

# The Concordia Courier

A Publication Of Concordia Lutheran Church

† JESUS' HARMONY FOR THE HEART OF SARASOTA † January 2024

## What Is Your Christian Duty?

**Table of Duties** – Certain passages of Scripture for various holy orders and positions, admonishing them about their duties and responsibilities. (This month our catechism directs us to Bible truths about our **church** relationships. In the next months we hear about our duties in the **state**, then **family**, then **workplace**.)

### To Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers

The overseer must be **above reproach**, the husband of but one wife, **temperate, self controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach**, not given to drunkenness, not violent but **gentle**, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage **his own family well** and see that his children obey him with proper respect. 1 Timothy 3:2-4

He must **not be a recent convert**, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. 1 Timothy 3:6

He must **hold firmly to the trustworthy message** as it has been taught, so that he can **encourage others** by sound doctrine and **refute those who oppose** it. Titus 1:9

### What the Hearers Owe Their Pastors

The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should **receive their living** from the gospel. 1 Corinthians 9:14

Anyone who receives instruction in the Word must **share all good things** with his instructor. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Galatians 6:6-7

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are **worthy of double honor**, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." 1 Timothy 5:17-18

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the **highest regard in love** because of their work. **Live in peace** with each other. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

**Obey your leaders** and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that **their work will be a joy**, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. Hebrews 13:17

(to be continued...)

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 Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis ©1992.



**Seminarian Paul Preaches Dec. 30/31**

## 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.**

**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.

## 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.

## Worship's Scripture

**Jan. 6, 7 - Baptism of Our Lord**

Genesis 1:1-5

Romans 6:1-11

Mark 1:4-11

**Jan. 13, 14 - Epiphany 2**

1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20)

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

John 1:43-51

**Jan. 20, 21 - Epiphany 3**

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

1 Corinthians 7:29-31 (32-35)

Mark 1:14-20

**Jan. 27, 28 - Epiphany 4**

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Mark 1:21-28

## Gifts to the Giver of All

**Offering envelopes** for your 2024 tithes and gifts will be available for pick up in **the church entryway**. 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!"

## 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!"

## Altar Guild News

On Friday **January 5** at **10 a.m.** all hands please help us **remove the Christmas decorations in the sanctuary.**

Altar Guild gathers in the choir room on the first Thursday of the month, November through May. We will **not** be meeting in January.

If you cannot attend meetings but would like to **help the Guild**, please call Junne Ulbrich at 815-955-6215. You may serve.

"Lord, bless our serving, just as You have **served us!**"

## Altar Flowers Changes

**Poinsettia plants** replaced the fresh flowers in **December**. Donors will be listed in February's Courier newsletter. Please phone the church office if you'd like to dedicate a poinsettia.

December and January's **fresh flower requests** will go to Jesus' altar in January.

**Thank you** to all who have supported the Altar Guild with their donations for the beautiful flowers that adorn the Lord's altar!

"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."



**God's greatest gift to us is Jesus...**

**Himself a Refugee!**

**Gifted by the Magi (Wise Men), hunted by King Herod, the holy family fled to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15).**

**Can Jesus today love refugees?**

**Through your church family, He does!**

See the **Christmas-wrapped gift box** in the church's narthex (entryway). Now through **Epiphany weekend** (January 7), please bring your gifts. **Concordia shares Jesus' harmony**, touching also the hearts of **Sarasota's refugee families**. Our refugees thrive with Lutheran Services of Florida care.

### Items needed -

- 1) **Cleaning supplies** such as all purpose cleaners, dish towels and cloths, mops, brooms and dust pans.
- 2) **Kitchen items** such as paper towels, new and gently used dish/kitchen towels, mugs, glassware, dishes, mixing bowls, knife sets, pots and pans, including large cooking pots.
- 3) **Hygiene items** such as tooth brushes, toothpaste, shampoo and conditioner, toilet paper, soap.
- 4) **Lightbulbs** - 75 watts or less. Please no bulbs for dimmers.
- 5) **Bedding** such as new pillows, new or gently used mattress pads, towels, sheets. Some furniture can be picked up.
- 6) **Gift cards** from Walmart, Dollar Tree, Target, etc. Or, write a **check** to "Concordia," writing also "Refugees" on the memo line and your envelope. At times we must buy bed frames.
- 7) If a **Thrivent member**, have you used your **2023 grants?**

Ask our church office (941-365-0844) for details. **Thank you!**  
**No toys** please... Toys were donated already!

