

The Concordia Courier

A Publication Of Concordia Lutheran Church

† JESUS' HARMONY FOR THE HEART OF SARASOTA † December 2023

Who Gets Your Thanks?

Mealtimes Prayers – How the head of the family should teach his household to ask a blessing and return thanks.

Asking a Blessing

The children and the members of the household shall go to the table reverently, fold their hands, and say:

The eyes of all look to You, O Lord, and **You give them their food** at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing (Psalm 145:15-16).

Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:

Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these Your gifts which we receive from **Your bountiful goodness**, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Returning Thanks

Also, after eating, they shall, in like manner, reverently and with folded hands say:

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His love endures forever. He gives food to every creature. He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call. His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor His delight in the legs of a man; **the Lord delights** in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love (Psalm 136:1, 25; 147:9-11).

Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer and the following:

We thank You, Lord God, heavenly Father, for all Your benefits, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

From the "**Small Catechism.**" Written by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther in 1529, the little book is treasured still by the world's 84 million Lutherans for clearly opening the Bible's truth and celebrating the heart of the Christian faith. Translation by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis ©1992.

Bible Groups to Befriend You

Concordia loves Bible groups! **Jesus speaks** to us through His Book, especially when we share His Word with one another.

Sundays, 10 a.m. offers conversation on "**the other Scripture,**" the readings that were not the sermon theme. Gather at **Willer Hall's red double-door** main room.

Thursday, 10:30 a.m. The **men's group** will begin to meet again in December in Concordia's Willer Fellowship Hall Library Room (the single red door at the north end).

Thursdays, 10:30 a.m. GiFTS! The **women "Growth in Faith through Scripture."** The group now sees God's vivid promises. Visit Concordia's Willer Fellowship Hall main room (double red doors).

Worship's Scripture

Dec. 2, 3 - Advent 1

Isaiah 64:1-9

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Mark 13:24-37

Dec. 9, 10 - Advent 2

Isaiah 40:1-11

2 Peters 3:8-14

Mark 1:1-8

Dec. 16, 17 - Advent 3

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28

Dec. 23, 24 - Advent 4

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38

Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve 7 pm

Isaiah 7:10-14

1 John 4:7-16

Matthew 1:18-25

Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve 11 pm

Isaiah 9:2-7

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

Dec. 25 - Christmas Day 10 am

Isaiah 62:10-12

Titus 3:4-7

Luke 2:(1-14) 15-20

Dec. 30, 31 - New Year's

Isaiah 30:(8-14) 15-17

Romans 8:31b-39

Luke 12:35-40

Choir Joyful

The choir practices **each Wednesday 7 to 8 p.m. Everyone is welcome!** We sing near the start of the 11 a.m. worship, so that also some who have worshiped at 9 a.m. can add their voice.

Sing for a **great time together** and a **great purpose.** Let's serve our Lord with our time and talents!

Your music director - Johnora Hildebrand
"Lord, You are **our Song!**"

Church Christmas Decorating

Friday **December 1 at 9 am.** Share the joy with **Christmas decor.** Our Altar Guild **welcomes all help.** (P.S. No other Guild meeting in December.)

"God born our Brother, let us serve as **You serve us!**"

Pastor Bob Serving

Seasonal Bob Smith (and Alice!) serves among us **now through May 1**. Learn more about the Smiths at their personal website: Keepmeandkeepall.com.

Pastor Bob is busy helping us to: 1) **welcome** our worship guests, 2) **follow up** on guests, and 3) dialog with those who have not yet returned to worship about how we can best **share Jesus' gifts**. He's bringing along others in his tasks. Can Pastor Bob show you how **you might help** with any of these or other loving works?

Since 2018 we've hired an additional winter church worker through our **Winter Worker Fund**. Will Concordia donors continue to give to that **Dedicated Fund**? Thank you!

"Jesus, let Your Word among us draw many to Your forgiveness, Your Feast of life! Give **joy to Pastor Bob** in his service to You."



3 photos - November's **Craft Festival**

Thankfulness

*Enter His gates with **thanksgiving** and His courts with praise; **give thanks** to Him and **praise** His name .*

Psalm 100:4

Upon our arrival and settlement at Concordia, Alice and I have much for which to be thankful. **Your prayers**, plans, and preparations have been greatly appreciated. We understand Pastor Stephen and others have contributed to make this a smooth transition.

We are **counting our blessings**. We will run out of time before we exhaust the list. Someone once said "Giving thanks is like swimming in the ocean. There is no end."

Giving thanks is intentional. Saying thank you is easy. We teach our children and grandchildren to say "Thank you." When a person says thank you, it communicates two things. It **first** says: "I know you are there." And the **second** thing thank you says is: "I know goodness comes from you."

Think what your heart is saying when you turn to God and say, "Thank You." Your heart is saying: "I know You are **there**. I know **goodness** comes from You."

God has always been there. He is here **now** and He will be there in the **future** for each one of us. "Thank You, Lord."

"**Thanks-living**" is an all-inclusive style of living with an attitude of giving thanks. Our attitudes, values, hopes, dreams, and commitments - all of these, focus back to our relationship with Jesus. We can stand tall in our thankfulness to God for we are His children and He is our Father. Yielding our life to the baby born in Bethlehem is positive. He grew up and won the victory we needed. Thanks-living is truly understanding that we are significant to Jesus Christ.

