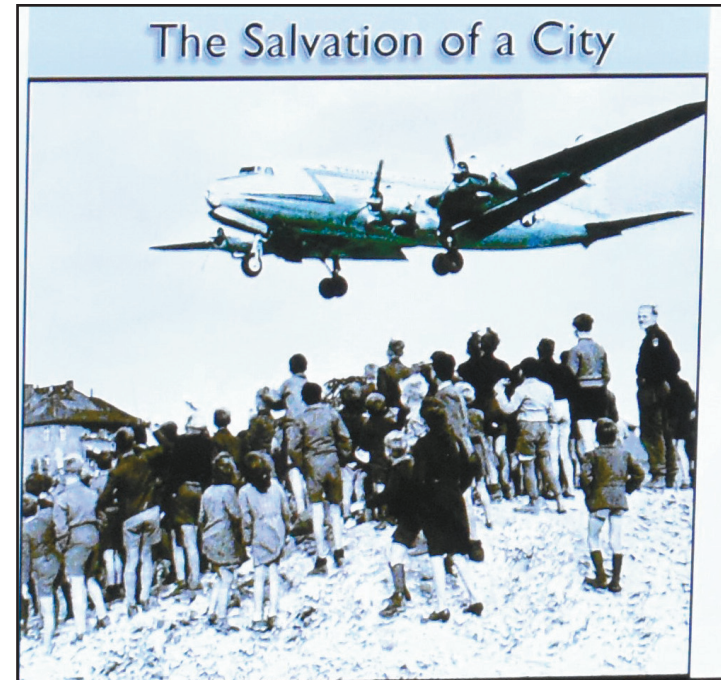
Allied forces hauled in a lot

of different products.

"The whole world was involved with this," Childs said. "The milk came from New Zealand. The coffee came from Brazil. The flour came from the wheat fields of Minnesota. It was made into flour and then baked into bread. They had to have a ration card, and they'd get one loaf of bread every two days."

walked up to me, and he was filthy black because he was covered with coal dust. He reached his hand out, shook my hand and said, 'danke schön (thank you in German), danke schön, danke schön. He had tears in his eyes, which told me exactly what I was there for. From that time on, I was very happy to be there."

Beginning with 500 flights



During his presentation about the Berlin Airlift, Chuck Childs shared several photos, including one depicting the Douglas C-54 Skymaster that was part of the impressive effort to save West Berliners from starving or freezing to death in 1948 and 1949. One plane landed every three minutes for 11 months, helping save the 2.5 million Germans, mostly women and children, living there after World War II ended.

One American pilot, Gail Halvorsen, added to the "Operation Vittles" effort by dropping candy to the children in Berlin. He founded "Operation Little Vittles" to try and raise morale in the war-torn community.

"They called Gail the 'Candy Man,'" Childs said. "He'd get all the rations from his buddies, get handkerchiefs, make parachutes and drop them out of the plane for the kids."

Reflection Post-Berlin Airlift

If there was any question whether the U.S. was doing the right thing by helping the German people, Childs said it was answered during his first landing at Tempelhof.

"The minute I cut my throttle, the door was opened and there was a truck and 10 German men to unload the airplane," he said. "On my first landing there, a big German

early on, the Berlin Airlift built up to over 600 flights a day.

"There were 275,000 flights in 11 months, with 2.5 million tons of supplies flown in," Childs said. "It was the greatest humanitarian airlift in history."

On some of his return flights, Childs had the opportunity to fly Jewish refugees out of Poland.

"The airplane was so dirty, but it didn't make any difference to them," he said. "When they got on and you closed the door, you could hear cheering. And when I landed in Wiesbaden, they really let out a cheer."

Throughout the colossal 15-month undertaking, 40 British and 31 American pilots were killed, including 1st Lt. Charles King (South Dakota) and 1st Lt. Craig Ladd (Minnesota).

"King was the first pilot to

be killed on the Berlin Airlift," Childs said. "I was president of Berlin Airlift Association for four years. We went to (King's) hometown and put a big marker on his grave because he gave his life for the Berlin Airlift."

The Berlin Airlift Memorial — located right outside the Tempelhof Airport — commemorates the sacrifices made by those 71 airmen in the Berlin Airlift fight for freedom and survival.

Stalin eventually conceded the blockade on May 12, 1949, after a ramped-up Easter effort.

"We went all out and did everything we could," Childs said. "We landed an airplane every minute. We hauled 13,000 tons of food, coal and stuff in. They needed to have 5,000 (every day), but we hauled 13,000. Stalin said, 'I quit.' So, we beat Stalin and I'm very proud of that."

The Airlift continued until September, though Childs got to go home to his wife, Grace, and their children, Connie, Charles and Cara, in July — exactly 70 years ago.

"You did a terrific job," Shirley Wendland said to Childs.

Having entered the Air Force in 1940, Childs retired as a colonel in 1961, after serving for nearly 22 years. The North Dakota native lived in Rapid City, South Dakota, for 58 years before he and Grace, who is also 99 years old, moved to Tracy two years ago to be closer to family. Since then, he's had an enormous impact on those around him.

"We are honored and privileged that you would come and speak to us," Balaton Area Historical Society President Pam Johnson said to Childs. "We had him at our May monthly Historical meeting at the Museum. We had about 25 people and he spoke on his World War II experiences as a B-17 bomber. He has such wonderful stories to tell us."

Dennis Swan said he found Childs' information to be accurate.

"It was just like he said: Truman didn't know the atomic bomb was being built until three days after Roosevelt died," Swan said. "You can read stuff there about the meetings. We spent two days at Truman's Library in Independence, Missouri."

After the presentation, Childs announced that the public speaking event would likely be his last, making the experience even more memorable for those in attendance.

"It's sad that so much of this kind of history is dying," Kirk said. "The stories they told aren't always being brought up, so it's got to be written down or shared through words."

Eleven years ago, Childs decided to write a book about the airlift and his involvement in it. He brought 11 copies of "Flying on the Berlin Airlift" to the Balaton event and all of them sold. As Childs signed Kirk's book, Kirk thanked him for his service.

"You're a good man," Kirk said.

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"Our family serving your family"

Trinity Lutheran Church

Indoor Picnic Dinner

Sunday, July 7 • 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
 at the Balaton Community Center

MENU: Roasted Chicken, Potato Salad, Baked Beans, Bun, Dessert & Beverage

EVERYONE WELCOME!

Adults — \$8.00 • Children 10 & under — \$4.00

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