

SCENE 3 – January 11, 1970, afternoon
The Congregational Meeting

It is January in Minnesota. As the lights come up we find the Pastor sitting at the center table with his guitar and a chord book, working out some new chords. The kitchen is clean.

P: Alright, let's see here: First finger, second string, first fret. Second finger, fourth string, second fret. Third finger...C diminished. *(He strums a few times. It sounds a little bit like a C chord.)* That sounds more like a C demolished. Okay, let's try another one. G Chord. *(He carefully places his fingers and strums.)* Now, where's my G string? That's the ticket. *(He plays the two chords back to back and sings.)* A-MEN (C/G). Well, I'll be. I think I'm getting the hang of this. Pastor Elvis. Just goes to show my wife was right, maybe you can teach an old dog new tricks. Let's try another one. *(He strums as the music begins)*

SONG: Old Dog, New Tricks

Pastor:

We're assigned a certain number of years, and that's all we get.
So we fall into an easy routine, and our ways are set.
Same coffee in the same old cup...
Every now and then I need to shake things up.
Spoken: Maybe I need to switch to Sanka.
Cuz y'know there's still a whole lot of life in the old boy yet.

When we're young, we lollygag and we think we have time to burn.
(B/K/M: We think we have time to burn.)
But we only get to pass this way once, and there's no return.
(B/K/M: Just once and there's no return.)
Same actor on a different stage,
With a wisdom that can only come with age.
Time to hunt for all the wonderful things that're left to learn. (B/K/M: So much to learn.)

(Beats on kettle)
Old drum...new sticks;
Old dog...new tricks to try...
I'm a lucky guy! (B/K/M: He's such a lucky guy.)
Age is just a number, and I know it's true;
Nothing's gonna stop me; all I have to do is believe... (B/K/M: Just have to believe.)
Hey, this old dog's got some brand new tricks up his sleeve. (B/K/M: Bow Wow Wow Wow.)

To the kids I may seem old as the hills and well past my prime.
(B/K/M: They think that he's past his prime.)
But I look ahead and see there are hills I have yet to climb. (B/K/M: Big hills he has yet to climb.)
I'm better than I used to be;
Older fiddles play the sweeter tunes, you see.
And remember that it's not only cheese that improves with time. (B/K/M: It's so sublime.)

("Plays" kitchen funnel)
Old horn...new licks;

Old dog...new tricks to try...
And I won't be shy. **(B/K/M: Oh, my, he won't be shy.)**
Never gonna hang it up and gather dust.
Never gonna see me sit around and just basket weave. **(B/K/M: Won't basket weave.)**
Hey, this old dog's got some brand new tricks up his sleeve.

Time's a gift from the Lord,
And I won't be wasting it.
Life's a big smorgasbord
And I'm not done tasting it!

(He does a quick, fancy dance step)
Old shoes...new kicks;
Old dog...new tricks to try...

'Til the day I die. **(B/K/M: And now he's flying high.)**
Chances of a lifetime coming into view...
Roads I've never taken; dreams that I'll pursue and achieve. **(B/K/M: Dreams to achieve.)**
Hey, this old dog's got some brand new tricks up his sleeve...Uh huh huh.
Hey, this old dog's got some brand new tricks up his sleeve...Oh oh yeah.
Yes, this old dog's got some brand new tricks up his sleeve!!!

As the Pastor rocks out on his final note, Vivian enters thru the exterior door.

V: Pastor?

He sings, very subdued:

P: Amen.

V: I think I dropped my hat.

She exits and the Pastor rocks out one final time.

P: Yeah!!! *(spoken ala Elvis)* Thank you. Thank you, very much.

SONG ENDS

Applause. The Pastor starts to put away his guitar as Vivian reenters wearing a winter coat, scarf, gloves and Wonder Bread bags on her feet. She carries a covered dish which she sets down with a bang next to the Pastor's guitar case. Clearly she does not approve.

V: A guitar? In the kitchen? That's.... nice.

P: My wife gave it to me for our anniversary. She got it at Schmidt Music.

V: Down in the Cities?

P: I wanted to surprise the Sunday School kids.

V: Oh, Ja, they'll be surprised. I think someone needs to sand those steps.

P: I believe you're right.

V: Whoo it's nippy! I heard 20 below!

P: Yeah, nippy, I heard 17 below.

V: 20.

*She takes off her coat, etc., and struggles to remove her bread bags.
This becomes a little awkward for them both.*

V: Pastor, careful, that's a new pair.

P: You know, Mrs. Snustad, my wife has quite a few Pepperidge Farm bread bags. I'd be happy to bring some for you.

V: Does she now? I appreciate that, but they don't fit my feet quite as well. I think I'll stick with what I know, thank you, Pastor.

P: You know, Mrs. Snustad, it might not be a bad idea for you to try something new every once and awhile. *(She looks at him blankly.)* Life's a smorgasbord. We only pass this way once. Maybe it's time to shake things up?

V: My shaking days are over, Pastor. I might break a hip.

We hear Karin and Beverly on the steps.

K: You know, Beverly, we can manage without you today.

B: I'm fine, Mom.

Karin enters with Beverly close behind her. Both are carrying some sort of dish. Beverly closes the door and hangs up their coats as Karin takes off her boots, puts the hotdishes in the oven to stay warm, etc.

K: Whoo. It's nippy.

V: Yeah, nippy, I heard 20 below.

P: 17.

V: 20.

K: Pastor. I didn't expect to see you here.

V: Pastor was playing guitar. In the kitchen. He's trying to "shake things up". Let me make you some fresh, pastor.