We are humbly thankful for His blessings and our relationship with the **Concordia family**.

In your prayers what can you **thank God** for today?

Pastor Bob and Alice Smith

Concordia's Winter Hospitality Pastor



Bethlehem Breakfast

All Concordia **women and men** (yes, this year the guys too!)

Bring a friend! **Saturday December 2, 10 a.m.** at our Willer Fellowship Hall. Together enjoy the friendship with breakfast. Also "A **Bunch of Gifts**" in music and devotion. Please bring a "gift" of small snack packs for Concordia's homebound Christmas Baskets. Look for the sign-up sheet in the church's entryway. Or phone the church office (941-365-0844) a.s.a.p. For more info call Carol Hill at 440-539-4058.

"Lord, ready us all for Your **Christmas gift!**"

Gifts to the Giver of All

Offering envelopes for your 2024 tithes and gifts will be available for pick up in **the church entryway after Thanksgiving**. If you have not yet been offered envelopes please speak to our Financial Secretary Wayne Ulbrich or Parish Secretary Lei Ann (365-0844).

May all our giving in this new year be planned, proportionate, first-fruits (He's worthy of more than "leftovers"), joyfully given as **worship to the Lord!** Thanks for your generosity!

Did you know? You greatly **help our offering counters** when you use your offering envelopes. Then they need not look up your

"number" with each gift, and your year-end statement is correctly tabulated. Thanks!

"Lord, receive our tithes and offerings as the **sacrificial worship** of hearts grateful for You! Move us to give to Your mission first, deliberately, as You have given to us!"

Altar Flowers Changes

Poinsettia plants for the Christmas holiday will replace the fresh flowers from **December 1** through **December 30**. Any fresh flower requests received during that time period will be postponed until January 2024.

Thank you to all who have supported the Altar Guild with their donations for the **beautiful fresh flowers** that adorn our altar each week!

"Heavenly Father, let these flowers show us the joy, goodness and the **beauty of You**, their Creator. Let us gladly grasp Your gifts and find delight in serving You at Your altar."



The Altar Guild welcomes your orders for **POINSETTIA PLANTS**.

These adorn the Newborn's sanctuary. Show Christmas joy!

Take home your plant any time after Christmas Morn worship.

Interested? Please complete this form.

Write your check payable to "Concordia Lutheran Church".

Place both into any envelope you label "poinsettias."

Drop that in the offering plate. Thank you!

Donors will be listed in your February **Courier** newsletter.

_____ 14-inch plants \$36.00

_____ 6-inch plants \$7.00

_____ 8-inch plants \$14.00 (Red)

_____ 8-inch plants \$18.00 (White)

Name: _____

For: _____

Specify: ___ in memory of, ___ in honor of, or ___ for blessings received.

"Little Lord Jesus, give to us Your Christmas joy!"



Congregation Meeting

Concordia's voters meet briefly on **December 2**, 5:15 p.m., after Saturday eve worship and **December 3**, 10 a.m., between Sunday morn's services.

We will **elect council leaders** (where 1st or maximum 2nd terms have ended, at least) for Concordia's vice-president, treasurer, chairs of worship, outreach, service and fellowship ministries. Let's gratefully continue the good work of those who have served!

The assembly will set our **2024 budget**. We will hear an update on the Concordia **75th Anniversary Renovations** Fund, agreed in 2021, to refurbish a welcome center and construct a handicap-friendly restroom.

Our Constitution requires that our **Council Nominations Task Force** be comprised of a majority who are not currently council members. Could you prayerfully help us **find new leaders**? Or would you like to nominate someone to council (even yourself)? Please speak **a.s.a.p.** to our congregation's Vice President Phyllis Kirtley (941-266-8662).

"Lead us, Lord Jesus. Always **give us leaders** who seek Your heart!"

Homebound Christmas Cards

Beginning **Sunday, December 3** please find on the church entryway's table the paper slips giving **names and addresses** of our homebound members and friends. You'll also see a **selection of cards** with envelopes for your use. For countless years, Concordia has sent Christmas greetings to those who are unable to come to worship. Every year recipients have voiced their appreciation through the church office or their visiting elders. Let our homebound know they are a treasured part of Concordia's family. Please enjoy this ministry!

"As we send out these cards, let us be part of **Your care** for Your sisters and brothers, Jesus!"

Advent Wednesdays

Concordia's November Newsletter is **wrong** about the first **Advent Wednesday** date. Our **Dinners and Devotions** gather on Wednesdays (not November 29) **December 6, 13 and 20**. Concordia prepares for the Christ's coming.

Three delicious, simple **suppers**, at **5:30 p.m.** Then a **half-hour's worship**, at **6:30 p.m.** Advent means "He comes!" **Bring your friends.**

"**Come, Jesus.** Renew our faith, love!"



God Born Our Brother!

For you, wonder and beauty: **Jesus is coming!**

Every Saturday Worship with Communion -

In the church's side chapel, **4:30 p.m.**

Every Sunday Worship with Communion -

Contemporary Service at **9 a.m.**

Bible Study groups for all ages at 10 a.m.

Traditional Service at **11 a.m.**

Advent Wednesdays -

Dinners and Devotions on Wednesdays

December 6, 13, and 20.

Delicious simple **suppers** at **5:30 p.m.**

A **half-hour's worship** at **6:30 p.m.**

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service -

Sunday, December 24, 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion -

Sunday, December 24 at 11:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Holy Communion Service -

Monday, December 25 at 10:00 a.m.

