

The Concordia Courier

A Publication Of Concordia Lutheran Church

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

God for Us

Would you delight to **know Jesus better**? To firmly grasp His **promise and purpose** for you? "I would!" says Pastor Stephen. Come May, he starts Concordia's new Sunday (10 to 10:45 a.m.) Bible discussions. Rejoice in the **beautiful basics of our faith**. As Luther's Small Catechism outlines: Ten Commandments, Apostle's Creed, Lord's Prayer, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Bible's awesome theme: "God is for us!"

All who worship at Concordia and other guests, families and friends from the neighborhood, all ages, **all are welcome**.

With "God For Us" you can...

1) **Go deeper** into Jesus' Good News (feel His touch on your heart!),

2) **Respond** to Jesus (simple, heart-felt discussions and prayers),

3) Build **new friendships** (with friends who really care!),

4) See Jesus **reach others** with His joy (also through you),

5) Say "YES!" to the **vision and mission** Jesus gives to you, and to Concordia!

Who can you bring with you? Would a weekday group, or evening group, better fit your schedule? Who else would enjoy these **faith-sharing discussions**? Who could grow with a loving and truthful church family? No pressure, no obligations. But a chance to rejoice in "God for Us!"

Mother's Day

Sunday **May 12** - Happy Mother's Day to all of you moms! God bless you! We **give God thanks** for you. Bring your children. Bless your children!

"Jesus, You compare Yourself to the **mother hen** (Luke 13:34)?! Bless all the moms. Bless our memories. Bless all today who care for us with a **mother's love**. Let us love with Your heart."

Pentecost Sees Red

Christmas – Jesus born among us. Easter – Jesus rises for us. **Pentecost** – Jesus lives through us! **May 19** is Christendom's third great festival. Fiery red Pentecost!

Can we "dress up" the Holy Spirit's day? In many churches, worshipers **wear some red** in their clothing. Remember: the Spirit marked Jesus' friends with tongues like flaming fire?

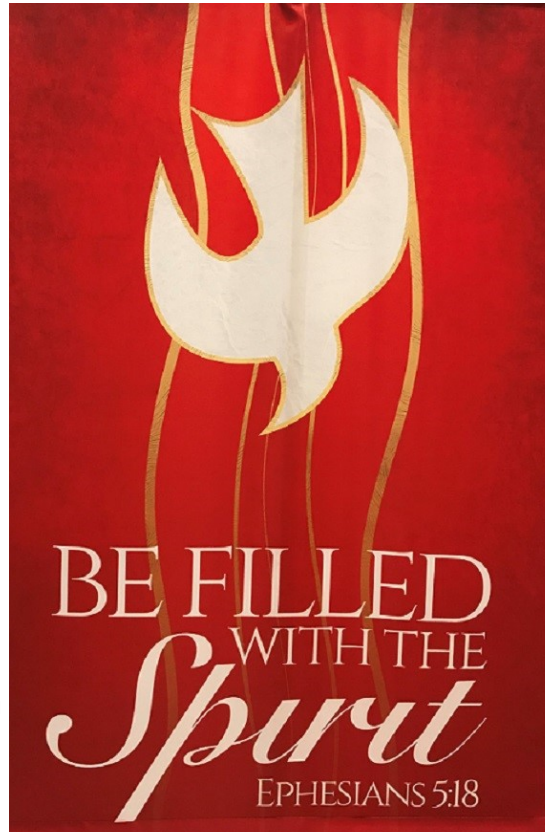
"Holy Spirit, still pour out **Jesus' fire** on His worshipers!"

Good News-letter

Our **June/July 2024**

Concordia Courier seeks articles, due Tuesday **May 14**. Can you **help the crew fold** the news for mailing? Do tell Parish Secretary Lei Ann (941-365-0844).

Thank you to April's Courier folders: Cathy Beiber, 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**.



Say Cheese Before It's Too Late

Concordia's Directory of members and friends is heading to the finish line.