P: *(by way of explanation)* I came down to see how preparations were going for the annual meeting and, since no one was in here, I thought I'd get in a quick practice.

K: I mean, I thought for sure you'd be home watching the Vikings play in the Super Bowl.

P: I've been listening on the radio up in my office, but it's halftime. Beverly. Shouldn't you be home resting?

K: I told her she didn't need to come, but she's stubborn, like her father.

Beverly has taken off her coat and is standing facing the closet. When she turns we see that she is VERY pregnant and very surly.

B: Mom, I told you, I'm fine.

K: She's apparently fine.

B: Except for my swollen ankles, my aching back, and the fact I can't sleep on my stomach.

P: *(Sorry he asked.)* Oh, yes, well.

K: Sweetie, I'd be happy to run you home.

B: Ha. That's the last place I want to be right now.

K: Did you and Harry have a fight?

B: I don't want to talk about it.

K: *(to the Pastor)* She doesn't want to talk about it.

The ladies get to work on the preparations for the congregational meeting: They make coffee, set out the ingredients for open face sandwiches, and take pickles out of the fridge. Throughout the scene Beverly, who is very hormonal, will find opportunities to visit the fridge to cool off, put her feet up, etc. Mavis enters. Bundled up and carrying a cardboard box and a plate of Jell-O.

M: Sorry I'm late.

P: Oh, Mavis, let me help you.

M: Careful! Careful! *(As he takes the box from her)* I would have been here sooner, but the cows got out. Then Gilmer had to jump me.

Mavis takes off her coat and is decked out in purple, head to toe. She wears a red hat.

V: Is it Easter already?

M: (*Clearly distracted*) What?

K: That's quite an outfit, Mavis. You could start a trend. Especially with the red hat.

M: Oh, ja. Well, you get to a certain age...

B: Does it seem hot in here?

M: Not to me. Drove over without turning on the heat in the pick-up cause I didn't want the Jell-O to melt.

K: Why didn't you just put it in the back?

M: Can't. Full of manure. Whoo, it's nippy.

V: I heard 20 below.

P: 17.

V: 20.

M: (*To Beverly who is fanning herself.*) You know, Beverly, you should try sitting in the freezer. Ja. Works great. You gals remember when I was going thru the change a few years back? I sorta camped out in there for awhile.

B: It's too far to walk and my feet hurt.

V: I know what you mean. (*indicating her feet*) Bunions.

M: Uff da, girls, listen to us! We're falling apart. And Karin, you're next. Ja. Before you know it, "Parts are dropping, back's gone weak. If you laugh too hard..."

V/K/M:You spring a leak." (*They all laugh and sigh*)

M: Say, Pastor, I don't suppose you've had a chance to catch any of the Vikings in the Super Bowl.

P: I've been listening up in my office.

M: Boy, I gotta tell you. I haven't been this worked up over a game since Orrin Ulmsted broke his toe our Junior Year and I had to go in as the kicker.

K: (*to Beverly who is still standing in the fridge*) Beverly, could you get out the meat for the sandwiches?

P: Don't you worry, Mavis. Bud Grant'll turn our boys turned around in the 2nd half.

M: I hope so, Pastor. But Kansas City has had a good year, and this IS their 2nd time at the Super Bowl.

P: Yes, but remember, they *lost* last time.

M: (*incredulous*) To the *Packers*. Now what were *they* thinking, letting Lombardi get away?

V: Who?

P: Vince Lombardi, used to coach the Packers.

V: Oh that's that fellow with the fur and the sequins who plays the piano?

B: (*As she slams the meat on the counter*) That's Liberace!

M: Say, did you know Liberace was born in Wisconsin? I wonder if *he's* a Packer Backer.

K: I'll bet he is. (*changing the subject*) So, what's the score?

M: 16 zip, Chiefs.

P: They shot out in the lead right off the bat with 3 field goals in 20 minutes. Then they turned a Viking fumble into a touchdown.

B: (*Who has been looking in the cupboards for something*) Don't we have any soda crackers!

V: All this talk of baseball.

K: Football, Vivian.

V: Either way.

B: You know, my stupid husband is probably cheering for Kansas City right now! Loyalty is NOT his best quality.

K: Sweetie, what happened?

B: I told you, I don't want to talk about it.

M: (*She spots the guitar*) Hey, who's been playing guitar?

V: Pastor. He's trying to shake things up.

M: (*she checks her watch.*) Say, can you girls get along without me for a few minutes? I gotta...well, I need to check on something in the furnace room.

She retrieves her cardboard box and exits into the furnace room. Beverly sits with a pickle.

V: Pastor, I have to say, I don't approve of changing the time of the annual meeting. For longer than I can remember the church has held that meeting on the 2nd Sunday in January, right after service. Until now. And because of a sporting event!

P: Well, yes, Mrs. Snustad, but this is not just any sporting event. This is the Vikings, in the Super Bowl. If we'd gone ahead with the meeting like always, we might not have had enough folks for a quorum.

As they all continue to talk, Mavis brings an armload of 6 foot extension cords into the kitchen and starts stringing them together from an outlet to the furnace room.

M: Don't mind me, I just need to plug something in.

P: And you know, football *does* have many ties to the Church. Sure. The scriptures talk about running the race...and victory. And you remember the passage from Ephesians, "put on the armor of God, the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet...the helmet of salvation?" *(he knows this is a stretch)*

K: *(helping out)* And don't forget, our Viking ancestors converted thousands to Christianity.

Mavis exits into the furnace room.

B: Yeah, by maiming and killing them...

P: Yes, well. That was before Martin Luther. But when the score is close, people *do* start praying.

Vivian grunts in response as we hear the sounds of Mavis tuning in a radio.