Altar Guild Annual Luncheon

Our **Pre-Christmas luncheon** will be held on **Friday December 8**, noon at **Sarasota Yacht Club** (1100 John Ringling Blvd.). All the Altar Guild's active, associate and honorary members and their spouses are invited. Questions? Call Junne Ulbrich at 815-955-6215.

Good News-letter

Our **January 2024** Concordia Courier seeks articles, due Tuesday **December 12**. Can you **help the crew fold** the news for mailing? Do tell Parish Secretary Lei Ann (941-365-0844).

Thank you to November's Courier folders: Gloria Bruggeman, Joyanne Fathauer and Loraine Tafel. Gloria Bruggeman took **260 newsletters** to the postal center. Another **180 homes** prefer their Courier by email.

Thanks also to Don and Sandy Zaloudek for folding **weekend worship bulletins**.

A New Beginning Preschoolers will bless our Wednesday **December 13** worship. Photo 2022.

Bell Ringers

You've always wanted to **learn to ring** the bells!? We need you! Johnora Hildebrand, our musical director (941-922-3142), invites all interested to the choir room on **Thursdays, December 14 and 21, 7 to 8 p.m.** We're preparing for Christmas' worship celebrations!

"Lord, Your coming makes our hearts **ring with joy!**"

Homebound Christmas Love

Let's assemble **goodies and gift baskets** on **Saturday, December 16 at 9:30 a.m.**, for delivery to our homebound members and friends. Would you like to help with this gift-giving? Come to our Willer Fellowship Hall, 9:30 a.m.

We will place the baskets on a table **in the narthex for delivery** when finished. Each will have a name and address attached, with a telephone number if the homes need to be contacted before delivering. What a delight always to bring joy to these fellow believers who are regularly not able to worship with us. If you have not delivered a basket in the past, you will find this an excellent way to spread the joy of Jesus' birth. He'll bring joy also into your life.

"You are the Gift, Jesus. **Your love give!**"

Holly Daze

Our **church office closes** December 25 and 26 celebrating **Jesus' birth**; and January 1 and January 2 launching the **New Year**.

Lei Ann regularly serves Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. **Pastor Stephen** often reserves Mondays for his day of rest.

End of Year Contributions

Please note that all 2023 donations must be received in the church office, by Financial Secretary Wayne Ulbrich or postmarked no later than Sunday **December 31** to receive a tax deduction towards your 2023 tax return.

"**Thanks to You, Jesus, for all who have generously engaged** Your work at Concordia!"

2024 Wall Calendars

...of many varieties, **free for you** and yours. See the narthex's sign-up table. Thanks, donors.

Calendar not needed if **the Lord returns** before 2024!

Keep Calm and Rummage On!

2024 rummage **sale dates: Friday and Saturday February 2 and 3.**

Set up days: Sunday, January 28 between the services thru Thursday, February 1

Rummage drop off accepted **only after November 26.** Thanks!

"Anxious for Nothing" Sundays

Do you feel weighed down with worry? Does the **uncertainty and chaos** of life keep you up at night? Are irrational fears your constant companion? Could you use some calm?

If so, God has a wonderful promise (Philippians 4:4-6): "Do not be anxious about anything, but...present your requests to God. And **the peace of God**...will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

You are invited to explore God's promise on **Sundays January 7 through February 11 at 10 a.m.** With coffee, juice, and pastry, gather at Concordia's Willer Fellowship Hall. Pastor Gary Hill will lead the conversation along with a video by Christian author Max Lucado.

"Jesus, lift our anxieties by **Your promise!**"

We're Making a Baby (Church)

You are personally invited to attend our Sarasota Circuit's **Missional Convocation** on Monday **January 22** here at **Concordia**, 9 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.

The focus? Led by the Holy Spirit, our region's **10 sister congregations** pray to discover **the next church** the Lord will plant in our circuit.

Conceived by the District **77 years** ago, our Concordia is this area's eldest Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregation. The youngest? Trinity of SW FL (Port Charlotte) was born only **8 years** ago.

The Florida-Georgia District still hears **Jesus calling** us to "be Christ's witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

With the District we've invested in plans now to plant 10 new churches across our District. Please pray for **North Port, Babcock Ranch, Lakewood Ranch**, for all the people underserved by the LCMS.

You, as a **Christ-centered** and **Spirit-led** child of God can lead the way in planting Jesus' Good News in our communities. Make plans today to attend on January 22 by **your RSVP** to Pastordavid@lakesidelutheran.net (that's Pastor Dahlke in Venice). Or tell Pastor Stephen.

"O Spirit of the Living God, **You raise Your people** from death to life. Grant us eyes to see the spiritually dead and dying people around us in **Sarasota and Port Charlotte**. Move within our congregations to recognize ways that our circuit can reach out to the lost.

"Prepare individuals from around our circuit to answer the call and set aside January 22 as a day for prayerful consideration to a **new mission start**. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer."

Dennis Jesse, Cathy White, Justin White



A Note from the President

Greetings and Merry Christmas. For most of us, the year has flown by. I cannot believe we are in the month of December and getting ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus. There are many activities happening around the Church during advent season. Please try to take advantage of the events that are scheduled. Hopefully, we will have the time to relax and reflect on what is important in all our lives.

