

# The Concordia Courier

A Publication Of Concordia Lutheran Church

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

## What Do You Believe of God?

### THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in **God, the Father** Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in **Jesus Christ**, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the **Holy Spirit**, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

### The First Article: CREATION

*What does this mean?* I believe that **God has made me** and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and **all I have**. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He **defends me** against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.

All this He does only out of **fatherly, divine goodness and mercy**, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to **thank and praise, serve, and obey Him**.

This is most certainly true.

The **Apostles' Creed** comes from the first generations of Christians. Like us, they desired a "short and sweet" summary of the faith that the apostles taught, the Good News proclaimed in the Bible. "Apostles" means "sent ones," those who knew Jesus, whom He sent to tell the world His Good News. "Creed" means "We believe."

The explanation following, "What Does This Mean," comes 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.

## Pastoral Care

Pastor Stephen and Ellen vacation **November 17 to 29**. Our retired member **Pastor Gary Hill** preaches Saturdays and Sundays those weekends of November 17 and 24. Our Season Hospitality **Pastor Bob Smith** will preach Wednesday November 27 at your Thanksgiving Eve service, 6:30 p.m.

Concordia's elders visit the homebound and hospitalized. Do you or your friend need

### pastoral care?

Please notify parish secretary Lei Ann Ahl at the church office (941-365-0844). Or contact elder Alice Williams (941-957-1090), or Pastor Bob Smith (989-295-8494).

## Worship's Scripture

### Nov. 30, Dec 1 - Advent 1

Jeremiah 33:14-16  
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13  
Luke 19:28-40

### Dec. 7, 8 - Advent 2

Malachi 3:1-7b  
Philippians 1:2-11  
Luke 3:1-14 (15-20)

### Dec. 14, 15 - Advent 3

Zephaniah 3:14-20  
Philippians 7:4-7  
Luke 7:18-28 (28-35)

### Dec. 21, 22 - Advent 4

Micah 5:2-5a  
Hebrews 10:5-10  
Luke 1:39-45 (46-56)

### Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve 5 p.m.

Isaiah 7:10-14  
1 John 4:7-16  
Matthew 1:18-25

### Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve 11 p.m.

Isaiah 9:2-7  
Titus 2:11-14  
Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

### Dec. 25 - Christmas Day

Isaiah 62:10-12  
Titus 3:4-7  
Luke 2:(1-14) 15-20  
OR

Isaiah 52:7-10  
Hebrews 1:1-6 (7-12)  
John 1:1-14 (15-18)

### Dec. 28, 29 - Christmas 1

Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15  
Colossians 3:12-17  
Luke 2:22-40

## A Baby Shower for Baby Jesus

"And **Mary gave birth** to her firstborn son (Jesus). She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger." (Luke 2:7)

Between **Thanksgiving Eve (November 27)** and **Epiphany (January 6)**, Concordia's Service Ministry Team will gather baby items for Pregnancy Solutions, a local **pregnancy ministry**, to support men and women who have chosen life for their unborn babies.

**Requested items** are:

### Diapers and Baby Wipes

A collection **box in the narthex** receives your donated items. You can also make a monetary donation. Please write the check to Concordia Lutheran Church and designate "Pregnancy Solutions" on the memo line. If you're donating cash, please specify on the envelope that the cash is for "Pregnancy Solutions in care of Concordia." You can also give a Thrivent Gift Card. If you have any **questions**, please contact Debbie Leslie, 941-726-9306. Thank you!

## Eve of Thanksgiving Worship

Thanksgiving Eve, **Wednesday, November 27, 6:30 p.m.**, we worship. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! Bring a friend, your family. The heart of Thanksgiving at Concordia!

**"To You** we give all thanks, Lord Jesus!"

## Giving Thanks to the Giver

Our church office closes on **November 28 and 29** in celebration of **Thanksgiving Day**.

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

## God Born Our Brother!

For you, wonder and beauty: **Jesus is coming!** **Every Saturday Worship with Communion**

A Chapel-style Service, **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 4, 11, and 18.**

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

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

### Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Tuesday, December 24, **5 p.m.** (a new time!)

### Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion

Tuesday, December 24 at **11 p.m.**

### Christmas Day Holy Communion Service

Wednesday, December 25 at **10 a.m.**

## Advent Wednesdays

### Dinner and Devotion

On Wednesdays **December 4, 11 and 18** Concordia prepares for the Christ's coming.