V: What on earth? It sounds like the Towel of Babel in there.

M: *(from the furnace room)* Got it! Come ON, Vikes!

V: Aren't the Vikings the ones with that Fran Tareyton?

M: Tarkenton. *(from the furnace room)* He was traded to the Giants in '67.

V: Why anyone would ever name a boy Fran is beyond me. Or that Dick Butt-something.

P: Butt... kiss.

V: Oh, dear, that's worse than I thought. That poor little boy.

M: *(from the furnace room)* Vikings score a touchdown!

P: What? Excuse me ladies. *(he races over to Mavis as she steps into the kitchen.)* What happened?

M: Dave Osborn got ahold of the ball on the Kansas City four yard line and just rammed across the goal line.

P: I can't believe I missed it.

M: Now, Dave Osborns a 6 footer from Cando, North Dakota. Not a flashy player, but he gets the job done. Married his High School sweetheart. No wait, that was my cousin Gunnar. He was born with one webbed foot. He could swim like a fish, but only in a circle.

Mavis keeps talking as she and the Pastor exit into the furnace room.

V: *(to no one in particular)* What if the Lord came today? How would we explain ourselves?

B: Hey, Mom, I get to vote on everything today, right?

K: Uh, huh.

B: The Pastor's salary? The new roof? Everything?

K: Yes, and I hope that you do.

B: They don't have things just the men vote on.

K: Where in the world did you get that idea?

B: Harry's mother. She said? "When it comes to church stuff, Herman votes for the family". Can you believe that?

V: "Thy people shall be my people."

B: And THEN she said it was a mistake to take the word "obey" out of the wedding vows in the new red hymnal.

V: Communists.

B: Mrs. Snustad! It's 1970! *(She is clearly upset)*

V: I suppose.

B: But do you know what the worst part is? Harry agrees with her! Mom, I married a chauvinist. My baby's father is a chauvinist!

V: Harry's a Calvinist?

K: *(to Vivian)* No, a chauvinist. *(to Beverly)* Is that what you two fought about?

We hear cheering and yelling from the furnace room.

B: Oh, Mom. First we had the whole “discussion” about women voting in church and he took his mother’s side. I’m his wife! He’s supposed to take my side. And he doesn’t clean the counter when he makes himself a sandwich, and I have to ask him over and over not to wipe his face with my dishtowels, and he squeezes the toothpaste wrong, and I have to run to the bathroom every five minutes, and he leaves the seat up, and John Lennon left the Beatles...

V: He married that Yoko Uno.

B: OH-NO!

V: Oh, yeah.

B: ...And every time I turn around he’s*(trying to express her frustration)* breathing, and scratching, and coughing and snoring, and if he asks me one more time “What’s for supper?” I think I’m going to scream *(she runs out of steam)* I sound like a terrible wife.

V: No, you sound like a normal wife.

B: What am I supposed to do?

K: Oh, sweetie. Sometimes your Dad drives me crazy, too.

B: Not Daddy.

K: Oh, sure he does. One time I got so mad at him, I threw a slab of butter across the kitchen at him. Took the knife, chopped off a hunk and *(she pantomimes flipping it thru the air.)* Of course, I missed. It flew right past him and landed on my new wallpaper. Stain is still there.

B: Where?

K: Under the needlepoint that says, “Every happy home needs a happy homemaker.” Your father gave it to me for our anniversary that year. He thought it was hilarious.

Just then we hear a big reaction from the game listeners. (Pastor says offstage “Carol Channing could have caught that ball!”)

K: Uh, oh. That doesn’t sound good.

Mavis and the Pastor enter from the furnace room, leaving the door open.

P: The Chiefs just scored a touchdown of their own.

M: 23-7. Chiefs.

P: I’m going upstairs to nurse my wounds.... And I’d better go sand those steps since Oscar’s out of town.

V: Oscar is in Hatton, North Dakota for his sister's birthday.

M: Is that right?

V: *(realizing she may have said too much)* Well, yes, he, ah, he stopped by Friday to plow the drive and happened to mention it.

K: He's been stopping by quite a bit lately, hasn't he, Vivian?

V: He likes my cooking.

M: I'll bet he does.

V: *(Pastor starts to leave and Vivian sees his guitar)* Don't forget your Bible camp toy, Pastor. Plunk your magic twanger, Froggie! Next thing you know he'll be growing a mustache and playing Koom Bow Yea...

M: So, what's been going on in here?

K: We were just talking about husbands.

M: How is Elroy, by the way? Missed him in church this morning.

K: Tired. Overworked. Doesn't eat well. But he's finally talking about selling the dealership. He jokes about having to write a "Dear John" letter to John Deere.

They all laugh and sigh.

V: I don't get it.

K: But it has to be his decision. He doesn't listen to me, that's for sure.

M: They never do.

B: So it's not just me?

M: Are you kidding?

K: Beverly, marriage takes....strategy. It's like sports. It's not whether you win or lose...

K/M/V: ...it's how you play the game.

SONG: Get Back In The Game

Karin:

Two rookies take the field,
And life has just revealed
New challenges to tackle constantly.
You'll differ and you'll doubt,

But if you stick it out,
You'll find a way to both be MVP.
When sudden silly scrimmages have got you in a spin,
Perhaps these sporting images will give your team a win.

M: Marriage is a lot like football;
The similarities are plain as day.
K: From time to time you'll fumble,
M: Go out of bounds and stumble,
K: But only losers quit and walk away.
M: Don't ever use unnecessary roughness;
Defensive lines will keep you from your goal.
K: It takes a lot of teamwork
To make your nuptial scheme work
And win the Holy Matrimony Bowl.