Our Seminarian Euder Paul will be joining us from December 16th through January 1st. We look forward to his visit during this important Advent season. Please make time to greet him and feel free to ask questions.

I attended my first ever Craft Fair in November. What a great turn out of people and most of all, the hard work put in by the women of the Church. Great time had by all.

Thanks to all of you for attending the dedication of the "Bob White Welcome Center" in November. I know Cathy really appreciated the whole day. Now that everything in the Narthex is complete, let's use the Bob White Welcome Center and the gifts it will bring. Remember it is okay to hug!!

Please continue to pray for the Church, the Employees, and the Council. I will continue to make myself available for anything that is on your mind. I appreciate your support and may God Bless you this Christmas Season.

Dennis Jesse

Mobile: 614-286-0101

Email: djesse@jessemarketing.com





Welcome Center Dedication



December Birthdays

01	Shirley Mead
04	Gabriela Miranda - 4th
07	Zach McMullen
11	Andrew Kenney
12	Audrey Hart
13	Dale Leinberger
14	Joy Wega
15	Rev. Jerry Lawson Kamela Schmidt - 6th Sandy Zaloudek
16	Dale Riedler Ila Jean Wright
17	Trudi Evans
18	Holly Johnson Myers Parrish Nevin Riedler
22	Lorraine Brinker-Clark Tracie Malone
23	Aleksander Lawson
25	Carol Hill Gregg Lewis
26	Dave Meadows Frederick Wurlitzer
28	Cory Biladeau Nancy Frayer
30	Helen Schmidt

December Anniversaries

09	Guoxiang Zhu & "Nancy" Shi - 36th
16	Kenneth & DeAnna Whitlow - 28th
18	Gary and Sara Thomas - 36th
22	Dick & Marilyn Reese - 69th
28	Leon and Nancy Frayer - 60th

Concordia Celebrates You

Are we missing your birthday or anniversary dates? Please pardon us. And let us know (941-365-0844) when we miss dates. Let us **share the celebration!**

With Thanks and Gratitude

To All the People of Concordia,
Thank you to all the people of Concordia whom have supported Marilyn and I all these years. The prayers you all have dedicated to our well being and your support have truly helped us in our lives as a Christian family.
Sincerely, Ron Billingsley

Refugees Say Thank You

A big thank you to Concordia members for their gracious response to the need for household items and furniture for the refugees.
Gary Thomas

Memorials Received

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Matthew 5:4

In memory of Sandy Harants, from Chuck Resh and Jaclyn Resh; and from Jan Schnarr.

In memory of Jim Kaluk, from Bonnie Kaluk.

In memory of Clayton Schnarr, from Barbara Briggs for the Sanctuary Bathroom Renovation Fund; from Nicholas and Lucy Colonese for the Sanctuary Bathroom Renovation Fund; from Ken and Diane Horn for the Sanctuary Bathroom Renovation Fund; from Tracie Malone for the Sanctuary Bathroom Renovation Fund; from Paul and Dawn Mowery for the Sanctuary Bathroom Renovation Fund; from Chuck Resh and Jaclyn Resh for the Sanctuary Bathroom Renovation Fund; from Jim Thomas for the Sanctuary Bathroom Renovation Fund; and from Robert Wenzel CPA for the Sanctuary Bathroom Renovation Fund.

In memory of Donna Shaulis, from Chuck Resh and Jaclyn Resh.

In memory of Pete Theisen, from Gloria Bruggeman for the Education Fund; and from Chuck Resh and Jaclyn Resh.

"Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" Rev. 19:9



photo:
Rosie and Vivian,
Concordia
Family Night
friends

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26 Last Sunday of the Church Year 9 a.m. Worship with praise band, Holy Communion 10 a.m. All-Ages Bible Study 11 a.m. Worship with organ, hymnal, Holy Communion	27 Church office closed ***7 p.m. Al-Anon Mtg.	28 Church office closed	29 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***7:30 p.m. AA Meeting	30 10:30 a.m. Women's Bible G.i.F.t.S. at our Willer Fellowship Hall 10:30 a.m. Men's Group at Willer Hall Library room	1 9 a.m. Decorate the Sanctuary/Willer Hall for Christmas	2 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 10 a.m. Bethlehem Breakfast 4:30 p.m. Chapel Worship with Holy Communion 5:15 p.m. Annual Voter's Meeting
3 Advent 1 9 a.m. Worship with praise band, Holy Communion 10 a.m. All-Ages Bible Study 10 a.m. Annual Voter's Meeting 11 a.m. Worship with organ, hymnal, Holy Communion	4 ***	5	6 5:30 p.m. Advent Dinner 6:30 p.m. Advent Worship 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***	7 10:30 a.m. Women's Bible G.i.F.t.S. at our Willer Fellowship Hall 10:30 a.m. Men's Group at Willer Hall Library room	8 12:00 p.m. Altar Guild Christmas Luncheon Sarasota Yacht Club (1100 John Ringling Blvd., Sarasota)	9 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Chapel Worship with Holy Communion, Pastor Gary Hill - Guest Pastor
10 Advent 2 9 a.m. Worship with praise band, Holy Communion, Pastor Gary Hill - Guest Pastor 10 a.m. All-Ages Bible Study 11 a.m. Worship with organ, hymnal, Holy Communion, Pastor Gary Hill - Guest Pastor	11 ***	12 January Newsletter Deadline	13 5:30 p.m. Advent Dinner with A New Beginnings Preschool 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***	14 10:30 a.m. Women's Bible G.i.F.t.S. at our Willer Fellowship Hall 10:30 a.m. Men's Group at Willer Hall Library room 7 p.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal	15	16 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 9:30 a.m. Homebound Gift Baskets assembled at Willer Hall 4:30 p.m. Chapel Worship with Holy Communion
17 Advent 3 9 a.m. Worship with praise band, Holy Communion 10 a.m. All-Ages Bible Study 11 a.m. Worship with organ, hymnal, Holy Communion	18 ***	19	20 5:30 p.m. Advent Dinner 6:30 p.m. Advent Worship 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***	21 10:30 a.m. Women's Bible G.i.F.t.S. at Willer Hall 10:30 a.m. Men's Group 7 p.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal	22	23 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Chapel Worship with Holy Communion
24 Advent 4 (morn) 9 a.m. Worship with praise band, Holy Communion 10 a.m. All-Ages Bible Study 11 a.m. Worship with organ, hymnal, Holy Communion Christmas Eve - Nativity of Our Lord 7 p.m. Candlelight Christmas Worship 11 p.m. Candlelight Christmas Worship with Holy Communion	25 Christmas Day Church office closed 10 a.m. Christmas Day Worship with Holy Communion ***7 p.m. Al-Anon Mtg.	26 Church office closed	27 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***	28 10:30 a.m. Women's Bible G.i.F.t.S. at our Willer Fellowship Hall 10:30 a.m. Men's Group at Willer Hall Library room	29	30 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Chapel Worship with Holy Communion, Seminarian Euder Paul - Guest Proclaimer
31 Christmas 1 - New Year's Eve 9 a.m. Worship with praise band, Holy Communion, Seminarian Euder Paul 10 a.m. All-Ages Bible Study 11 a.m. Worship with organ, hymnal, Holy Communion, Seminarian Euder Paul - Guest Proclaimer	1 New Year's Day Church office closed	2 Church office closed 2 p.m. Elders meeting	3 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***	4 10:30 a.m. Women's Bible G.i.F.t.S. at our Willer Fellowship Hall 10:30 a.m. Men's Group at Willer Hall Library room	5	6 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Chapel Worship with Holy Communion

December

***Concordia's Willer Fellowship Hall and (sometimes) the narthex of the church are used every Monday, Wednesday and quarterly Saturdays by 12-step groups.

Concordia Council Minutes - Tuesday, October 17

Members in attendance: President-Dennis Jesse, Vice President-Phyllis Kirtley, Secretary-Ruth Bogenberger, Treasurer-Tom Mann, Financial Secretary-Wayne Ulbrich, Outreach-Dawn Mowery, Service-Margo Arehart, Education-Julie Smith, Properties-Dave Meadows, and Pastor Stephen Gaulke.

Members not present: Worship-Alice Williams

Guests present: None

Constitutional quorum in person

The meeting was called to order by Phyllis Kirtley at 6:00 P.M.

Opening Devotion: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 was read and discussed.

Leadership Report: Pastor Stephen reminded the Council that Concordia's Foundation offered to match donations to Seminarian Euder Paul's expenses up to \$4,000.

Pastor Stephen reminded the Council that a financial review still needs to be completed.

Pastor Stephen told the Council that hospitality Pastor Bob Smith would begin his service in two weeks.

Pastor Stephen mentioned the fact that there are several prospects in the congregation of an age to begin Catechism training.

Pastor Stephen told the Council that it is time to nominate a church member for the Good Samaritan award from Lutheran Services of Florida.

Dennis Jesse suggested listing the theater organ for sale on social media. Phyllis made a motion which was seconded by Tom Mann. The motion passed unanimously.

President's Report: Dennis Jesse reminded the Council that the Bob White welcome center will be dedicated on November 12th between worship services.

Dennis stated that Octoberfest was a good event.

Dennis reminded Council members to submit their employee evaluations to him. He further stated that the revised employee handbook will be presented to Council members for approval at the November meeting.

Vice President's Report: Phyllis Kirtley had nothing to report.

Secretary's Report: Ruth Bogenberger was absent from the September meeting and minutes were not taken.

Properties Report: Dave Meadows said the fence separating the playground from the parsonage will be installed by month end.

Dave further stated that the trimming of all trees is under contract.

Dave said that the preschool is renting one less classroom resulting in the loss of \$750 of income each month.

Dave suggested that we add a Workman's Compensation clause to our insurance at a cost of \$700 per year. The Council unanimously approved this addition on a motion made by Dennis Jesse and seconded by Tom Mann.

Dave said that the ADA bathroom should be completed by November 12th.

Margo Arehart said that she found someone to repair the stage curtain. The work should be completed before Fall Fest.

Dennis Jesse added that he is getting quotes for roll down window coverings to mitigate wind damage to the property.

Financial Secretary's Report: Wayne Ulbrich had nothing to report.

Treasurer's Report: Tom Mann said that he wants to review more financial history to better understand how we are doing year to date.

Tom asked board leaders to send him their budget estimates for next year.

Education Report: Julie Smith said that family nights will be resumed in mid to late November.

Outreach Report: Dawn Mowery said that the annual rummage sale has been scheduled for February 2nd and 3rd, 2024.