Have you updated your information and photo? If you have not or if have not been contacted, reach out to the church office (941-365-0844). Or, Bethany Thompson (941-350-0723), heading up the venture. It's so easy to do. Options for pictures are many, so you can do what works for you and your schedule. Act now to see your smile among your many Concordia friends.

"Father, help us always to see each and all with Concordia as Jesus' **brothers and sisters**. Gather many with His joyful Spirit!"

All American Holiday

The weekend's worship will give God thanks in remembrance for those who gave their lives in **service to our nation**. The church office is closed on **Memorial Day Monday, May 27**.

Summer Daze Off

The church office will be **closed on Mondays and Tuesdays** beginning **May 28** through **August 6**. **Lei Ann** will also be taking **July 15 to 26** as vacation days. Lei Ann uses these as days to enjoy some summer family time.

Pastor Stephen takes **Mondays** as his year-round day off. He's regularly at the church office **Thursday** mornings. Schedule a visit with him at **any time** and place best for you, please.

Bible Befrienders

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

Sundays, 10 a.m. Pastor Stephen leads us into the Bible's beautiful basics. Gather at **Willer Hall's** red double-door main room.

Thursday, 10:30 a.m. The **men's group** now gathers in Concordia's Willer Fellowship Hall **Library Room** (the single red door at the north end). Gary Thomas leads the guys who **"Dare to be Different."**

Thursdays, 10:30 a.m. GiFtS! The **women "Grow in Faith through Scripture."** The group recently has been hearing from the **"minor prophets,"** some of the Bible's shortest books. Visit Concordia's Willer **Fellowship Hall** main room (double red doors).



Worship's Scripture

May 4, 5 - Easter 6

Acts 10:34-48
1 John 5:1-8
John 15:9-17

May 11, 12 - Easter 7

Acts 1:12-26
1 John 5:9-15
John 17:11b-19

May 18, 19 - Pentecost

Ezekiel 37:1-14
Acts 2:1-21

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

May 25, 26 - Holy Trinity

Isaiah 6:1-8
Acts 2:14a, 22-36
John 3:1-17

Praise with Pianist

Thanks to all who helped with and enjoyed April 21's celebration. **Dawn Brown** has led Concordia's worship with the praise band (9 a.m. Sundays) now for **20 years!**

Dawn says: "To all, what a wonderful celebration and appreciation brunch! Thank you for the music themed décor and cake, the delicious food and drink, sweet smelling flowers, friendly voices and generous gifts." Dawn selects beautiful songs to reflect each week's

Scripture, prepares the song slides, preps the joyful band and singers, then pours all her amazing talent into the keyboard while lifting her prayer with our praise to our Lord.

"Jesus, we thank You for **Dawn and the band** You have gathered to lead Your worship. As Concordia sings **Your song**, send down Your sweet Spirit. Give to all Your harmony."



Jesus Will Feast with You?!

Christian Questions with Their Answers – Prepared by Dr. Martin Luther for those who intend to go to the Sacrament.

After confession and instruction in the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the pastor may ask, or Christians may **ask themselves** these questions:

1. Do you believe that you are a sinner?
Yes, I believe it. I am a **sinner**.
2. How do you know this?
From the **Ten Commandments**, which I have not kept.
3. Are you sorry for your sins?
Yes, I am **sorry** that I have sinned against God.
4. What have you deserved from God because of your sins?
His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal **damnation**. See Romans 6:21, 23.
5. Do you hope to be saved?
Yes, that is my **hope**.
6. In whom then do you trust?
In my dear Lord **Jesus Christ**.
7. Who is Christ?
The Son of God, true **God and man**.
8. How many Gods are there?
Only one, but there are three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
9. What has Christ done for you that you trust in Him?
He died for me and shed **His blood** for me on the cross for the **forgiveness** of sins.
10. Did the Father also die for you?
He did not. The Father is God only, as is the Holy Spirit; but the Son is both true God and true man. He died for me and shed his blood for me.
11. How do you know this?
From **the holy Gospel**, from the words instituting the Sacrament, and by His body and blood given me as a pledge in the Sacrament.
12. What are the Words of Institution?
Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is **My body**, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in **My blood**, which is shed for you for the **forgiveness** of