M/K: So, rah rah rah for the home team...
To forfeit now would be a crying shame.
K: The bench can warm itself;
To put a trophy on your shelf,
M/K: You gotta get back in the game.

Mavis: (Spoken) OK, so yer not a football fan. Try these cleats on for size.

Marriage is a lot like baseball;
And from the game, we gain some good advice.
K: Although I know you're eager
To be a major leaguer,
Remember that you'll need to sacrifice.
M: You'll spend a lot of innings dodging curve balls,
Some errors will annoy you now and then.
K: Just tighten up your laces
And cover all your bases,

Mavis/Karin:
And soon you'll find you're safe at home again.

So, rah rah rah for the home team...
You're on your way to glory and acclaim.
M: And if you hit a slump,
Don't blame the weather or the ump;
K/M: You gotta get back in the game.

Vivian: Steee – rike! Yer oughta there!

Mavis: Say Vivian, why don't you give it a try?

V: Marriage is a lot like tennis;
(spoken) You run around and sweat a lot and...then you make 15 and sweat, then you make 30 and sweat,
and then you make love and sweat.... *(She stops.)*
Marriage is a lot like hockey;
You slam into a wall and then you... *(She stops again, frustrated.)*
(To Karin and Mavis:)
"You took all the good ones!"

Vivian/Mavis/Karin:

So, rah rah rah for the home team...
An undefeated season is your aim.

Vivian:

You'll never get the prize
Until you finally realize

Vivian/Mavis/Karin:

You gotta get back in the game.

Yes, sis boom bah for the home team...
You're headed for the Marriage Hall Of Fame.

Karin:

But only if you strive
To keep your pennant hopes alive.

Mavis:

You'll never grab the gold
If you just pack it up and fold;

Vivian:

I've had enough of these
Obnoxious sports analogies.

Vivian/Mavis/Karin:

You gotta get back in the game!

SONG ENDS

M: Feeling better?

B: I am. Thanks. Sorry I've been such a crab.

M: It's perfectly natural. Now, if you'll excuse me, I think I better pay a little visit to Mrs. Jones.

Mavis exits into the fellowship hall and promptly reenters again.

M: Karin, could you come see if this is enough chairs?

Karin exits into the fellowship hall.

V: Time was, that would have been my job.

B: Are you ever sorry you gave up the kitchen?

V: Some days. Being in charge gave me a purpose.

B: Oh, Mrs. Snustad.

V: Oh, no, you call me Vivian. You're a married woman now.

B: For better or worse. It's nothing like I expected.

V: It never is. I expected my Lars to live longer. *(she sighs)* Don't you worry. You and Harry will be just fine. But life is short. Remember that. *(It occurs to her)* I'll bet that's what Pastor was trying to tell me.

The baby kicks. Beverly places Vivian's hand on her stomach.

B: Oh! Feel...feel!

V: So wonderful! Someone wants to come out.

Karin reenters.

B: Well, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go say hello to Mrs Jones myself!

Beverly exits.

V: I'm so glad she moved back home.

K: I'm glad she *chose* to move home. That she's here because she *wants* to be.

V: *(deciding to share is a big deal for her.)* You know, Karin, when my Lars passed away, this kitchen was all I had. And there may have been times I regretted handing it over to you.

K: Vivian.

V: Let me finish. I know I'm not much help to you around here anymore, but you've never made me feel like a burden. And I want you to know how much I appreciate that. Listen to me. Sharing my feelings. I sound like hippie.

K: Next thing you know you'll be wanting a hug.

V: No, no I really don't think I will. But I do think maybe it's time for me to "shake things up". I just don't have the slightest idea where to start.

K: The church is sending some delegates to the Lutheran Women in Missions conference in the Cities this Spring. Maybe I should nominate you at the meeting tonight.

V: Me? Go there? For that? *(Vivian finds this ridiculous yet interesting)*

K: You know, Vivian, you could really shake things up in the Cities.

Mavis throws open the serving window and hollers into the kitchen.

M: Grab a mop and bucket, the baby's coming!

V/K: What?

M: Beverly's water just broke over by the flannel graph board.

K: The baby is coming? But it's too early.

V: They come when they're ready. You light the stove. I'll start boiling water.

Vivian grabs a pot/dishtowels/a spoon/a basin/newspapers, everything she thinks she might need for an "at church" birth, and starts clearing off the center counter. Meanwhile, Karin, who is starting to panic, washes her hands, tries to decide if she should take off her apron, gets her coat out of the closet, puts on her boots, and generally gets in Vivian's way.

K: She's having the baby – oh, I can't believe it. Oh, dear. Someone needs to tell Elroy.

V: Pastor'll phone him.

K: Of course, Pastor will phone him. Oh I can't believe it. Vivian! She's having a baby! I wonder if will be a boy or a girl. Elroy has always wanted a granddaughter.

V: If it's a boy, I hope she doesn't name him Liberace Butkis.

K: Oh, it's too soon. I'm not ready. She's not ready. Harry hasn't even finished making the cradle yet. And Harry's mother was going to teach me to Rosemal so we could paint it. Oh, Vivian. I'm going to be a grandma. I wonder how the Vikings are doing. Oh, it would be so exciting if we won the Super Bowl and Beverly had a baby all on the same day. Her Viking baby. Eager to get out and conquer the world. That's cute. I'll have to remember to tell that to Elroy.

V: Karin, maybe you should go find Beverly before she has her baby in the fellowship hall.