## "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.

## Groups 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.** Gather at **Willer Hall's red double-door** main room.

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

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

## 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!**"

## Good News-letter

Our **February 2024** Concordia Courier seeks articles, due Tuesday **Jan 16.** Can you **help the crew fold** the news for mailing? Do tell Parish Secretary Lei Ann (941-365-0844).

Thank you to December's Courier folders: Gloria Bruggeman, Joyanne Fathauer, Bev Kinton 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.**

## 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."



With Concordia's helpers, A New Beginning ECC (our campus partner) presented their **preschoolers' Christmas pageant.** "Glory to You, manger born!"

## 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 Pastor Dahlke at Pastordavid@lakesidelutheran.net. Or tell Pastor Stephen.

"O Holy Spirit, as we **celebrate the coming** of Jesus the Messiah (God born our human brother!), prepare Your people in our local sister churches for January 22's gathering. **Give Your birth** to a new mission start or church plant. **Give us wisdom** from on high to understand Your will. **Give us courage** to heed Your call. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer."

## Pastor Bob Serving

Seasonal Pastor 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**. Hearty thanks to Concordia's donors who have totally filled that **Dedicated Fund** for 2024!

"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."

## Rummage Sale and You... A Match Made in Heaven!

The Concordia Rummage sale has been blessing **our church family and the community** for over **45 years!!!**

Come to our biggest fellowship, stewardship, service and outreach event of the year all wrapped up in one **rewarding, fun** experience.

If you've been involved before, welcome back. If you have yet to jump in, we **welcome** any time you can give and promise your effort will not be wasted.

**Got an hour or 2?** Here's where **you are needed:**

1. Come to a **sorting session** (starting right after New Year's Day)
2. Help set up **Sunday, January 28 between services**
3. Work the sale on your schedule **8 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day, Friday and Saturday, February 2 and 3**
4. Help tear down and pack up **Saturday, February 3 at 2 p.m.**

**More time to give??**

1. Join other sorting sessions throughout January.
2. Come **Monday, January 29 thru Thursday, February 1 between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.** to unpack and start pricing.
3. Volunteer for a job on **sale days**. We will need cashiers, outside sales and hot dog sales helpers and greeters. Or...what would you like to do????

Be a **Rummage Rocker**. Get on the email/text updates. Talk to Dawn Mowery 678-230-0208 to hear more.

**Donate \* Volunteer \* Shop**



+ + + **Beginning - 2024** + + +

"And I said to the Man who stood at the Gate of the New Year. 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.'" (anonymous)

***Thy Word is a light unto my path.*** This is where to find God's plan for you.

The Swiss theologian, Karl Barth (1868-1968) once said, "You can never have a new beginning, but you can start today to make a new ending.

***We don't fight for victory, we live in victory.***" GRACE AND MERCY have been given to you for 2024.

Progress in the Christian life is not "I'm getting better and better and better..." Progress in the Christian life is, "I'm growing in my realization of just how bad I am and growing in my appreciation of just how much Jesus has done for me."

God wants you to **put your past behind you and propel yourself into the future.**

When a **trapeze artist jumps** to catch the next trapeze bar, he doesn't hold on to one bar while grabbing the next one. This would result with one hand on each bar. It would cause him to hang and be stranded in the middle. Instead, he lets go with both hands and flies through the air to catch the other swinging bar with both hands.

In the same manner we can't jump into the future by clinging to the past. One thing we have learned from moving so many times is to let go of the past. We try to live to the fullest wherever we find ourselves in this world to God's glory.

**JESUS IS YOUR SAFETY NET FOR 2024** – mistakes and failure are not going to ruin you. Jesus will catch you when it is necessary.

On Saturday December 11, 2011 I had the privilege to do a book signing for my new book *Keep Me and Keep All* at a Christian Family book store.

Out of all those sales there was one sale that I purposely did not make that stands out in my mind.

A lady and a high school age boy entered the store. As they passed by, I requested an opportunity to explain the two books I had to sell.