Dawn informed the Council that there is enough interest in the Bread Breakers dinners to host two dinners per month. Carol Hill is overseeing some of these meals.

Dawn announced that a firepit gathering will be held on December 9th. (Editor's note: The firepit event now has been rescheduled to January.) Music and lights will be included as well as the possibility of an interactive nativity.

Service Report: Margo Arehart volunteered to check the linens in the parsonage.

Margo shared that the Lutheran Women's

Missionary League will hold a rally on Saturday at Beautiful Savior.

Margo said that we are looking for suggestions for a charity to support this Christmas.

Margo further said that Carol Hill wants to host a Christmas breakfast.

Fellowship Report: Barbara Briggs mentioned that a couple funeral luncheons were held.

Old Business: None

New Business: Dave Meadows mentioned that A New Beginning preschool's lease agreement expires in January. He asked the Council to consider whether or not the current rental amount is reflective of market conditions. A discussion was deferred to the November meeting.

With no further business to discuss, Phyllis Kirtley made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Margo Arehart and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 P.M. with the praying of the Lord's Prayer in unison.

The Next Council meeting is scheduled for **November 15, 2023**, at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ruth

Bogenberger,

Council

Secretary



2 photos:
November
16's **Family
Night** -
dinner, Bible
story, music
and craft

Bread Breakers Dinners

Friends new to your church family with others who have worshiped here for years gathered on a recent Tuesday evening for **great food and conversation.**

Would you like to **help** with Concordia's next social event? Know someone you would like to **bring**? Are you **new** to Concordia and would like to get to know others in a small group gathering. Or, do you have other **ideas** to **share Jesus' welcome**? Please contact Dawn Mowery, Outreach Chair, with questions or suggestions, 678-230-0208.

"Friend of sinners, Lord of forgiveness, by Your love draw us all to Your **feast!**"

Little Library for Neighbors

Concordia's new little library already offers **beneficial books** to our neighbors. Have you seen it, like a large mailbox? Look beside the north driveway our big parking lot, near **Payne Park** and the **Legacy Trail.**

Do you have a **good book** you would like to offer? Please bring it to the church office, weekdays between 8 AM and 4:30 PM. Or deliver your gift book to any of Concordia's leaders after worship. We will usher your book to the church office. Thanks for your **help and prayers!**

P.S. Do you know also about **Concordia's big library**? That's behind the single red door at the north end of your Willer Fellowship Hall. Find **hundreds** of great books, many of them faith-based. For **adults and children, free** reading. If you find the library door locked, please stop by the church office.

"Word of God, You who came to be our flesh and blood Brother, let these books shared lead someone also into the wonders of **Your Book.**"

Free Bread - Help Needed

Did you know? Concordia distributes for **free Panera's day-old bread and pastries.** Visit our Wood Street "circle driveway" Saturdays, 8 to 9 a.m.

Our **bread brigade** welcomes **new helpers.** Might you pick up the baked goodies at the Panera at Ridge Road and Cattlemen Road, **2nd Friday of the month** at 8 p.m.? You could help even once a month. Call the church office at 941-365-0844. Our lead volunteer Sandy Z. can **show you how** you can be a big bread brigade blessing!

"Bread of life, give free to all Your **life-giving love!**"

Snowbirds Warmly Welcomed!

Concordia is blessed with many "snowbird" friends who worship with us several months of the year. Many of you already have joined Concordia's **Associate Membership.** If you have not yet, please do so! Your **primary membership stays "home,"** as you settle in for the season to your Concordia church "here." Speak to Pastor Stephen (365-0844).

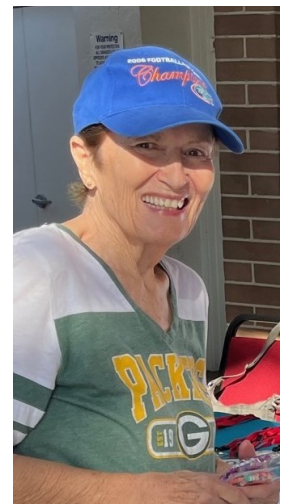
We promise our associate members:

- 1) A faithful ministry of **Jesus' Word and sacrament.**
- 2) **Pastoral care** and spiritual counsel when requested.
- 3) Our heartfelt prayers (and your birthdays, anniversaries, news, in our "Courier" newsletter) and warm **friendship.**
- 4) Our support as you seize every **opportunity to serve** with Jesus, both in the congregation and in the community, as He leads you.
- 5) Stewardship helps to spur your spiritual growth, offering envelopes, and an annual record of your tithes and **gifts to God** given at Concordia (also for the taxman!).

We invite our associate members to participate fully in **all the blessings** of Concordia's membership!

So, what's the difference between associate and **full members**? Only that you can not exercise the formal vote at the congregational meetings of both Concordia and your home church. And, you probably don't get to enjoy the Florida summertime sun as much as the rest of us! Help Concordia to serve you, and to serve Jesus with you, as best as we can!

"**Thank You,** Lord, for Your snowbirds! Bless also their home churches, our faithful sisters."



Packer Fan
Barbara
welcomes all
teams' fans.

ConcordiaSarasota.org

Have you visited **our website**? You'll find an easy link there to our **Facebook** page. "Like" us and share the link. You'll also see our **YouTube** page, filled with **our worship**, songs, sermons and Bible studies. The website also offers the latest **Courier newsletter** and those of the previous year. Guests often first "**visit**" **Concordia** by seeing ConcordiaSarasota.org. How can you **help us** improve?