K: Of course. Beverly. I should go find Beverly. *(she throws open the serving window and hollers into the fellowship hall.)* Mavis! Where's Beverly? *(When there is no answer she starts crawling on the counter to get a better view and continues hollering as she crawls out the window.)* Mavis? Can you hear me? Beverly? Where are they? Hello? Mavis? Beverly?

V: *(Vivian continues to prepare herself. When she is ready she sets herself up to catch the baby.)* Okay, we're ready to go.

Mavis enters thru the swinging door.

M: Beverly is on her way to the hospital. *(Vivian is slightly disappointed.)*

K: She's on her way to the hospital?

M: Harry just showed up and said he had something important to tell her. My guess, he came to apologize. Anyway, he and Pastor are helping her out to the car right now.

K: Oh, this is it. What should I do? I should phone Elroy. No, Pastor will do that. I should get the car. Of course. The car. I should get the car. I'll need my coat. Where is my coat? Where is my Coat!? WHERE IS MY COAT!!!

V: Is this the part in the movies where we slap some sense into her?

K: Boots. I should put on my boots first. That's right. *(She grabs her boots and is wandering around, lost.)* Oh, dear, I'm a wreck. I'm an absolute wreck... and my keys. I have to find my keys. Oh, I have to get to the hospital.

M: Well, I'm driving. Your driving is awful at best and right now you're such a mess you have no business behind the wheel.

Mavis and Karin race to the door, Mavis blocking the door with her foot as she reaches into the closet for her coat. They head out up the stairs, leaving Vivian standing at the center "operating table" island, a spoon in her hand.

V: You go on ahead. I'll hold down the fort.

The Pastor enters in a rush.

P: Where's Karin?

V: She just left with Mavis.

P: So she's heard?

V: Heard what?

P: Elroy is on his way to the hospital.

V: Oh, good, I told Karin you'd phone him.

P: No. Vivian. Listen. Listen. Elroy's had a heart attack. They don't think he'll pull through.

V: Oh, Pastor.

The lights slowly fade to black/End of Scene

TRANSITION SCENE

Through the windows we see cold winter daylight and hear a church organ playing a funeral hymn. This transitions into Beverly's lullaby from scene 2 as Karin enters the darkened kitchen thru the swinging door, dressed in a black hat, scarf and overcoat. She is taking a moment alone.

REPRISE: Cardamom, Cinnamon, Ginger and Clove

Karin:

At times, I accept, other time, disbelief.
I thank God for the T.V. and phone.
I understand pain, and I understand grief,
Yet still, I can't fathom "alone".

I'm not sure that I know what sleep is anymore;
Yesterday, I was up at a quarter past four.
And I sat on the couch til a glow filled the skies,
With our daughter and someone who has Grandpa's eyes.
Soon the room was ablaze with the colors of dawn,
And at last I believed life indeed will go on.
And we sat there, enveloped in crimson and mauve,
Singing, "Cardamom, cinnamon, ginger and clove."

As she finishes the verse she takes a breath. She is ready. She exits. The light on stage and in the windows brightens, marking the passage of time. Beverly enters, and Scene 4 begins.

SCENE 4 – May 1970. Saturday afternoon
Spring Cleaning

It is one year since the show began, and the baby is now 4 months old. It has been two months since the Pastor left the church to become the administrator of a Bible camp in Stillwater (if an older actor plays the role, alternate dialogue will suggest the Pastor has retired), and the church has a new young Pastor, right out of seminary. The new baby will be baptized during church tomorrow, and their beloved Pastor is coming back to perform the service. The ladies are busy with Spring Cleaning: polishing the silver, folding and ironing tablecloths, refilling salt and pepper shakers, etc. The furnace room door is ajar.

As the music continues, Beverly enters, the same way she did at the top of scene 2, only now she holds her baby. As she sings, she walks around the kitchen and shows her new daughter all the things she will grow up to love.

Beverly:

My miraculous child, you're so needy and new.
You were given to us, now I give this to you...
The most valuable prize from my heart's treasure trove,
It goes, "Cardamom, cinnamon, ginger and clove."

As she finishes singing, we hear Mavis on the stairs.

M: Hey, hey. Look what I found.

Mavis enters carrying a banana box and sees Beverly with the baby.

M: *(whispering)* Oh, is she sleeping? *(Beverly nods yes as Mavis looks at the sleeping baby.)*
Look at you. Someday you're gonna run this kitchen.

B: Or the country.

M: She's got a button nose like her mommy. But those ears are all Elroy, poor thing.

B: Harry says she looks like a Volkswagon with its doors open.

M: She'll grow into them.

B: You know, Mrs Gilmerson, when I look at her, I feel so happy - like my heart might explode. I've only known her four months, but already I can't imagine my life without her. And then I think about Dad, and I feel guilty for being happy.

M: Of course you do, you're Lutheran. We practice Lent year round. But life goes on. And your dad would want you to be happy... once and awhile.

B: I really miss him.

M: I know you do.

Underscoring ends.

M: So, whadda say we give 'er a try?

Beverly puts the baby in the banana box.

B: It's a perfect fit.

M: Snug as a bug in a rug. So, is Vivian still givin' you a hard time about waitin' so long to have the baptism?

B: You know Mrs. Snustad, "What if something happens to her before she's baptized!" I wonder what she'll say when she finds out we put the baby in a box.

M: Just tell her I did it.

As they continue to talk, they take out salt and pepper shakers to refill, silver to polish, etc.

B: I can't believe I didn't bring the infant seat. But Harry was so excited about loading up the new baptismal font, I completely forgot. Sometimes it feels like my brain has turned to mush.

M: Welcome to Motherhood. That font is gonna look beautiful up there in the front of the sanctuary.