Three delicious, simple **suppers**, at **5:30 p.m.**, give us a moment to rest in the pre-Christmas scramble. Come, bring a friend, and make some new acquaintances! Please phone the church office or Diane Scott (941-302-4819) if you'd like to help.

The Wednesdays welcome us also to a **half-hour's worship** together, at **6:30 p.m.** Advent means "He comes!"

Our devotions celebrate Jesus the Giver! Bring your appetite. **Bring your friends.**

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

## Homebound Christmas Cards

Beginning **Wednesday, December 4** 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 these cards, let us be part of **Your care** for Your sisters and brothers, Jesus!"

## Church Christmas Decorating

Friday **December 6** at **10 a.m.** 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!**"

## Bethlehem Breakfast

Join us for our Annual Bethlehem Breakfast on **Saturday December 7, 10 a.m.** at your Willer Fellowship Hall. This special morning will be filled with delicious food, warm fellowship, and inspiring reflections that remind us of the Joy brought by the birth of Christ. Whether you're a longtime member or visiting for the first time, come and experience the true spirit of the season with us! Watch for the sign up sheet in the narthex or call the church office (941-365-0844) to sign up. This year again we will be collecting small prepackaged snack packs for Concordia's homebound Christmas Baskets.

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

## Nominate - Voters Meet

Concordia's voters meet briefly on **December 7**, 5:15 p.m., after Saturday eve worship and **December 8**, 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 president, recording secretary, financial secretary, and the chairs of education, service, fellowship, and properties ministries. Let's gratefully continue the good work of those who have served!

The assembly will set our **2025 budget**. The voters may respond to any other items previously announced at our weekend worship.

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 Alice Williams (941-957-1090).

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

## 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 12 and 19, 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 14 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 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. Have you not yet delivered a basket? 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!**"



## Christmas Dinner (and Bingo!)

Join us for a festive night filled with **fun, food**, and Christmas cheer! **Bingo** brings friendly play with plenty of prizes to win. Savor delicious food and refreshments. **Ham and rolls** provided, but you may bring any **holiday dish** to share. Sing along to your favorite **Christmas carols**, filling the night with holiday spirit. Please bring friends and family. Together we celebrate the season, perfect!! Festivities begin **5 p.m. on Sunday, December 15.**

"Give us Your cheer, **joy to share**, Lord!"

## Holly Daze

Our **church office closes** December 24 and 25 celebrating **Jesus' birth**; and December 31 and January 1 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 2024 donations must be received in the church office, by Financial Secretary Rick Reese or postmarked no later than Sunday **December 31** to receive a tax deduction towards your 2024 tax return.

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

## Gifts to the Giver of All

**Offering envelopes** for your 2025 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 Rick (or Becky) Reese 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!"

## Christmas Poinsettias

**Poinsettia plants** adorn the Newborn's sanctuary, in place of fresh flowers, from **December 7** through **January 3**. Any flower requests then will be postponed until January.

Show your Christmas joy with a poinsettia? Sized \$13 or \$25, place your request with the **church office** (Concordia5@juno.com) or on the **form available** at worship. You may take home your plant any time after December 25.

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

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

## Altar Guild News

The Altar Guild will **meet** January 10 to remove Christmas decorations.

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. Apart from our meetings, you can **help the Guild**. Please call Junne Ulbrich at 815-955-6215. Thanks!

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

## Good News-letter

Thank you to November Courier folders: Gloria Bruggeman, Joyanne Fathauer and Loraine Tafel. Gloria took **260 newsletters** to the postal center. **Another 160 homes** prefer their Courier by **email**. Your choice?

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

Thanks to Carol Pyle and Ruth Bogenberger for making sure the **pews look amazing** for our members and guests.

## Email My Courier

Are you **reading this on paper**, but would prefer the emailed .pdf copy? Just let your church office know. Send your email **request** to Concordia5@juno.com. Or, here reading **on a screen**, do you wish for the printed version? Ask, and it will be mailed to you! Thanks!

Our **January 2025** Courier seeks articles, due Tuesday **December 11**. Can you **help the crew fold** the news for mailing? Tell Parish Secretary Lei Ann (941-365-0844).