A Note from the President

Greetings Concordia. He is Risen....He is Risen Indeed! What a great Holy Week we had at Concordia. It was great getting wonderful comments from members who expressed what a momentous week they experienced. I really appreciate that many of you took the time to express this to me. I want to thank Council Member Diane Scott and her team for putting on a great breakfast. She made the whole morning festive and welcoming. Plus, for the first time we had breakfast right after the Sunrise service. Much work was done, and we appreciate your gifts to Concordia. Another enormous success was the work of Carol Hill and Julie Smith working the Easter Egg Hunt. All had a fun time. Finally, thank you Pastor Stephen for delivering the message we all needed in our hearts.

Regarding the property of the Church, we stated at the congregational meeting we would self-insure ourselves. The insurance is getting out of control on certain programs. We signed an agreement with Wind Shutters who will start this September putting up Shutters to protect from wind during the hurricane season. We are excited this process is in motion. Thank you to Council Members Thomas Mann and Dave Meadows who led this project.

Regarding Pastor Bob and his wife Alice, we are honored to have them at Concordia this year. I can speak for everyone is saying we enjoyed the ministry that you both bring. Our hope is to have them both back in the Fall. Stay tuned to the announcement.

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.

Dennis Jesse

614-286-0101; djesse@jessemarketing.com

sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:15-20; and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

"Christian Questions" to be continued **next month**. 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. (The "Christian Questions with Their Answers," designating Luther as the author, first appeared in an edition of the Small Catechism in 1551, five years after Luther died).

An Urgent Call to Fish

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people."
(Luke 5:10)

Thank you for the warm welcome and support Alice and I have received at Concordia during the past last six months. It is amazing how many people come from all over the world to worship at Concordia. We praise God for the new relationships we have made here. We hope some of the life lessons we have learned were caught by you as we rubbed shoulders and talked about life.

I love to fish for fish but there is a more critical concern today. It is a CALL or COMMITMENT to FISH FOR PEOPLE! It is URGENT! Permit me the opportunity to share one more story.

Shortly after the 2004 tsunami in northern Sumatra, Alice and I were given the privilege to accompany a small group to Banda Aceh, Indonesia. This coastal city was the most directly impacted by the tsunami. The trip left us with lifetime impressions of the magnitude of the disaster they suffered.

Following the earthquake, enormous 60-foot waves traveling at an estimated 500 miles an hour hit Banda Aceh. Within a few hours, the tsunami killed over 100,000 people. For two to three miles inland, nearly everything was flattened. Whatever you can imagine in your mind as to the scale of the catastrophe, it was worse. Words, videos, or photographs did not capture the full extent of damage or do it justice.

Grief was profound, lonely, and overwhelming. We were told of one man who lost his entire family. He said he just didn't know how to grieve because the sadness was so great. His eyes could not shed tears. Also, Alice and I sat and listened to a group of teachers as they explained further details about their stories. One man told us he had over fifty relatives die during the earthquake and tsunami.

The most dramatic and touching story came from Armin, a school security guard. For over 30 minutes he shared his detailed description of his survival. Our small group listened in amazement. Tragically, his wife and two children were suddenly swept away as the wave caught up with them while they tried to outrun it on his motorcycle. He never saw them again. Two hours later he found himself alive, his body covered with cuts, lying on a hillside. We will always remember his final words: "It was good for me to tell my story. This is the first time I have told it. The pain comes out when I share it."