After a few minutes of explanation, she turned to her grandson and asked, "Would you read this book if I bought it for you? He responded with shaking his head and answering "Yes." She decided to purchase 2 books for her two grandsons.

In the continuing conversation I found out she attended Grace Lutheran Church where I was to preach the very next day. I decided to tell her she should wait until tomorrow and I would sell them to her there. This way I could reduce the cost for her and receive more profit from the sale.

Sunday morning, I looked for her before church and after church. I couldn't find her. At this point I asked the pastor, "Where's ... I think her name was Joyce?... I am supposed to sell her two of my books."

His reply shocked me. "Joyce is the one who I announced had died during the night." It was difficult for me to grasp what had just taken place in the last 24 hours!

***She wanted to leave a legacy. She was living her life in the victory of Christ. She wanted to share her faith with her grandsons.*** (I gave the books to the pastor to give to them.)

God gives us all another good lesson here. **Joyce had been thinking ahead, wanting to provide for her grandsons.** Our lives, Joyce's and mine, only crossed once in this lifetime. Yet it was a significant passing that won't be forgotten by those grandsons and me. I am amazed how God used me to bear fruit in that situation and it was His plan for our lives to touch.

Definition of success in 2024: To be the best Christian witness I can possibly be in the time and place where God has put me to His glory.

Don't wait in sharing your Christian worldview and love with someone you are close to or anyone who crosses your path. This is God's plan for you. You might not be here tomorrow to do it.

Who knows? It could be your final year or your final day to live in God's grace on this earth.

My challenge to you is this: **Wholeheartedly ask God about HIS plans, and offer yourself to carry out His purposes. Start today to make a new ending your rest of your life!**

**Happy New Year!**  
**Pastor Bob and Alice Smith**  
Concordia's Winter Hospitality Pastor



## January Birthdays

01	Becky Naughton
02	Missy Powter
04	Andrew Whitlow
05	Ron Billingsley Lana Cruzio - 11th Chery Riedler
06	Barbara Thomas
07	Kira Endriss Joel Schaefer - 15th
12	Chris Basinger Marie Lehman Penny Miller
13	Ray Blackburn
14	Pastor Ted Wuerffel
15	Eric Endriss
17	Sara Thomas
18	Elaine Staudt
19	Stephen Madigan
21	Cathy White
22	Dominic Snapp - 11th
23	Christie Basinger Darrell Cascio Clara Spittler
25	Alice Williams

## January Anniversaries

07	Sem. Euder and Judelande Paul - 2nd
11	Ken and Diane Horn - 55th Lee and Sharon Woerner - 27th
19	Mike and Sue Bell - 33rd

## 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!



Our Foundation's Barbara Briggs presents gift to **UF Freshman Stochl**

## Concordia Foundation Thanks

Dear Concordia Foundation,

**Thank you** so much for the generous gift. I feel extremely blessed and assure you it will go to good use going into the bulk of my college years. I look forward to the new experiences ahead of me.

Sincerely, Thomas Stochl

(See the Foundation report here on page 10.)

## Memorials Received

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

**In memory of Marilyn Billingsley**, from Denny and Alice Williams for the Seminarian Student Fund.

**In memory of Sandy Harants**, from Denny and Alice Williams for the Seminarian Student Fund.

**In memory of Clayton Schnarr**, from Rev. Bob and Julie Stuenkel for the Sanctuary Bathroom Renovation Fund; from Cathy White for the Altar Guild Memorial Fund; and from Denny and Alice Williams for the Seminarian Student Fund.

**In memory of Donna Shaulis**, from Denny and Alice Williams for the Fellowship Fund.

**In memory of Pete Theisen**, from Denny and Alice Williams for the Fellowship Fund.

**"Blessed** are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!"

Rev. 19:9

## Treasurer's Report

Finance year 2023, November

	Actual Nov. 2023	Actual as of 11/30/2023	Budget as of 11/30/2023
Income:	48,735.15	435,552.20	465,373.48
- Expense:	48,295.34	404,849.62	480,208.63
<b>Net Income:</b>	<b>439.81</b>	<b>30,702.58</b>	<b>-14,835.15</b>