"Jesus, send Your **Good News** to every home! Let our neighbors find Your joy, welcomed by Your Concordia family."

## All Book Lovers Welcome

Remember Concordia's Book Club? We were in the middle of reading through **The Chronicles of Narnia** and time slipped away...

Let's enjoy one evening, **Sunday January 12**, finishing up all of the books in C.S. Lewis' delightful series. We left off with Prince Caspian. On to **The Last Battle** – my favorite!

And then, a book that has had a great impact on me in so very many ways: Evelyn Waugh's **Brideshead Revisited**. Fine copies of the book on the church's front pew at church. I'm eager to discuss this book- **February 16**.

Both Book Club nights will be at the Gaulke home. 5308 Sunnydale Circle N, 34233. We will begin at 6:15. Even if you have not read the books but desire to join us, **you are welcome!**

Ellen Gaulke

## News Editors, Media Managers

Every month (almost) this Courier brings you **news, invitations and photos** from Concordia's leaders and church family. Please keep these coming! The newsletter gets laid out by our friendly parish secretary, Lei Ann. Pastor Stephen then has helped as an editor. Others have volunteered to proofread that almost final draft. Before Pastor Stephen retires (March 2), would you be willing to let him or Lei Ann show you how these **Couriers get edited**? We'll also be looking for some new **proofreaders**. (If you just read "poof" rather than "proof," poof, you're the one!")

In the same way, Concordia will benefit from **new media managers** for your website **ConcordiaSarasota.org**, and your church family's **Facebook** page, and your **YouTube** page. There, your weekly worship videos gather about 30 views each week. Those curious about Jesus and Concordia often visit our social media before worshipping with the church. Can you help us make that **good first impression**?

"No **Word is faultless** but Yours, Jesus. Help us share Your Good News, all Your forgiveness and the resurrection to come!"

## All Singers Welcome

Your choir now resumes practices **each Wednesday 7 to 8 p.m. Everyone is welcome!** We sing near the start of the 11 a.m. worship. Also some who have worshiped at 9 a.m., after 10 a.m. coffee and Bible study, add their voice. Sing for a **great time together**. With our time and talents, we praise the Lord and **sing His Good News**. Johnora Hildebrand, director

"Lord, **renew** our joy. You are our Song!"



## A Note From the President

Merry Christmas Concordia. We are in full swing of the new Church year. The time is flying by so fast these days. We look forward to seeing everyone at the annual Church meeting on December 7 and 8. We had another incredible year at Concordia. The annual Craft Fair was another success. I want to thank Diane Scott, Junne Ulbrich, Cathy White for keeping this event moving. Fun time, everyone and another perfect weather day. Pastor Bob and Alice Smith have arrived from Michigan uninjured this time. It is a blessing to have them at Concordia and share them with us. Advent season is upon us. Please take the time on Wednesdays to join us. Please check the Courier for activities and ways you can help make this a Christmas season to remember. This is the time of year when we will be having change on the Church Council. Ruth Bogenberger has been in the Council for years, and we say goodbye and the job well done. Ruth has been a rock on Council. I appreciate her leadership and advice for the past years. Ruth will be playing other roles at Concordia soon. Please thank Ruth when you see her. Also, coming up we need you to help decorate the Church. Please make time and come out and share in the fellowship. The year end is approaching, so make sure your stewardship to Concordia is on schedule. The reason Concordia is so successful, because of the giving made by this congregation. Jesus has blessed this Church in many ways. Thank you, Jesus, as we celebrate your birth. Again, Merry Christmas!

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



## From Pastor Bob and Alice

Alice and I have much for which to give thanks. We arrived safely here on November 1. We have appreciated the warm welcome and the renewal of friendships. Unfortunately, I find it difficult to remember everyone's name. Please be generous in forgiveness. Just remind me of your name when we meet!

Traveling outside my comfort zone has given me a thankful perspective on my blessings. My family has had protection and safety in so many situations around the world. I am humbled and amazed as I look back through my life's calendar. As the opportunities unfolded for us to travel and live across the globe, we realized what amazing things God was doing. He showered us with His spiritual and material riches. The older I grow the more thankful I become. Someone once said "Giving thanks is like swimming in the ocean. There is no end." The list could go on and on.