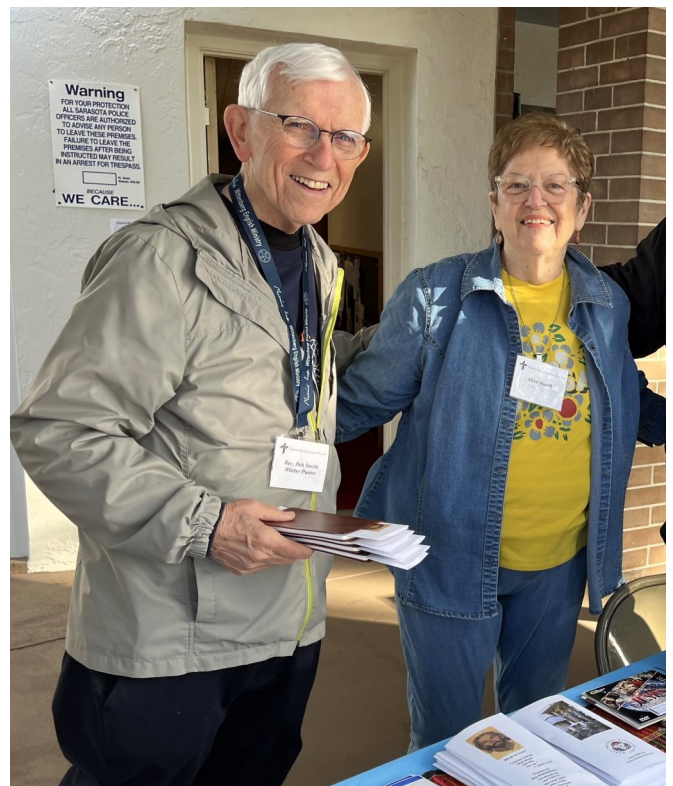
At the time of their death, many of the people did not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Life can be and is short. Death is certain for everyone. The statistics on death are quite impressive. One out of one people die. How many people die without any hope?

Christians know that God is stronger than every wave of sorrow in this life. He wants to help us through difficult times. There is hope for the future. Through faith in Jesus Christ, in the end there is victory. God can take sorrows and tragedies and turn them into a positive future.

We don't have all the answers; but we do have an overwhelming conviction that through faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior, we are prepared to face the "tsunamis" in our lives. We can help others to do the same. It is urgent for the members of Concordia congregation to continue a COMMITMENT TO FISH FOR PEOPLE! Listen to Jesus of Nazareth and answer his call to be a fisherman of all people.

We look forward to expanding on this vision and mission next year.

In His service,
Pastor Bob and Alice Smith,
Concordia's Winter Hospitality Pastor





Rebecca Hicks

I am graduating from **Riverview High School** in May, 2024.

I enjoy participating in the **Stars-to-Starfish internship** program where I am able to give tours of our Aqua-Science department to younger kids around the county.



These tours include a viewing of an educational movie in our planetarium followed by walk-through of all the different fish we keep at the Aqua-dome.



In the fall, I plan on attending **University of Central Florida** in Orlando for a bachelors degree in **biology**.



Ryan Hicks

I graduated from **University of Florida** in December '23. Besides going to church (First Gainesville, LCMS) and writing essays, my favorite thing to do was go **fossil hunting** in the streams/rivers drainage areas around my apartment.

I am headed to **St. Louis for Seminary** in June and, God willing, plan to become a Pastor!

Without bragging, I would really like to give thanks for the opportunity to make a good impression on behalf of Christian students to the mostly non-religious staff at UF. **God bless** you all!



Jackie Williams

I will graduate from **Suncoast Polytechnical High School** having completed over **11 college credits**. This summer, I plan to attend the

University of South Florida St. Pete, where I will pursue a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science on their **Pre-Law Track**.

My overarching goal is to work in Law within the government, although I am still deciding on the specific path. Throughout my school career, I have been involved in numerous extracurricular activities, holding multiple Officer roles such as President of the **Coexistence Club**, Secretary of **Speech and Debate**, and Secretary of the **National Honor Society**.