B: Harry is so proud. The new Pastor told him it showed great craftsmanship.

M: Did you know Gilmer's Uncle was a woodworker? Ja, he carved the pulpit for First Presbyterian up dere in Thief River Falls (*pronounced Teef River Falls*). Turns out, when he was done, he had enough wood left over to carve his own coffin. But then he was killed in WWI and his body was never recovered. So they turned it upright, added some shelves, and used it to store the canning down in the fruit cellar.

B: Is Mr Gilmerson Presbyterian?

M: Ja. But he *turned* after we met. Just don't tell Vivian. It took her forever to get over the fact he wasn't 100% Norwegian.

B: He's not?

M: German on his mother's side. That's why he's so stubborn. Well, we should get to work. We've got Spring Cleaning to do.

B: *(getting to work)* Should I refill the peppers, too?

M: I don't think you'll need to. We filled them last summer for the Gilbertson wedding. But you might have to dust them. *(checking the time)* Ya know, I'm surprised your mom isn't here yet.

B: Me, too. I talked to her this morning and she said she was coming.

M: Well, she's had a lot on her mind these last few months since your dad died. Selling the dealership, trying to adjust to life on her own. I'm sure it's tough for her.

Karin enters dressed in a pantsuit with a very short, very sassy new hairdo and looking every inch a woman of the 70's. Mavis gives a whistle.

K: Sorry I'm late.

B: Mom?

M: Whoo hoo, Karin, look at you. You look like something right outta the Sears catalogue.

B: I love your hair! I didn't know you were getting it cut today.

K: Neither did I.

B: What do you mean?

K: Well, right after I talked to you on the phone, I blew a fuse.

M: Oh no, Karin. You should've called me.

K: I wanted to change it myself. It took 45 minutes and two trips to the hardware store, but I did it.

M: Whoo hoo. Good for you.

K: Anyway, while I was monkeying around in the utility room, I got my hair stuck to the flypaper we have hanging in there.

B: Oh, no, Mom!

M: Uff da. I've done that a time or two myself.

K: Oh, you should've seen me. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. And the more I tried to get it out, the worse it got. I'm sure your father would've gotten a big kick outta the whole thing. Watching me flailing around. Finally, I just grabbed a scarf, drove into town and...Wa-La. It's called a Sassoon cut. Elroy always wanted me to try something new.

B: Next thing you know you'll be moving to the Cities, starting a career and buying a split level.

K: You never know.

M: *(hugging her)* No, you never do.

K: *(crossing to the baby)* So, how is my little girl today?

B: Perfect. *(standing with her mom by the baby)* Oh, Mom, I wish Dad could see her. I wish Dad could see you.

M: *(crossing to stand with them)* He does. He sees everything. Why, he's probably looking down at us from heaven right now.

They all look to heaven. Mavis decides to button one more button on her dress as if Elroy were peeking. They all laugh, Karin grateful for the mood change. We hear Vivian from the furnace room.

V: *(calling back into the furnace room)* Oh, Oscar, you're such a caution. I'll get you that coffee.

Vivian enters from the furnace room. She has a spring in her step and looks younger than she has in years. She is surprised to see the other ladies, and they are surprised to see her.

B: Mrs. Snustad?

V: Beverly?

M: Vivian.

V: Mavis.

Vivian stops to take in Karin's new appearance then looks to heaven as if asking God "did you see?"

V: Pants....

M: Say, Vivian. I didn't know you were here.

K: In the furnace room.

B: And not many women could pull off a frock like that.

M: Your Buick's not outside.

K: How'd you get here?

M: Did you walk? Etc.

K: Take a train...? Etc.

They continue to “give her the business” until Vivian cuts them off.

V: A friend brought me.

B: (*teasing her*) A “friend” as in Old Man Clementson?

V: He’s not *that* old. He was over helping me with my screens this morning and, since he was coming over here anyway, asked me if I wanted to ride along. (*innocently*) Isn’t that right, Oscar?

We hear a bang bang from the furnace room.

B: (*to Vivian*) From what I hear, he’s been helping you around the house quite a bit lately. Isn’t that right, Mr Clementson?

BANG BANG from the furnace room.

M: From what *I* hear, he’s become quite a fan of your hot dish! Isn’t *that* right Oscar?

BANG BANG BANG from the furnace room. Vivian closes the door.

V: Oh, for heaven’s sake, Oscar.

B/M: The time’s they are a changin’.

V: I’ll say. My nephew’s drivin around in something called a Goblin.

B: Gremlin.

V: Either way. Terrible.

K: And tomorrow is my granddaughter’s baptismal day.

V: About time, too. You never would have forgiven yourself if something had happened to this little girl before she was baptized. A box?

B: She did it!

K: Vivian, you know the kids wanted to wait until Harry’s brother was discharged from the VA hospital so he could be her sponsor.

V: I suppose.

B: I’m just glad Pastor could come back for the service. It’s still strange, not having him around all the time.

M: You're telling me. When he announced that he' accepted another call, I nearly lost my girdle.

K: Well Camp St. Croix is lucky to get him. He's always said young people are the future of the church.

V: Why anyone would want to go work down near the Cities is beyond me.

M: It will be fun to see him tomorrow. I just hope we recognize him.

B: It's only been 2 months. He can't have changed that much.

The Pastor enters looking very snappy and 70's in his street clothes and moustache. The ladies are surprised to see him, and don't know what to make of his new look.

P: Ah, ladies.

M: Pastor? We weren't expecting you today. And here we are in our work clothes

P: I think you all look wonderful. A real sight for sore eyes.

B: You look pretty snappy yourself, Pastor. That's quite the get-up.