Thanksgiving is a way of communicating gratitude to God. As the creator of all things, God deserves to be acknowledged and thanked for His abundant blessings. Not only does this demonstrate our appreciation for Him but also strengthens our relationship with Him.

## What Does Advent Mean and Why Do We Celebrate It

The Advent season is upon us. During this time we remember the past and we look forward. During these four weeks, we meditate on Jesus' sacrifice that brings us to repentance and we anticipate his return. In the busyness of leading up to the Christmas season, celebrating Advent provides us a time to focus our hearts on Jesus.

The word Advent has Latin roots and means "coming." Christians use this period of time before Christmas to prepare for the celebration of Jesus' birth. It's also a time of repentance and meditation while anticipating Jesus' second coming.

Advent is a season rich in wonder. With the birth of Jesus, we have the divine God who left His glory to become the perfect example of a sinless man. He enlightens people. For those who believe and receive Him in faith, He generates eternal life. Looking forward with a heart full of thanks,

Pastor Bob Smith



## December Birthdays

01	Shirley Mead
04	Gabriela Miranda - 5th
07	Zach McMullen Wayne Ulbrich
12	Audrey Hart
13	Dale Leinberger
14	Joy Wega
15	Rev. Jerry Lawson Kamela Schmidt - 7th Sandy Zaloudek
16	Dale Riedler Ila Jean Wright
17	Trudi Evans
18	Holly Johnson Myers Parrish Nevin Riedler
22	Lorraine Brinker Tracie Malone
23	Aleksander Lawson
25	Carol Hill Gregg Lewis
26	Dennis Mann Dave Meadows
28	Cory Biladeau Nancy Frayer
30	Helen Schmidt

## December Anniversaries

09	Guoxiang Zhu & "Nancy" Shi - 37th
16	Kenneth & DeAnna Whitlow - 29th
18	Gary and Sara Thomas - 37th
22	Dick & Marilyn Reese - 70th
28	Leon and Nancy Frayer - 61st

**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!**

## We Remember Shirley

Shirley Ann Schwisow (nee Schoenbauer) passed away on October 14th at the Hospice House in Sarasota. She was born on her family's farm in Jordan Minnesota on August 26th, 1939, the 10th child of 13 children.

Shirley attended school in New Prague Minnesota, but joined the convent before graduating high school at St. Joseph High School in Milwaukee Wisconsin. Shirley graduated from Alverno college in 1969 with a Bachelor of Science degree. After leaving the convent, she and her friends made their way to Florida where Shirley began teaching school and met the man of her dreams, Howard Schwisow. They married on August 20, 1973 at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Lincoln, Nebraska and were married 48 years. Shirley was a teacher in Sarasota for 19 years and she loved it. Shirley's family was very important to her. She and Howard loved to travel and especially loved visiting Minnesota when they had the chance. Shirley loved the family she gained upon marrying Howard and especially loved the joy the grandchildren and great grandchildren brought to their lives. Shirley will be missed by so many. She was a wonderful person who always brought a smile to everyone's face.

Shirley was a beacon of Christlike faith and love, a gift from God across her many decades to so many people. Her everyday prayer was the Our Father. She delighted in forgiveness and eagerly looked forward to the resurrection to heaven with her loved ones. Concordia's memorial service was November 23.

Shirley is survived by her sister Lil Gravlin, Faribault MN, brother Ralph Schoenbauer, Colorado Springs Colorado, and her 3 stepchildren; Jeff (Heather), Phyllis (Bill) and David, 2 step grandchildren and 7 step great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband Howard, and her siblings Melvin Schoenbauer (Cathy), Mildred Dehlinger (Richard), Wallace Schoenbauer (Rose Ann), Gilbert Schoenbauer (Shirley) and Jerry Schoenbauer (Pat). Andrew Schoenbauer (Winnie), Carol McDonald (John) and by her parents William and Walburga Schoenbauer.