# January

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>31 Christmas 1 - New Year's Eve</b> 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	<b>1 New Year's Day</b> Church office closed ***7 p.m. Al-Anon Mtg.	<b>2</b> Church office closed 2 p.m. Elders' Meeting	<b>3</b> 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***7:30 p.m. AA Meeting	<b>4</b> 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	<b>5</b> 10 a.m. Remove the Christmas decorations from the Sanctuary and Willer Hall	<b>6</b> 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Chapel Worship with Holy Communion Aphasia Event - TBD
<b>7 Baptism of Our Lord</b> 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	<b>8</b> ***	<b>9</b> 6 p.m. Council Meeting	<b>10</b> 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***	<b>11</b> 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 5:45 p.m. Family Dinner - Bible story, bells, craft	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Chapel Worship with Holy Communion, Pastor Gary Hill - Guest Pastor
<b>14 Epiphany 2</b> 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	<b>15 MLK Jr. Day</b> Church office closed ***	<b>16</b> February Newsletter Deadline	<b>17</b> 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***	<b>18</b> 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	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Chapel Worship with Holy Communion
<b>21 Epiphany 3</b> 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	<b>22</b> 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. LCMS Circuit Church-Planting Convocation at our Willer Hall ***	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***	<b>25</b> 10:30 a.m. Women's Bible G.i.F.t.S. at Willer Hall 10:30 a.m. Men's Group	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Chapel Worship with Holy Communion
<b>28 Epiphany 4</b> 9 a.m. Worship with praise band, Holy Communion 10 a.m. All-Ages Bible Study (in chapel) 11 a.m. Worship with organ, hymnal, Holy Communion After 10 a.m. Rummage Sale set-up	<b>29</b> 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Rummage Sale set-up ***7 p.m. Al-Anon Mtg. (moved to our sanctuary)	<b>30</b> 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Rummage Sale set-up	<b>31</b> 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Rummage Sale set-up 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***7 p.m. AA Mtg. (moved to our sanctuary)	<b>1</b> 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Rummage Sale set-up 10:30 a.m. Women's Bible G.i.F.t.S. (moved to our sanctuary) 10:30 a.m. Men's Group at Willer Hall Library room	<b>2</b> 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Rummage Sale	<b>3</b> 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Rummage Sale 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Chapel Worship with Holy Communion

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

## **VOTERS' ASSEMBLY MEETING MINUTES December 2 and 3, 2023**

**Call to Order:** by Concordia's President, Dennis Jesse at 5:20 p.m. on Saturday and at 10:09 a.m. on Sunday.

**Prayer for the Lord's guidance and wisdom:** by Pastor Stephen Gaulke on Saturday and Dennis Jesse on Sunday.

Dennis Jesse announced that Concordia is a "very, very, very healthy church." He further named and thanked all Council members for their service. Additionally, Dennis thanked church members for increasing their donations. He said that he appreciates all the calls he receives from church members. Dennis mentioned that an external audit was completed in March of 2023, and Concordia is in the 95th percentile of all Missouri Synod Lutheran churches. He stated that the narthex remodeling makes that part of the church more appealing. In Sunday's service he thanked Junne Ulbrich for her help in the decorating of the Bob White Welcome Center. Dennis said that the Council approved a "use it or lose it" policy for paid church workers concerning vacation and personal days. He further stated that dedicated funds not earmarked for a specific purpose were combined with general offerings. In Saturday's meeting Dennis said the employee evaluations were instituted this year. They were completed by church elders and council members. 16 responses were received resulting in a 3.7% raise for paid church workers. In Saturday's meeting Dennis said that we have bought workman's comp. insurance, and we are updating the employee handbook. With regard to the skyrocketing costs of wind mitigation insurance, he said we will self-insure rather than renew. We will add protective window coverings for protection.

**Approval of the December 2022 Voters' Assembly Minutes** (bright yellow handout). On Saturday, Treasurer Tom Mann made a motion to approve 2022's minutes, and Judy Dennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. On Sunday, Vice President Phyllis Kirtley made a motion to approve the minutes, and Tina Granthon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Elect 2024 Church Council** (purple ballot). Dennis Jesse asked those in attendance for nominations for the Fellowship chair to be vacated by Barbara Briggs at year end. None were suggested. At Sunday's meeting, Dennis explained the duties and how sub committees are needed for the many duties. At Sunday's meeting he mentioned that there were two candidates for the Vice Presidency: Phyllis Kirtley and Alice Williams. The slate of candidates was approved as presented.