P: It's reversible. My wife got it for me at Chess King over at the Mall.

All: Oh, that's...nice.

B: Pastor, someone else wants to say hello.

P: *(As Beverly shows him the baby)* Hello, little one. She's grown quite a bit since I saw her last. And those ears are all Elroy.

K: She'll grow into them.

V: Coffee, Pastor?

P: No thankyou, I drink tea now. Karin, how are you doing?

K: Good. Better. Day by day.

P: These things take time.

M: Don't I know it! I still haven't recovered from the Vikings loss at the Super Bowl.

K: Oh, Mavis, we got so close this year. It won't be long before the Vikes will be bringing home that trophy.

M: You're right, Karin. We couldn't possibly lose another one.

B: So, Pastor, how is life down in the Cities?

P: Not bad. Not bad at all. Vivian, my wife tells me you had a wonderful time down there at the conference last month.

V: Well, I'm not sure I'd go that far.

SONG: Vivian's Bad Trip

V: You know that I've never been a fan of the Cities.
It's a place that I'd just as soon let be.
But the convention needed delegates.
Of course, I'd never seek it out.
I never dreamed that they'd choose me!

V: *(spoken)* Well, how could I say no? The vote was unanimous—clearly, this church needs me!

(The ladies all look at each other and smile. They had a hand in this.)

V: I felt a little nervous when the time came to leave,
though I'd packed my finest dress and set my hair.
I climbed aboard the bus and turned my back upon my sanity,
knowing before long I would be there:

The Cities! **(BG VOX: The Cities!)**
Capitals of evil vice!
The Cities! **(BG VOX: The Cities!)**
Home of things that aren't nice!

The bus left the station and I knew it had begun:
My long, slow descent into Hades.
The machine, it belched and rumbled,
and I knew our time had come—
me and a dozen other ladies.

Yet somehow we survived on this trip—you can't imagine—
a journey almost more than I could bear.
The bus creaked to a halt, with a hiss the door flew open,
we stepped off, and we found ourselves there:

The Cities! **(BG VOX: The Cities!)**
Capitals of evil vice!
The Cities! **(BG VOX: The Cities!)**
Home of things that aren't nice!

I found myself surrounded by the Devil's every work!
My heart pounded, I was desperate to leave.
And around every corner some new threat was sure to lurk:

a serpent tempting me like I was Eve!

TANGO DANCE BREAK during which the following interjections (or something similar) are shouted out, trying to tempt Vivian.

B: Make love, not war, Vivian!

M: If it feels good, do it, Vivian!

K: Power to the people, Vivian!

P: Sock it to me. Sock it to me. Sock it to me.

Unwashed hippies! Godless free love!

(spoken) Why are all those long-haired men buying those cute little glass vases?

War protesters! Bra burners!

K/B/M/P: *(spoken)* Someone left the cake out in the rain, Vivian.

V: ...and I'll never have that recipe again! Oh No!!!!

The Lemington Hotel,
though surrounded by such evils,
was a bit of an oasis, I could feel.
So I made my way downstairs
and found the hotel restaurant,
and settled in to have a noontime meal.

Well, imagine my surprise
when I met the other women.
They were just as nice and normal as could be.
They had two arms and legs,
and each one had her Bible.
They were *almost* as Lutheran as me.

Well, up until this point
I hadn't dared to step outside.
If I left, would I ever make it back?
Then I got a funny feeling
What had entered my domain? Pastor, your NEW wife!
I nearly had a heart attack!

(spoken) I couldn't believe it. I never thought I'd have to... *(she corrects herself)* get to see her again. But there she stood. You can imagine my surprise. And then she.....HUGGED ME!!!!"

Before I knew it, we were strolling
down the Mall, across the town.
I confess, I never thought that I would dare!
We found the corner from that TV show
(at Nicollet and Seventh)—
I took off my hat and threw it in the air!
Who can turn the world on with a smile

We passed a pleasant afternoon
relaxing over coffee;
I went back to my room without a care.
I'm glad to say I made a few
new friends while on this trip,
but I don't think I'll ever go back there:

The Cities! (**BG VOX:** The Cities!)
Capitals of evil and vice!
The Cities! (**BG VOX:** The Cities!)
Home of things that aren't very Minnesota nice!

SONG ENDS

V: And, I brought back a lovely souvenir to brighten up the fellowship hall. It's a glass vase.
(She presents a bong filled with flowers.) They had them in a variety of colors. And there's
even a little spout on the side so you can keep it watered.

M: My son has a vase like that!

Beverly gives the Pastor the "peace" sign, and changes the subject.

B: Pastor, I have something for you. A baptismal gift. From Katie.

V: Katie! I still can't believe you gave your daughter such a floozy name.

M: It's not a floozy name, Vivian. Martin Luther's wife was named Katie, but they called
her Kitty for short.

V: Like the saloon girl on GUNSMOKE! You know it's not too late to change it...since she
hasn't been baptized....

B: Her name is Katie, Mrs. Snustad. And it's a perfect name.

V: I suppose I'll get used to it.

B: Here, Pastor. I wasn't expecting you today, so it's not wrapped.

P: It's a cross. *(He puts it on)*

B: Harry carved it using leftover wood from the baptismal font. It's reversible.

P: So it is. Oh, that reminds me. I have something for you, too. It's out in the car. I'll be
right back.

The Pastor exits.

V: *(to Beverly)* Since we're giving gifts...

The ladies gather round as Vivian presents the quilt.

B: Oh, Mrs. Snustad.

V: It's for the baby. For the baptism.

M: It's a quilt.

V: She can see perfectly well it's a quilt.

M: *(joking)* It's reversible...