# December 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1 Advent 1</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>2</b> ***7 p.m. Al-Anon Mtg.	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Homebound Christmas Cards in Narthex 5:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. Advent Worship 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***7 p.m. AA Mtg.	<b>5</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>6</b> 10 a.m. Decorate the Sanctuary and Willer Hall for Christmas	<b>7</b> 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 10 a.m. Bethlehem Breakfast in Willer Hall 4:30 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion 5:15 p.m. Annual Voter's Meeting
<b>8 Advent 2</b> 9 a.m. Worship with praise band, Holy Communion 10 a.m. Annual Voter's Meeting 11 a.m. Worship with organ, hymnal, Holy Communion	<b>9</b> ***	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> January Courier article deadline 5:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. Advent Worship 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***	<b>12</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 7 p.m. Bell Chior Rehearsal	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 9:30 a.m. Assemble Homebound Christmas Baskets 4:30 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion
<b>15 Advent 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 5 p.m. Christmas Bingo in Willer Hall	<b>16</b> ***	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 5:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. Advent Worship 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***	<b>19</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 7 p.m. Bell Chior Rehearsal	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion
<b>22 Advent 4</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>23</b> ***	<b>24 Christmas Eve</b> Church office closed 5 p.m. Family Candlelight Worship Service 11 p.m. Candlelight Worship Service	<b>25 Christmas Day</b> Church office closed 10 a.m. Christmas Worship Service ***	<b>26</b> 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	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion
<b>29 Christmas 1</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>30</b> ***	<b>31 New Year's Eve</b> Church office closed	<b>1 New Year's Day</b> Church office closed Choir on holiday ***	<b>2</b> 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	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 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.



## Refugee Team Update

Hello from the refugee team! We look forward to welcoming back our snowbird members and enjoying another blessed year of ministry to the refugee community. To date, **this year** we were able to share the love of Jesus, working through Lutheran Services Florida, aiding **37 families** by providing household supplies and helping to furnish their new homes. Over **50 donated bikes** were refurbished and given to refugees. There are **an additional 10 families** in the pipeline to support.

With this good news comes the fact that our supplies of **good used furnishings** are in short supply. Please be aware that the apartments or homes obtained for the families are generally small and large items of furniture such as entertainment centers, dining room cabinets, and large sectional couches are difficult to fit. However, if you are unsure if an item can be used please ask before you make other arrangements.

Thank you so much for your help and consideration. You will be blessed! If you have



donations or questions or would like to help contact Gary Thomas at grthomas57@gmail.com or phone on 410-868-9935.

Thank you,  
The Refugee  
Ministry  
Team



## Messiah's Money Management

How does Concordia decide her **annual spending plan**, the budget?

First, our various **ministry leaders** (boards of worship, education, outreach, fellowship, service, properties, and leadership) prayerfully consider past spending and hopes for the new year.

Second, the **Council** (the 6 board leaders, 5 officers, and pastor) assembles a proposed budget.

Finally, **Concordia's members**, having received that draft budget a couple of weeks before, gather for the annual meeting after 4:30 p.m. worship on Saturday, December 7 and between services (10 a.m.) on Sunday, December 8. Questions, concerns, and Concordia's desires can be openly discussed. By the voters' majority, the budget may be amended and is adopted.

All of Concordia's leaders' meetings welcome guests. Would you like to **bring your help**?

Concordia's funds are **transparent**, lovingly lit by the most generous Son-shine! Your Treasurer Thomas Mann (660-379-7630) will be happy to answer any questions.

Paul (Romans 11:35-36) quotes Job to unmask the one... who is the first giver?

"Who has **first given to God** that the giver will be repaid (Job 41:11)?" For from God and through God and to God are all things. To God be the glory forever! Amen."

"From You and through You and to You are all things, **resurrected Jesus!** Give to me and all Your people Your **generous love** to share. To You be the glory forever! Amen."

## Little Library for Neighbors

Concordia's 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.**"



## Read Scripture at Worship

**Volunteer, please**, to join the many who read Scripture at our worship services. By text or email, we'll invite you to the next week's **schedule**. You would be assigned to read the Old or New Testament Scriptures for **your preferred** worship service, Saturday or Sunday. The church office can then email to you **on Thursday the exact text translation** you will speak. If you can't serve on the weekend selected for you, you need only let your church office know. We, or you, will find a substitute. Please **volunteer** with Parish Secretary Lei Ann (941-365-0844) or Worship Chair Cory Biladeau (612-532-3771).

"Lord, let us hear **Your Word on the lips** of even more of Your sisters and brothers!"

## Bible Befrienders

Concordia loves Bible groups!