**Adopt 2024 Financial Plan** (green handout). At Saturday's meeting, Dennis Jesse presented the 2024 financial budget. Tom Mann presented the budget at Sunday's meeting. Both Tom and Dennis said funds that were earning a small rate of return with LCEF (Lutheran Church Extension Fund) were moved to CD at 5/3 Bank at a 4% increased earning rate. On Sunday, Diane Horn reminded the voters that the LCEF supports Lutheran Churches. Dennis replied that some funds were left on deposit there, and also the Foundation deposits their money there.

**Pastoral Report** (gray handout). Pastor Stephen reported that church attendance has not rebounded to pre pandemic levels. He said that this is not unique to Concordia. He directed those in attendance to the back of the front page which outlined a plan by the district to start several new LCMS churches in growing areas in Florida. A meeting will be held at Concordia on January 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. to help a mission start in our own Suncoast region.

**Annual Report from the Concordia Lutheran Foundation** (pale yellow handout). On Saturday, Dennis Jesse said that the Foundation gifted 7 students with \$1,000 each for education expenses. He mentioned that the Foundation is offering a \$4,000 matching grant for seminarian Euder Paul's seminary expenses. Euder will be at Concordia from December 16<sup>th</sup> to January 1<sup>st</sup>. He will preach on December 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> according to Pastor Stephen. On Sunday, Phyllis Kirtley said that the Foundation will have no expenses before year end. She said that it will see several hundred dollars in interest.

**New Business** Jim Thomas asked for donations to replace the side lighting in the sanctuary. He also said that memorials received in his late wife, Alice's name were used to paint the LCMS cross on the outside of Willer Hall.



**VOTERS' MINUTES ... Continued**

**Thank the Lord for His grace and mercy and adjourn:** Dennis Jesse made a motion to pause the meeting on Saturday and Pam Battles seconded the motion. Dennis Jesse voted to adjourn the meeting on Sunday. Tom Mann made a motion and Gary Thomas seconded. Saturday's meeting was paused at 5:50 p.m. and Sunday's meeting was adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

**Ballot: 2024 Church Council Members** (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>-Yr) indicates the term (2 maximum) and year when that 2-year term end (Dec. 31)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| President Dennis Jesse (1 <sup>st</sup> - '24) | Worship Cory Biladeau (1st - '25)                |
| Vice Pres. Phyllis Kirtley (2nd - '25)         |  |
| <b>or</b> Alice Williams (1 <sup>st</sup> -25) | Education Julie Smith (1st - '24)                |
| Secretary Ruth Bogenberger (2nd -'24)          | Fellowship Open                                  |
| Finance Sec. Wayne Ulbrich (2nd- '24)          | Outreach Dawn Mowery (1st - '24)                 |
| Treasurer Tom Mann (1st - '25)                 | Service Margo Arehart (2nd - '25)                |
|  | Properties David Meadows (1 <sup>st</sup> - '24) |

**Saturday Members in attendance (23) December 2, 2023:** Thomas Mann (Treasurer), Julie Smith (Education Chair.), Julie Bauer (guest), Joyanne Fathauer, Tambry Schoolcraft, Roger Schoolcraft, Loraine Tafel, Pam Battles, Judy Dennis, Judy Mattes, Aaron Mattes, Chuck Resh, Jaclyn Resh, Ray Blackburn, Elfriede Hinck, Carolyn Piano, Debbie Leslie, Dawn Brown, Bruce Dilges, Ellen Gaulke, Ruth Bogenberger (Secretary), Dennis Jesse (President).