Outside of school, I have volunteered as a Teacher's assistant at the **Art Center**, delivered meals for **Meals on Wheels**, and served as a Teen Attorney in Teen Court. **Teen Court**, in particular, has been the most meaningful commitment for me. It is a second-chance program that allows at-risk adolescents to make amends before their record is affected. As a Teen Court ambassador, I evaluate the program to enhance participation and support strategies. Representing clients and offering advice in Teen Court is rewarding as it allows me to work

towards their futures while learning about my own. My passion for volunteering stems from the belief that I can make a difference in someone else's future. Teen Court has influenced my decision to enroll in AP Government and pursue a career in government, realizing that helping individuals may not be enough. I am driven to study political science with a pre-law track to create broad policies that benefit everyone. I was **baptized** December 18, 2005 as an infant **and confirmed at Concordia Lutheran** in the 7th grade on August 18, 2019.



May 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28 Easter 5 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	29 ***	30	1 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. ECCC using Willer Hall ***7 p.m. AA Mtg.	2 National Day of Prayer 10:30 a.m. Women's Bible G.i.F.t.S. at Willer Hall 10:30 a.m. Men's Group at Willer Hall Library room	3	4 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion
5 Easter 6 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	6 ***7 p.m. Al-Anon Mtg.	7	8 ***	9 Ascension of Our Lord 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	10	11 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion
12 Easter 7 Mother's Day 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	13 ***	14 June/July Courier Deadline 6 p.m. Council Meeting	15 ***	16 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	17	18 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. District Al-Anon Meeting in Willer Hall 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion
19 Pentecost 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	20 ***	21	22 ***	23 10:30 a.m. Women's Bible G.i.F.t.S. at Willer Hall 10:30 a.m. Men's Group at Willer Hall Library room	24 3 p.m. New Beginning Early Child Care Center at Willer Hall for Graduation	25 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion
26 Holy Trinity 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 Memorial Day Church office closed ***	28 Church office closed	29 ***	30 10:30 a.m. Women's Bible G.i.F.t.S. at Willer Hall 10:30 a.m. Men's Group at Willer Hall Library room	31	1 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. 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.

May Birthdays

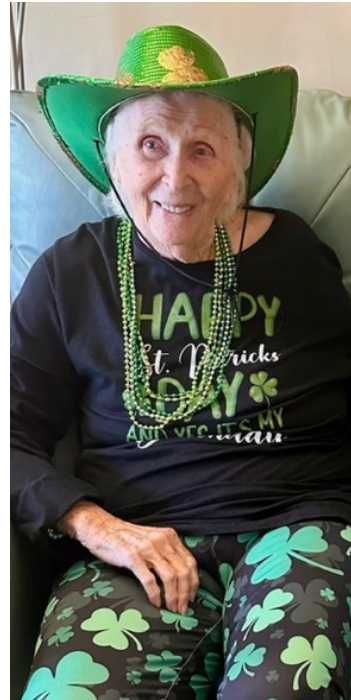
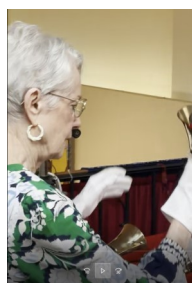
01	Nathan Kelty
05	Doug Kresge
06	Graham Hildebrand
07	Micah Basinger Judelande Paul Dave Steinman
08	Dave Brady Janet Lewis
10	David Evans Conrad Kresge Rick Reese Marya Smith
13	Nancy Hormann
14	Kylee Schaefer
16	Becky Reese Marilyn Schawk
19	Mike Granthon
20	Cosette Lawson
22	Michelle House
23	Lance Ahl Dan Schaefer
25	Russell Hart
27	Jayne New Euder Paul
28	Carol Bickel Maes (Yarrish) Sandine Nathan Sisk

May Anniversaries

01	Doug and Carol Bickel - 42nd
11	Scott and Ruth Montgomery - 39th
15	Greg and Mary Ostermann - 47th

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!**



99 Years Young

Dear Concordia Family,
On behalf of **Pat Lenke's** family, we would like to thank all of you for your thoughts, prayers and cards for mom's **99th birthday** on March 17. We are thrilled to report that she received **146 birthday cards!!!**

Thank you all for being a special part of her birthday. We are looking forward to celebrating her 100th birthday!