**Sundays, 10 a.m.** Pastor Stephen leads us into the Bible's beautiful basics. December will discuss the beautiful promises of Jesus' Advent/Coming. 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 Hall **Library Room** (the single red door at the north end). Gary Thomas and Pastor Bob lead the guys.

**Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.** GiFTs! The **women "Grow in Faith through Scripture."** The group recently has been exploring the **Fruit of the Spirit**. How is Jesus' Spirit making your life produce productive? He brings flavor to those who savor you! Visit Concordia's Willer **Fellowship Hall** main room (double red doors).

**"Jesus, speak** to us through Your Book. Let us share Your Good Word with one another."

## Harvest and Craft Fair Thanks

Concordia's Fall Festival and Craft Fair 2024 was a big success! We had **17 vendors inside** and **9 vendors outside**. We had a pretty good size **crowd**, including several families. The **kids** enjoyed the bounce house, face painting, and Bible stories. The fire truck was here, too! The **Aphasia group** handled the free hot dogs and soda sales. And all the bake sale goodies were scarfed up. The weather was beautiful, and it seemed everyone was enjoying the festivities! A BIG THANK YOU to everyone who helped make this outreach event a success! And by the way, the **quilt raffle winner** was Thomas Mann! Congratulations!



## Good Sam Fund

"Caron and I owe a debt of gratitude to Concordia. We did not know where to turn in paying our **homeowners' insurance** when I was in the hospital. Concordia stepped in and paid for it. Consequently, when **Hurricane Milton** came, all of the damage to our house was covered. Without that help, we would not have been able to continue to live in our house. Thanks to God and Concordia for that help. -In His Service and by His Word, Steve and Caron"

"Concordia's Good Samaritan Fund is invaluable in time of need. No one wants to ask for help. But life can change in an instant for anyone. Lacking **food and shelter** (necessities) can be very frightening. Knowing there are **people who care** about you and because God has blessed them, they are willing to share some of their blessings with you, that changes everything. The Good Samaritan Fund is a blessing for the givers and the receivers. Please continue to make it grow! -Anonymous"

This second "thanks," like the first, comes from a member's home. Many people, worshiping beside you at Concordia, have been blessed by the **short-term help** Concordia's Good Samaritan Fund offers. Thanks to the **generosity of many!** If you need help, or if you have any questions or suggestions, please speak to Pastor Stephen or one of Concordia's elders.

Thanks!  
Pastor Stephen

## Pastor Stephen Retiring

At the end of September 1 worship, Pastor Stephen with Ellen announced:

"I will retire as Concordia's pastor the first week of **March 2025**. I look forward to six months more **following Jesus** with you.

"Soon enough, Concordia will rejoice welcoming the next pastor Jesus gives to you. And Ellen and I will have new adventures with the Lord leading us in our retirement. **Please pray** for us. We pray for you.

"The Lord has been so good to me and my family serving with Concordia. For 20 years, we have been **grateful for your love** and support.

"We will always treasure the Christian life we have shared. Even more, with you we look forward to the still better gifts **Jesus has yet to give** to us all."

Pastor Stephen

"Jesus, bless us each and **Your church family**. Gather us to Yourself in worship and send us out to share **Your harmony** with the heart of Sarasota!"

## Concordia Council Minutes - Tuesday September 17, 2024

**Members in attendance:** President-Dennis Jesse, Vice President-Alice Williams, Treasurer-Thomas Mann, Financial Secretary-Rick Reese, Secretary-Ruth Bogenberger, Worship-Cory Biladeau, Outreach-Dawn Mowery, Education-Julie Smith, Properties-Dave Meadows, Fellowship-Diane Scott, Service-Debbie Leslie

**Not Present:** Pastor Stephen Gaulke

**Guest:** Becky Reese

**Constitutional Quorum in person**

The meeting was called to order by Alice Williams at 6:00 P.M.

**Opening Devotion:** Genesis 3:1-13 was read.

**President's Report:** Dennis Jesse announced that a Call Committee to find a new pastor will be formed in January on the advice of our district president, Rev. James Rockey. The committee will be comprised of 3 Council members, 3 elders and 3 church members (not in the previous 2 categories).

Additionally, Pastor Gary Hill will not be called upon to preach on weekends in October, November and December as he has previously done.