**Sunday Members in attendance (39) December 3, 2023:** Wayne Ulbrich (Financial Secretary), Barbara Briggs (Fellowship Chair), Junne Ulbrich, Tina Granthon, Rev. Bob Smith (assoc.), Rich Reiter (assoc.), Mary Reiter (assoc.), Abby Wuerffel (assoc.), Rev. Ted Wuerffel (assoc.), Phyllis Kirtley (Vice President), Ricky Reese, Alice Smith (assoc.), Jim Thomas, Maxine Cook, Dick Reese, Marilyn Reese, Ron Billingsley, Richard Zuelke, Kathleen Yarrington (assoc.), Gary Thomas, Sara Thomas, William Hagen (assoc.), Richard Wega, Becky Reese, Ronald MacRitchie, Don Zaloudek, Paul Mowery, Gloria Bruggeman, Faby Jesse, Margo Arehart (Service chair), Cathy White, Diane Scott, DeAnna Whitlow, Dawn Mowery (Outreach Chair.), Diane Horn, Jan Schnarr, Dorothy Hagan (assoc.), Alice Williams (Worship Chair).  
*Pastor Stephen Gaulke attended both meetings.*

The Saturday and Sunday ballots were counted and the results were:  
Election of Church Council Members other than Vice President YES 44 NO 0  
Election of Vice President: 24 for Alice Williams; 20 for Phyllis Kirtley  
2023 Annual Financial Plan YES 42 NO 3

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ruth Bogenberger, Secretary



**A Note from the President**

Greetings and Happy New Year! Wishing you all a prosperous 2024. We have so much to look forward to in the new year. First, I want to thank you for attending the Congregational Meeting in December. As you can see, Concordia is in a very healthy position. We will continue the path forward in a positive way. Concordia is in a great position to start being a leader in our community. We will have the tools in place to continue to make the Church a destination.

I want to thank Barbara Briggs and Phyllis Kirtley for their service to the Council. We appreciate the time and service they have provided. We welcome Alice Williams and Cory Biladeau to their new positions on the Council and look forward to the input they bring. First Council meeting is January 9<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm.

Work continues with improvements to the campus. We will be moving the fencing near the Parsonage and cleaning that area up. We are working on quotes in getting shutters for the Church. This should be a great help in future weather conditions that come near the campus. Also, we will investigate finishing up and getting rid of the carpet in the Church. Coming up, we will need help with the upcoming Rummage Sale. I know people are already making donations for the event and things are getting organized. Stay tuned.

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

## Concordia Foundation Report

What is the **Concordia Foundation**? The charity chartered in 1962 "to carry on such exclusively **religious, charitable, and educational work**, and to provide financial assistance... consistent with... Concordia." Incorporated as a legal/financial base for special contributions from Concordia's members and friends, the Foundation had grown to \$72,000 in 1988. Today even after many financial tasks accomplished, the Foundation holds **\$176,921**. All was generously donated by Concordia Sarasota's people past and present.

The Foundation usually aims to give grants that conserve the fund's capital while distributing out the **interest income** only. Over the years, various recipients have included the roofing fund, organ fund, numerous charities, LCMS mission churches, and scholarships for our members attending college and our Lutheran elementary and preschools. All of the fund has long been invested in the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, the "LCMS bank," where the money is always being loaned to finance growing churches.

In **2016** (the first time in more than a decade) the Foundation spent her **capital**. The Foundation **matched the first \$50,000** donated by members of the congregation to Concordia's major repairs and **roofing campaign**. The Foundation also **matched the first \$5,000** donated towards our **Missionary Fund**, that year sending Rev. Dr. Naumann to Sri Lanka.

In **2023** interest monies and gifts blessed **seven college students** (\$1,000 each) with "for books, etc." gifts. The Foundation Board also set a **\$4,000 matching grant** our **St. Louis Seminary** (to help cover the Sem's \$8,000 semester food/housing/insurance costs) for our student Euder Paul. This grant has now been fully matched: thanks, donors! 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**). (Thanks to the donors who separately provided for our seminarian's Sarasota flight!) Another **\$500** Foundation grant helped purchase a furniture-moving trailer used week after week by **Concordia's volunteers** with our **Refugee Resettlement** (Lutheran Services Florida) ministry.

What would you recommend, helping the Board wisely manage Foundation 2024 grants and blessing the Lord's works?

Current members of **the Foundation Board** are Barbara Briggs (term through 2024), Phyllis Kirtley (2025), Gary Thomas (2026), and Thomas Mann (2027). Each serving a four-year term, Concordia's president appoints one new member annually. All meetings of the Foundation are open to Concordia's people. The Foundation's next meetings are scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Thursdays **January 18, July 11 and November 7, 2024**, at our Willer Hall.