"Jesus, lead people to You! You delight to **serve all people**, in worship giving to us Your Good News and Feast. Help us **welcome** those You love!"

Foundation News

Concordia's Foundation **board members** met November 9: Barbara Briggs (term through 2024), Phyllis Kirtley (2025), Gary Thomas (2026), and Thomas Mann (2027).

Funds held by the Foundation totaled \$182,956 through June (see the report here). Thanks to **you donors!**

Board members were delighted they needed turn down no requests from our **college students. \$1,000 gifts** (not tuition, but for books, expenses) were granted to Zoe Ahl (SCF-1st), Eli Basinger (USF-1st), Luke Basinger (USF-2nd), Rachel Gaulke (FGCU- 3rd), Noah Lutsch (USF-2nd), Ethan Schaeffer (FSU-4th), and Thomas Stochl (UF-1st).

The Foundation's \$4,000 matching grant to **Concordia Seminary** for our Seminarian Euder Paul's campus costs has gathered **\$2,400** to date. Because **Seminarian Paul** cannot travel to his wife Judelande in troubled Haiti, and he has not been able to visit us since he left for the seminary (spring 2021), our board decided to bring him to Sarasota to work among us on his **Christmas break** (perhaps **\$500**).

Another **\$500** Foundation grant purchased a furniture-moving trailer used week after week by **Concordia's volunteers** with our **Refugee Resettlement** (Lutheran Services Florida) ministry.

Many of Concordia's members continue to **advance this partnership**, helping others in Jesus' name. Please continue to support the Concordia Foundation with "over and above" special gifts. Can you make a one-time donation? On-going support answers continuing needs. Have you written the congregation, or Foundation, into **your will**? Thanks!

"Jesus, use our gifts for Your glory! Spirit, move us to manage **all that God gives** to us, so that the Father's children grow and Jesus' kingdom shines!"

INCOME STATEMENT	2021	2022	6/30/2023
Interest - Checking	16.37	278.27	282.90
Interest LCEF 163020253	1,784.73	1,811.65	908.50
Interest LCEF 2810	792.26	690.34	231.45
Donations Concordia	3,422.00	11,560.00	4,115.00
Bette Schoenherr Fund Income	2,723.04	2,169.85	1,443.76
TOTAL INCOME	8,738.40	16,510.11	6,981.61
State of FL Registration	61.25	61.25	61.25
Gifts College Students	5,250.00	6,250.00	0.00
Gifts Preschool Students	0.00	0.00	
Other Gifts	0.00	0.00	500.00
Concordia Painting Contribution	0.00	0.00	
Concordia 75th Anniv. Contribution	3,500.00	0.00	
Concordia Missionary Fund	1,000.00	0.00	
Office Supplies	-	0.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES	9,811.25	6,311.25	561.25
Net Income	(1,072.85)	10,198.86	6,420.36
BALANCE SHEET	12/31/2021	12/31/22	6/30/23
LCEF Checking Account	5,439.97	12,920.64	17,396.23
LCEF Certificate 163020253	120,099.72	121,911.37	122,819.87
LCEF Certificate 2810	40,792.26	41,717.86	42,184.63
A/R Concordia Lutheran Church	1,322.00	2,000.00	555.00
A/R Schoenherr Endowment	697.06	-	
TOTAL ASSETS	168,351.01	178,549.87	182,955.73
Retained Earnings	169,423.86	168,351.01	176,535.37
Current Earnings	(1,072.85)	10,198.86	6,420.36
TOTAL LIABILITIES + EQUITY	168,351.01	178,549.87	182,955.73

An Education Fund

The **Bette Schoenherr Fund** was established by our beloved former member with the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (our national church body's financial manager). The capital invested there pays to Concordia the annual interest. All these funds assist with tuition or payments for **Christian education**, as Mrs. Schoenherr directed.

Maximize the Moments

Our legacy becomes increasingly important as we age. Although some older adults spend days deciding who will get the family china, others turn in a different direction. They focus on the impact of their **legacy**.

That makes sense. After all, there are more days behind us than ahead. **Time is precious.**

Take these **four steps** to maximize the moments:

Prioritize. What matters the most to you?

To transmit Christian virtues to the next generation, prioritize praying for your grandchildren (or the other youngsters God has placed in your life) by name every day. To ease the transition of your volunteering to a new leader, write a leader's manual. To comfort friends who are grieving, sign-up for an e-card service or buy a box of stationery. Invest in **what's important**.

Remember the why. Connect the goal to the meaning.

Remind yourself why your legacy matters. This mental process increases the "stickiness." We **stay motivated** when we reflect on the reason we pray daily for that teenage neighbor or plug away at downsizing. Focus on the core purpose to prevent a wandering mind.

Be realistic. Approach goals in a way that makes sense.

As we move through the **"Go go, Slow go and No go" seasons** of aging, it becomes harder to meet long term goals. We need more frequent "wins" to keep us engaged. Be realistic by building micro-habits.

Breaking big plans into more **do-able segments** makes it quicker to meet goals. We stay motivated when the starting point and finish line are close together.

Serve. Our legacy will be reflected in those we help.