Dennis announced that a zoom meeting with District president Rockey will be held in Willer Hall at 6:30 p.m. on October 6<sup>th</sup>. All Council members and elders are strongly encouraged to attend. Dennis made a motion which was seconded by Ruth Bogenberger not to engage any guest pastors before Pastor Stephen's retirement unless Pastor Stephen is away on vacation. The Council voted unanimously to pass this motion.

A second motion made by Dennis and seconded by Cory Biladeau asked the Council members if he should inform President Rockey that we want an interim pastor for Concordia while we search for a permanent pastor. The Council unanimously agreed and the motion was passed.

A discussion ensued about printing the courier every other month rather than every month beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>. Dennis made the motion, Cory seconded it, but the Council was split 4 in favor and 4 opposed. 3 members abstained. This issue will be taken up again at the October meeting.

Dennis made a motion to grant Pastor Stephen his entire 5 weeks' vacation and 10 personal days for 2025. Cory seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by the Council.

**Vice President's Report:** Alice Williams had nothing to report.

**Secretary's Report:** August's meeting minutes as reported by Dennis Jesse were unanimously approved with the following addition: Dawn Mowery added that the church directory is now in its' final stages. Additionally, Dawn shared that the rummage sale dates have been set for February 7 and 8, 2025. The motion to approve August's minutes was made by Dawn Mowery and seconded by Diane Scott.

**Financial Secretary's Report:** Ricky Reese stated that he will be out of town the first week in November. Deposits will be made when he returns.

**Fellowship Report:** No report was given.

**Properties Report:** Dave Meadows plans to put no parking notices on unauthorized vehicles parking on church property.

**Outreach Report:** Dawn Mowery mentioned that a new banner has been ordered for the playground fence.

**Education Report:** No report was given.

**Service Report:** No report was given.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

Alice Williams made a motion which was seconded by Ruth Bogenberger to adjourn the meeting at 7:18. The motion was unanimously approved by the Council. The meeting closed with the praying of the Lord's Prayer in unison.

**The Next Council meeting** is scheduled for **November 12, 2024**, at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted, Ruth Bogenberger, Council Secretary



# 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 2025** issue of "*The Courier*" is **December 11**. 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 nearly every month. 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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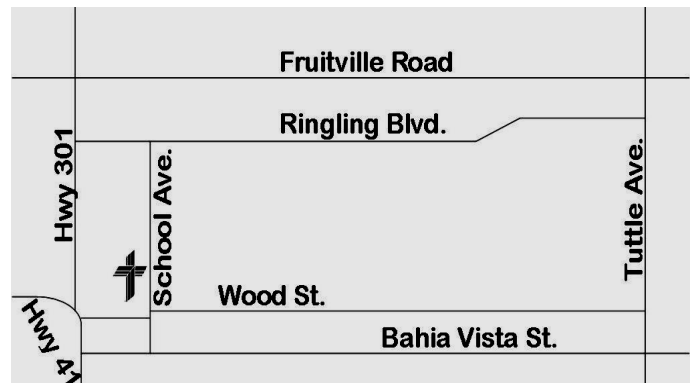
## Concordia Lutheran Church

### 2024 Church Officers

President..... Dennis Jesse .....614-286-0101  
Vice-President ..... Alice Williams.....941-957-1090  
Treasurer ..... Thomas Mann .....630-379-7630  
Secretary ..... Ruth Bogenberger....941-412-4466  
Financial Secretary .... Rick Reese .....941-544-0656

### 2024 Board Chairpersons

Worship ..... Cory Biladeau .....612-532-3771  
Education..... Julie Smith .....813-361-7325  
Outreach..... Dawn Mowery .....678-230-0208  
Fellowship..... Diane Scott .....941-302-4819  
Service..... Debbie Leslie .....941-726-9306  
Properties ..... Dave Meadows .....941-685-6711





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

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# The Concordia Courier

December 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 Pastor  
Lei Ann Ahl ..... Parish Secretary/Bookkeeper  
Johnora L. Hildebrand . Music Director/Organist  
Dawn Brown ..... Praise Band Leader/Pianist



## Concordia Lutheran Church, LCMS

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E-Mail: "concordia5@juno.com"  
Website: [ConcordiaSarasota.org](http://ConcordiaSarasota.org)

Facebook: search Concordia Sarasota

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