With appreciation,
Nancy and Norm
Johnson and family

Easter Thank You Note

Thank you so much to **Doris Horn** for the beautiful homemade Easter cards for our homebound members and friends. Thank you to **Alice Williams, Audrey Hart, Mark and Sheila** (Gloria Bruggeman's friends from Montana and the Philippines) for personally delivering the cards along with Easter Roses to Concordia's homebound.

Gratefully,
Gloria Bruggeman



Memorials Received

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

In memory of Kurt Zeugin, from Aaron and Judy Mattes for dedicated Winter Pastor Fund.

"Blessed are those who wash their robes [baptized], that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the [heavenly] city" (22:14).

Sanctuary Lighting

I am in prayer for your help with a project that Doug Kresge and I have been looking into. We have Sanctuary lighting at the ceiling that has not worked for over a year now as they cause interference with our sound system. We would like to replace these lights with the latest **"LED" technology lights**.

To simplify: This project consists of removing the existing gas filled neon lights and transformers which extend **50 feet on each side**, at the ceiling in the artificial balcony of the sanctuary. The lights would then be replaced with RGB+TW Tunable Tape lighting which has the option in **unlimited palette of color** combinations. You also have the ability to adjust true white light ranging from **2700k to 6000k**. This would provide intense color saturation effects for limitless color combination. Colors are red, green, blue, yellow and white.

The complete cost for this project would be \$10,000. To date, \$3,500 has been contributed. So any donations for this **wish list upgrade** would be appreciated. **Quote and specifications** are with Lei Ann in the church office. Donations towards this expense should state on the memo line of your check "Sanctuary Lighting Fund" and your check should be made payable to "Concordia Lutheran Church. **Thank you**, Jim Thomas

Altar Guild News

The Altar Guild will **meet again** beginning in **October**. Enjoy your summer!

You are welcome to help **care for the Lord's altar** every season. Help us set the altar for Holy Communion, change the altar cloths, care for the candles and more. Any season, you can **help the Guild**. Please call Junne Ulbrich at 815-955-6215. Thanks!

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

Altar Flowers

Please consider purchasing the **altar's fresh flowers**.

Commemorate a special occasion or **honor** a loved one? The flowers always look beautiful praising Jesus! Find the special flower envelopes in the church entryway next to the sign up poster and in the pews.

After Sunday's 11 a.m. worship we will place the flowers in a vase for you to **take home**. Or you may donate them for delivery to our hospitalized or homebound members.

Altar flowers cost **\$32.50 for one bouquet** and **\$65 for both bouquets** (the cost our Altar Guild pays each week). Thank you for your continued support of this floral adornment of the Lord's altar, the sweet fragrance to Jesus!

"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."



Easter Lilies

- ❖ Lei Ann Ahl and Family in memory of mother, Anita Bixler and sister Tricia Bixler-Maxson
- ❖ Gloria Bruggeman to honor Jesus, thankful for blessings received and in memory of husband, Carl and mother, Llwayway De Guzman
- ❖ Russell and Audrey Hart celebration for Easter Blessings
- ❖ Lori and David Hertzberg & Family in memory of Clayton and in honor of Jan
- ❖ Dennis Jesse & Faby Napoleon in memory of Orphilise Napoleon
- ❖ Gail Keilty and Family in memory of parents, Joseph and Madeline Stoothoff; in memory of brother, Thomas Stoothoff
- ❖ Gail Keilty and grandsons John, Conner and Gavin in memory of Gail's daughter and mother to her grandsons, Nancy Palamara
- ❖ Aaron and Judy Mattes for blessings received
- ❖ Shirley Mead in memory of parents, H. Theodore and Helen Beharrell
- ❖ Janet Meyers in memory of Paul, Stan, Bob, Marvin and Glen
- ❖ Paul and Dawn Mowery in memory of Jean and Ervin Mowery and in memory of Esther and Richard Jenkins
- ❖ Jan Schnarr in memory of husband, Clayton
- ❖ Diane Scott in memory of her mother Barbara Meadows
- ❖ Shirley Schwisow in memory of husband, Howard
- ❖ Rebecca Trotsky in honor of her mother Elaine Staudt

Refuge Team Update

Sorry it's been a while since a refuge team update - we have been busy! But first I want to **thank Concordia** and the Council for their support of this ministry. The **donations** given and the shed provided for **storage** are a Godsend! A very humble thank you as well for the Good Samaritan recognition. The ministry is certainly a **team effort** and everyone involved is vital to its success.