Although it's tempting to feel "been there, done that" when asked to serve, we bring years of experience. We aren't competing anymore; we can celebrate the power of collaboration. We know how to mentor. The legacy of others is now reflected in our own lives. Our influence is magnified when we serve.

Mary Manz Simon, **ALOA** Board of Directors

You'll find resources for many aspects of ministry to those in the second half of life in the resource section of ALOA's website: aloaserves.org. **Adult Lutherans Organized for Action** is a nationwide resource to the church that strengthens ministry by and for adults in the second half of life. ALOA offers events for individuals and provides resources to encourage adult ministry in Lutheran congregations.



Christian Stewardship Is...

"Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of **the child of God** and God's family, the church, in **managing all** of life and life's resources **for God's purposes.**"

The above definition of Christian Stewardship has been used in our church for a few decades. It contains **only 29 words**, but what a mouthful when you consider the application of the various parts of this definition.

"Free and joyous." Many people do not think of stewardship as being free and joyous but it really can be when we have the calm assurance that our God richly provides all that we need for the support and wants of our body and life.

"Child of God." What a beautiful title for God's people! The opening verses of 1 John 3 speak of the lavish love of God resulting in making us His very own children. What great good news and what a powerful reminder of the proper motivation for our stewardship activity – love to our God who first loved us.

"God's family, the church." This phrase reminds us that our stewardship is not a solo performance but is done within the Christian community to honor God and benefit others.

"In managing all of life and life's resources." Part of our stewardship struggle is that we think we "own" all those things that surround us when, in truth, we are managers. Another part of our struggle is that we may think that Stewardship is just about money, time and talents. Christian stewardship is about those things and more; Christian stewardship involves our whole life--everything that God has entrusted to us to manage as faithful stewards.

"For His purposes." Maturing stewards do the right things for the right reasons. All we do as Christian stewards is to be done to the glory of God and for the welfare of others as well as ourselves. Who said stewardship was easy? If it were, everyone would be doing it!

The Concordia Courier

Concordia Lutheran Church Mission Statement

The mission of Concordia is to **share Jesus' harmony** ("concordia") with the **heart of Sarasota**. Jesus comes to us in worship, giving to us His Good News for sharing, and His love for caring!

Jesus comes to us
 in **worship** (Jesus is our harmony!),
 giving to us **His Good News** (His Word for us, education)
 for **sharing** (His Word for all, outreach),
 and **His love** (His deeds among us, fellowship)
 for **caring** (His deeds for others, service).



Editor's Notes...



The deadline to submit articles for the **January 2024** issue of "*The Courier*" is **December 12**. You may mail information to the church office or e-mail "concordia5@juno.com". Please mark "*For The Courier*" on your news, along with your name. Thanks for your cooperation!

"*The Courier*" is published every month, with one June/July ISSUE. The purpose is to share with the members of Concordia Lutheran Church, friends and the community Jesus' work among us. He brings harmony to the heart of Sarasota! We welcome your suggestions and contributions.

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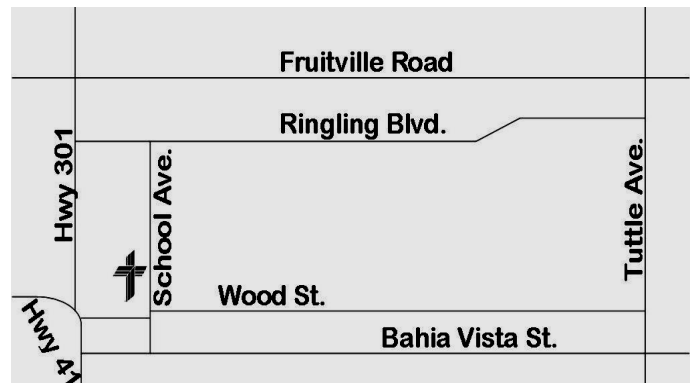
Concordia Lutheran Church

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President..... Dennis Jesse614-286-0101
 Vice-President Phyllis Kirtley941-921-9150
 Treasurer Thomas Mann660-379-7630
 Secretary Ruth Bogenberger....941-412-4466
 Financial Secretary ... Wayne Ulbrich.....815-600-4815

2023 Board Chairpersons

Worship Alice Williams941-957-1090
 Education..... Julie Smith813-361-7325
 Outreach..... Dawn Mowery678-230-0208
 Fellowship..... Barbara Briggs941-955-1148
 Service..... Margo Arehart419-810-0853
 Properties Dave Meadows941-685-6711



The Concordia Courier
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The Concordia Courier

December 2023

Worship Schedule

Worship Services

Saturday Chapel Worship 4:30 pm
Sunday Contemporary Worship 9 am
Sunday School and Bible Study 10 am
Sunday Traditional Worship 11 am

Holy Communion

The Lord's Supper is celebrated at every weekend's worship service. Jesus promises, "This bread is My body. Drink, this wine is My blood for your forgiveness." In worship Jesus serves!

Concordia:
"Jesus' Harmony for the Heart of Sarasota"

Church Staff

Rev. Stephen Gaulke, M.Div., S.T.M.....Pastor
Rev. Bob Smith, M.Div. Seasonal Hospitality
Lei Ann Ahl Parish Secretary/Bookkeeper
Johnora L. Hildebrand . Music Director/Organist
Dawn Brown Praise Band Leader/Pianist



Concordia Lutheran Church, LC-MS

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Usual Office Hours:
M-F, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