B: It's beautiful.

V: Your mom did the piecing.

K: It's been a good distraction.

B: *(recognizing a piece of fabric)* Is this a piece from my confirmation dress?

K: Remember? We got it at Pennys for \$13.95.

B: And you bought me my first pair of nylons.

All: Suntan beige!

K: It was the first time Elroy let me drive to Fargo without him.

B: I remember.

K: Each piece tells a part of your story, a part of your life.

V: *(indicating one brightly colored and out of place square)* Except for this piece. This one came from the missionaries.

M: Someday you can show this to little Katie and tell her all about the nutty Church Basement Ladies you once knew.

B: Don't worry, Mrs Gilmerson. I'll be sure and tell her all about you. Mom, I don't know what to say.

K: It was Vivian's idea.

B: Oh, Mrs. Snustad...

V: Vivian... *(She puts out her arms, and Beverly steps in to hug her.)*

B: ...Vivian. *(This is the first time she has called her by her Proper name)* It's beautiful.

V: Now, remember, this is to be used, not to be put up on a shelf and saved only for good. You wear it out, that's what it's for.

B: Where is this piece from?

V: Oh, that.... *the song begins and they tell her the stories behind each of the pieces.*

SONG: The Tales of Your Heart

V: This is a piece from the dress that I wore on your baptismal day,
a glorious Sunday in May

K: I remember it like yesterday.

V: You cried just a little, but when it was through
you were beaming and bright like the sun
And that's when I knew you'd be one of those children
who'd never be trouble,
so warm and compliant, never defiant,
and that's just the kind of a child that you were.
How could I know that someday you'd grow up to be
just as bull-headed and stubborn as her? (*indicating her mother Karin, who reacts*)

B: (*spoken*) This is from when I played Mary in the Christmas program!

K: And this is a piece from the dress that you wore on your first day of school—
(*spoken*) remember?
That green and blue plaid that you loved,

K & B: And your/my hair, how it shined like a jewel!

K: (*spoken*) That's right!

B: That dress was so pretty I felt like a princess ascending a throne, ...
'til you left me alone!

K: Oh, sweetheart, how could you have known
you were taking a step, the first step of many
away from the nest that we'd built,
and all of the steps of your life,
they're all here in this quilt.
And now you're all grown, no longer alone.... (*referring to the sleeping baby*)

K, V, M: Put a piece here, put a piece there
the picture comes alive
and row by row the stories grow
and through those tales we survive

hands have stitched this quilt together
knowing the tales of your heart
and love has stitched our lives together
so tightly, we won't come apart.

M: This is a piece from the dress that I wore when our sow had her litter—
(*spoken*) remember?

B: (*spoken*) I do!
Eight bundles of joy, all squealing and snorting!

M: You loved every one of those critters!
But one most of all, I recall,
you fell for the runt, so helpless and small
you hugged him and coddled him,
fed him his bottle and watched him grow healthy and strong!

B: It wasn't long after he opened his eyes
that I realized what a winner he was.

M: You took the blue ribbon that year at the Fair!
We made it a square ... and sewed it in there. (*indicating quilt*)

DIALOGUE SECTION:

B: Wilbur! I named him Wilbur, after *Charlotte's Web*! And you said he was destined
for fame and fortune. Whatever happened to him, Mavis? I can't remember.

M: (*looking embarrassed*) Well.... I was just learning how to drive the new John Deere, and...
Let's just say we had ham for Christmas dinner, and leave it at that.

K: Mavis!

SONG RESUMES:

V: This one's the dress from your graduation.

K: You were an angel in white!

B: I remember!

K: And this one is from that hayride with Harry.

K, M, V: Your first date that night!

B: I remember!

K, M, V: Buttons and ribbons and bows and fabric
all of your memories here

we're piecing together the tale of a journey
to pass along through the years

K: And this is a piece from your daddy's old jeans
he wore them the day you were born.... *(she can't continue; the women console her)*

DIALOGUE SECTION:

Beverly notices something stitched into the corner of the quilt and looks at Vivian.

B: Look at that, it says "Katie". I thought you said it wasn't too late to change it.

V: I also said I'd get used to it.

SONG RESUMES:

K, V, M, B: Put a piece here, put a piece there
the picture comes alive
and row by row the stories grow
and through those tales we survive
hands have stitched this quilt together
knowing the tales of your heart
and love has stitched our lives together
so tightly, we won't come apart;
so tightly, we won't come apart.

As the last chorus ends, underscoring continues as the Pastor enters carrying his guitar and presents Beverly with a homemade craft.

P: Beverly, take a look at this. It's a Bible. Carved out of Ivory Soap. Remember?

B: I made it for you in Bible School!

P: 99 and 44/100 percent groovy.

M: Too bad we can't add it to the quilt.

B: *(showing him the quilt)* Look what they made me Pastor. It's the story of my life.

K: So far.

V: Except for that piece. That one's from the missionaries.

P: Oh, well that's..... nice. *(And he means it.)*

Together they all sing one more chorus of the song

All: Put a piece here, put a piece there
the picture comes alive

and row by row the stories grow
and through those tales we survive
hands have stitched this quilt together
knowing the tales of your heart
and love has stitched our lives together
so tightly, we won't come apart;

Beverly hands the baby to the Pastor.

P: Hello, little Katie. Oh, dear. I think someone needs to be changed.

V: It's 1970. I think we're all about to be changed.

K: You're telling me.

Karin appears to be having a hot flash. (Her first one?)

M: Oh, no, Karin. Welcome to the club.

They sing.

All: So tightly, we won't come apart;

SONG ENDS

Blackout.

BOWS