In February, Sara and I hosted our first ever **get together** at our house for the whole team. It was nice to enjoy each other's company without lifting and moving stuff! We will need to do it more often.

To do a quick recap of how we were able to share the love of Jesus **last year**; working through Lutheran Services Florida, we **aided 32 families** by providing **household supplies** and helping to **furnish** their new homes. About 40 donated **bikes** were refurbished and given to refugees, along with helmets and pumps. Seven baskets of supplies for **newborn babies** were given to families. And 30 baskets of **cleaning** supplies and 30 bags of personal hygiene products were provided. Twenty-three pick ups of furnishings during the last two months of the year greatly helped to make all this happen. **God truly provides.**

This year we have helped about **seventeen families** so far. We also continue to refurbish donated bikes and provide to families as needed.



Thanks to generous friends, church members, and responses to online ads. An additional **gracious blessing** was the refugee ministry received about \$6,500.00 during the Sarasota **Giving Tuesday** event. God provides for every need and always at the right time!

As I say each time, **whatever you can do**, you will be blessed in giving your time, talents, or treasures to this much needed outreach ministry. Some of the greatest blessings of helping out are seeing the **joy and thankfulness** on the faces of family members as they receive these gifts to get them started and settled in a **new life of freedom**. If you have donations or **questions** contact Gary Thomas at grthomas57@gmail.com or phone on 410-868-9935. Thank you!

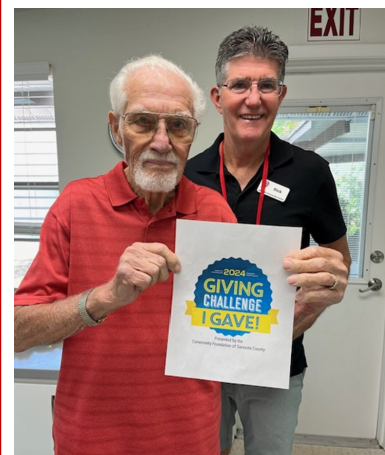
For the Refugee Ministry Team,
Gary Thomas



Giving Challenge Update

Dear Friends at Concordia,
Thank you so much for your support during the **2024 Giving Challenge**.

The Aphasia Community Center met our goal and more by **raising \$27,000!** We will



be able to offer more services to members of the community for free. Visit aphasiasarasota.org for more information about the center.



Thank you, Becky and Rick Reese

Aphasia: What is it?

Aphasia is a loss of language resulting from stroke or other brain injury. As an adult communication disability, aphasia affects spoken and written language, namely... speaking, writing, reading, and/or understanding others, but without loss of intellect.

Seminarian Euder Paul

We received the following note and photos from **Euder Paul, our Haitian member** this month completing his third-year of graduate studies towards **becoming a pastor**.

Dear friends of Concordia Lutheran Church, Sarasota,

I am very happy to share with you and all the people in the Florida-Georgia District LCMS news about my life at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. My life on campus is a blessing with my formation here to become a pastor for God's Church and God's people. Without your spiritual and economic supports, I can't do that. I want to thank you for all you are doing for me and for the Church.

In the first half of this Spring semester I took a course called **Religion and Society in America**. This course helps me to understand and examine the mutual influence of religion and society including the politics in America. Cultural contexts differ in their assumptions, values and expectations. I learn to value the need to examine beliefs and practices in light of the Word of God....



I know you are praying for me and my family because of Haiti's situation.

The political situation in Haiti is very deteriorated. There are a lot fears across the population because of the insecurity in Port-au-Prince. Once again, thank you for your prayers and your words of encouragement. I know you are praying for my wife Judelande and other members of the family. During this period of political problems, instability of life in Haiti, my prayers and desires are: "God, I want to delight in You, please give me self-control, peace in my heart and take control of the situation."

