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State wrestling with its image

After high-profile tragedies: “We’re tired, we’re hurting.”

By KATIE GALIOTO
The Minnesota Star Tribune

For the people who live in Minnesota or have roots here, seeing the state become the center of international attention for tragic reasons now feels like a recurring nightmare.

Minnesota – especially its urban heart, Minneapolis – has been in the global spotlight since the killing of Renee Good by a federal immigration agent on Jan. 7. For many, the extraordinary scrutiny has been strikingly similar to what followed the murder of George Floyd in 2020.

Last summer’s assassination of Melissa and Mark Hortman and the mass shooting of elementary school students at Annunciation Church also put the state at the epicenter

SEE SPOTLIGHT ON A5 »



American flags were plentiful among demonstrators across the street from Immigration and Customs Enforcement headquarters at the Whipple Federal Building at Fort Snelling on Jan. 18.

JEFF WHEELER • The Minnesota Star Tribune

Activists disrupt Sunday church service in St. Paul

By KIM HYATT
and KYELAND JACKSON
The Minnesota Star Tribune

Protesters disrupted a St. Paul church service on Jan. 18 after activists determined one of the pastors works as the acting director of ICE’s field office in St. Paul.

David Easterwood, a pastor at Cities Church in St. Paul, is named in a pending class action lawsuit filed by the ACLU of Minnesota for aggressive tactics used by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

When activists discovered Easterwood is a local pastor, they decided to mobilize, they said.

“This man is a wolf in sheep’s clothing, masquerading as a pastor,” said Nekima Levy Armstrong, a local attorney, activist

and reverend.

Easterwood was not leading Sunday’s service. Lead pastor Jonathan Parnell was confronted by the activists. In a video of the protest, Parnell can be heard telling activists, “Shame on you.”

Messages left with Parnell were not returned Sunday. Attempts to reach Easterwood also were not successful Sunday.

The federal government announced an investigation of possible criminal violations.

Harmeet Dhillon, Assistant Attorney General for the U.S. Department of Justice, announced the investigation on X when responding to videos of protesters shouting “Renee Good!” as they interrupted the Sunday service. Dhillon called the protest “un-American and

SEE CHURCH ON A5 »



BACK IN OFFICE

Sen. John Hoffman speaks from his office in the Minnesota Senate Building on Jan. 19. Hoffman survived being shot nine times in an assassination attempt in June.

‘THAT NOISE, THAT SOUND NEVER LEAVES YOU’

In the seven months since Sen. John Hoffman was shot nine times in the doorway of his home, he has learned that healing from physical and emotional trauma is not linear.

“Recovery is a process,” said Hoffman, DFL-Champ-
plin. “Physically, you have good days, and there are
sometimes where you just hit the wall and I’m physi-
cally just done.”

Hoffman and his wife, Yvette Hoffman, were shot
early June 14 by the same man accused of murdering
House DFL Leader Melissa Hortman and her husband,
Mark Hortman. The man, Vance Boelter, is accused of
dressing up like a police officer to target Democratic

Sen. John Hoffman
on his ongoing
recovery and his
upcoming return
to the Legislature.

Story by ALLISON KITE
Photo by JEFF WHEELER
The Minnesota Star Tribune

lawmakers in the dead of night and shining a flashlight
in the Hoffmans’ eyes when they answered the door.
Authorities allege Boelter had written plans to target
many more.

Seven months into his recovery, Hoffman was in good
spirits Monday, Jan. 19, during an interview in his office
in the Minnesota Senate Building – his first with the Min-
nesota Star Tribune since his attempted killing. But he
said he’s still working on healing. As an avid drummer,
he’s frustrated he hasn’t regained strength in his left
arm, he said. He’s working on that in physical therapy.

SEE HOFFMAN ON A8 »

Trump says peace isn’t his only focus

President now links his
stance on Greenland to
Nobel Peace Prize snub.

By AAMER MADHANI, GEIR
MOULSON and EMMA BURROWS
The Associated Press

NUUK, GREENLAND – U.S. President Donald Trump linked his aggressive stance on Green-
land to last year’s decision not to award him the Nobel Peace Prize, telling Norway’s prime minister that he no longer felt “an obligation to think purely of Peace,” in a text message released Monday.

Trump’s message to Jonas Gahr Store appears to ratchet up a standoff between Washing-
ton and its closest allies over his threats to take over Greenland, a self-governing territory of NATO member Denmark. On Satur-
day, Trump announced a 10% import tax starting in February on goods from eight nations that have rallied around Den-
mark and Greenland, includ-
ing Norway.

Those countries issued a forceful rebuke.

Many longtime allies of the U.S. remained resolute that Greenland was not for sale but encouraged Washington to discuss solutions. In a statement on social media, the European Union’s foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said the bloc had “no interest to pick a fight” but would “hold our ground.”

The White House has not ruled out taking control of the strategic Arctic island by force. Asked whether Trump could invade Greenland, Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen said Monday that

SEE GREENLAND ON A8 »

Top Catholic clerics denounce U.S. foreign policy – without naming Trump

By RUTH GRAHAM
The New York Times

The three highest-ranking Roman Catholic clerics who lead archdioceses in the United States said in a strongly worded statement on Monday that

America’s “moral role in confronting evil around the world” is in question for the first time in decades. Their critique of the Trump administration’s principles – while not mentioning President Donald Trump by name – escalates the American

Catholic Church’s denunciations of the country’s top leaders.

In 2026, the country has entered “the most profound and searing debate about the moral foundation for America’s actions in the world since the end of the Cold War,” read the unusual

statement issued by Cardinal Blase Cupich, archbishop of Chicago; Cardinal Robert McElroy, archbishop of Washington; and Cardinal Joseph Tobin, archbishop of Newark, N.J.

Citing recent events in Ven-
ezuela, Ukraine and Greenland

as having raised fundamental questions about the use of military force, the cardinals call for a “genuinely moral foreign policy” in which “military action must be seen only as a last resort in extreme situations, not a normal instrument of

national policy.”

The cardinals did not delve into policy details, and they declined to offer specifics about the countries mentioned in the statement. They specifically framed their statement as a

SEE CLERICS ON A3 »