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!"

## 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. So far in 2022 \$2,175 of the Schoenherr "income" interest monies came to the **Concordia Foundation**. (See financial report, above.) All these funds assist with tuition or payments for **Christian education**, as Mrs. Schoenherr directed.

CONCORDIA FOUNDATION	
	YTD
INCOME STATEMENT	
	11/30/23
Interest - Checking	89.82
Interest LCEF 163020253	580.48
Interest LCEF 2810	831.54
Donations Concordia	4,270.00
Bette Schoenherr Fund Income	2,174.94
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>7,946.78</b>
State of FL Registration	61.25
Scholarship Expense College	7,000.00
Refugee trailer donation	500.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>7,561.25</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>385.53</b>
BALANCE SHEET	
	11/30/22
LCEF Checking Account	11,879.65
LCEF Certificate 163020253	122,935.69
LCEF Certificate 2810	42,105.56
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>176,920.90</b>
Retained Earnings	176,535.37
Current Earnings	385.53
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES + EQUITY</b>	<b>176,920.90</b>

# 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 **February 2024** issue of "*The Courier*" is **January 16**. 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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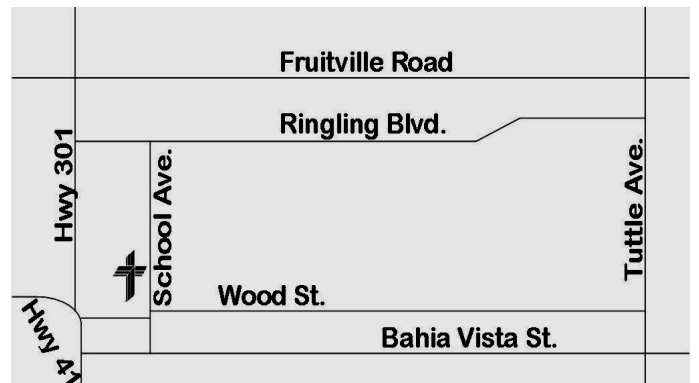
## Concordia Lutheran Church

### 2024 Church Officers

President..... Dennis Jesse .....614-286-0101  
 Vice-President ..... Alice Williams.....941-957-1090  
 Treasurer ..... Thomas Mann .....660-379-7630  
 Secretary ..... Ruth Bogenberger....941-412-4466  
 Financial Secretary ... Wayne Ulbrich.....815-600-4815

### 2024 Board Chairpersons

Worship ..... Cory Biladeau .....612-532-3771  
 Education..... Julie Smith .....813-361-7325  
 Outreach..... Dawn Mowery .....678-230-0208  
 Fellowship..... Vacant.....  
 Service..... Margo Arehart.....419-810-0853  
 Properties ..... Dave Meadows .....941-685-6711

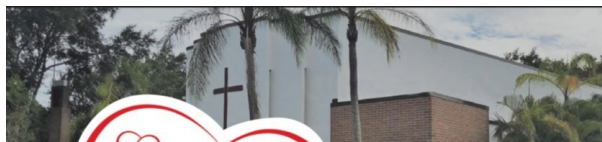


The Concordia Courier  
Concordia Lutheran Church, LCMS  
2185 Wood Street • Sarasota, FL 34237-7915

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January 2024

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**Concordia**  
Lutheran Church

COME!  
GOD'S SON  
IS BORN  
FOR ALL!



**CHRISTMAS EVE**

7 pm: Family Candlelit Worship Service  
11 pm: Candlelit Worship with Holy Communion

**CHRISTMAS MORN**

10 am: Festival Worship with Holy Communion

**EVERY WEEKEND**

4:30 pm: Saturday Worship with Piano  
9 am: Sunday Worship with Praise Band  
11 am: Sunday Worship, Organ, Choir

2185 Wood Street (Along School Avenue, North of Sarasota High School)  
[ConcordiaSarasota.org](http://ConcordiaSarasota.org)

# The Concordia Courier

January 2024

## 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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Website: [www.ConcordiaSarasota.org](http://www.ConcordiaSarasota.org)

Facebook: search Concordia Sarasota

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