Let me share with you this verse from the Bible: **"Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart"** (Psalm 37: 4).

What is the first thing you think of when you wake up? Some people will think about their projects, others about their work, or about a person dear to them, or about the trials they are going through at the moment. And you? Jesus should be frequently at the forefront of our thoughts. Someone once said that the thing we think about when we wake up says a lot about our priorities.

Is God always at the heart of your thoughts? Do you regularly think about how to advance the Kingdom of God?

The Bible warns us against idolatry. It tells us "flee from idolatry"! We must love God with all our strength, with all our thoughts, with all our hearts. God must have first place. He must be our priority!

Let us seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and the rest will be given to us above all. Abraham understood this, he was ready to sacrifice Isaac, the child of the promise.

Even if it cost him, his desire was to please God, to have a heart entirely his own. And you, are you ready to sacrifice what you love to follow God?

Does God always have first place in your heart? Have you lost your first love? What if today you give God the first place! *Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart ...* Please continue to pray for me. April 23 at 3:00 PM will be my call day for my vicarage.*

May God bless you abundantly and have a blessed Easter season!
Euder Paul



* **"vicarage"** sends seminarians to their **internship year**. On April 23 he was called to serve with **Our Savior LCMS in Lake Worth**, south of Palm Beach. The year after vicarage, Euder expects to complete his seminary education and receive a call to **pastoral ministry**.

Back in December 2021 our Voters' Meeting redirected \$22,500 out of our **2022** \$25,000 mission gifts to **the St. Louis Seminary**, so covering the seminarian's **campus living costs** for Euder's first year-and-a-half of studies. Since 2022, our congregation budgeted no more funds to the seminary. (Budgeted funds have never been given to the seminarian personally.) The Seminary and the seminarian have found other donors to fund his **tuition** costs. As a Haitian with a US Student Visa, he had no opportunity to take (or pay back) any loans.

In 2023 our **Concordia Sarasota Foundation** contributed an \$8,000 **matching grant**. Euder's Concordia friends generously dedicated special gifts that covered costs for "our" seminarian's **room** and board. Thank you! These sums sufficed to the end of Euder's 2023-24 academic year. The Seminary also enabled Euder to take on some part-time work for his personal expenses.

As the Miami Herald reported: "Because regular visa services remain suspended due to Haiti's ongoing escalation in gang violence, the first available openings aren't **until 2026**." Unless the US Embassy in Haiti can reopen sooner, Euder's wife Judelande will not be able to come to the US. Neither will Euder be able to visit her in Haiti. "Lord, have mercy!"

photos: Euder preaching Lent at Timothy Lutheran, St. Louis (top); enjoying an Easter feast at Abby and Ted Wuerffel's St. Louis home (left); with our Bishop James Rockey and four other seminarians called to our FL-GA District sister churches.



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 **June/July 2024** issue of "The Courier" is **May 14**. 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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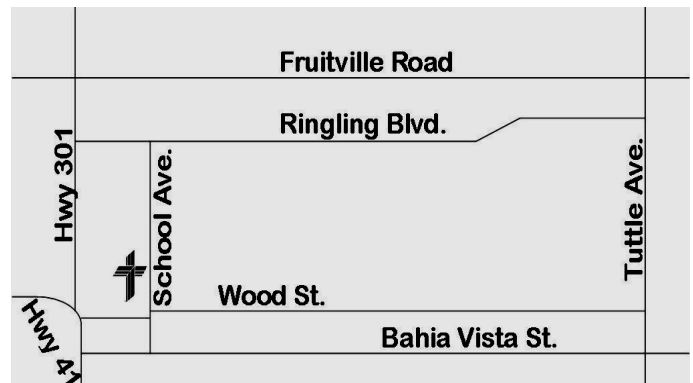
Concordia Lutheran Church

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The Concordia Courier

May 2024

Worship Schedule

Worship Services

Saturday 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



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

