

# The Concordia Courier

A Publication Of Concordia Lutheran Church

† JESUS' HARMONY FOR THE HEART OF SARASOTA † January 2025

## 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.

**Christmas Eve (Tuesday)  
candlelight: 5 p.m.**

**Christmas Eve (Tuesday)  
candlelight communion: 11 p.m.**

**Christmas Day (Wednesday)  
communion: 10 a.m.**

**God, your Rescue, born your Brother!**

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.



Joyful Sounds ring out at December's Bethlehem Breakfast

## 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.**

### 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.**

## Holly Daze

Our **church office closes** December 24 and 25 celebrating **Jesus' birth**; and December 31 and January 1 launching the **New Year**. Also Monday January 20, as we thank God for **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

**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.

"Every year, Jesus, give us all to **rest** in Your work, and joy to work with You!"

## 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 Tuesday **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!"

## 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)

Now until 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!

## God for Us: the New Birth, Feast

Would you delight to **know Jesus better**? To firmly grasp His **promise and purpose** for you? Me too!

**Try** Concordia's Sunday (10 to 10:45 a.m.) Bible discussions. January through February, rejoice in the **beautiful basics of our faith**. As Luther's Small Catechism outlines: Ten Commandments (He loves!), Apostle's Creed (He's faithful), Lord's Prayer (He hears), Baptism (He cleanses) and the Lord's Supper (He feeds us). 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!

True, we had similar discussions last year.

Some of us wanted a **fresh start**. Others want to **go deeper**, and with new friends. Who can you bring with you?

Led by Pastor Stephen, try these **faith-sharing discussions**. Or, enjoy Pastor Bob's Bible studies, the Luther story, offered at the same time Sunday. Who could grow with a loving and truthful church family? No pressure, no obligations. But a chance to rejoice in "**God for Us!**"

"Jesus, let us take to heart Your care, so that we may **share Your heart**."



## Altar Guild News

The Guild has no business meeting in January. Do gather with us Friday **January 10** at 10 a.m. We need lots of hands to **remove Christmas decorations**. Please come!

You are welcome to help **care for the Lord's altar** every season. Might you 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, as You **serve us!**"

## WISDOM FOR 2025

A frog knew his destiny was to turn in to a handsome young prince. But for confirmation, he decided to visit a fortuneteller. The fortuneteller brought the frog in and gazed into her crystal ball. She said, "Oh, I see something. You are going to meet a beautiful young woman."

The frog gets very antsy, "Yes, I knew it. I'm going to become a prince."

The fortuneteller continues, "From the moment she sets eyes on you she will have a voracious desire to know all about you. She will be compelled to get close to you--you'll fascinate her."

The frog is very excited. He asks, "Where will I be?"

The fortuneteller tells, "In a biology class."

Before you go off to a fortuneteller to decide your destiny for 2025, you might want to check out what God has to say. You can live with WISDOM for next year and beyond.

Repeatedly, the Holy Spirit has brought wisdom-laden friends and family from afar to bless me with their gifts and a greater understanding of scripture. I'm glad He sent wise people to me. This wisdom gave me hope that brought peace because it was centered in Jesus. Not a false hope promising my wildest dreams would undoubtedly succeed. Rather a true hope grounded in the certainty that Jesus' plan will prevail and will always turn out for my good.

Divinely smart people sent from God were to remind me I'm under God's authority. I am accountable to Him while also cared for by Him. Loved by Him so I can love others.

A wise man named Solomon once penned, "*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.*" - Proverbs 1.7

WISDOM FOR ME IS THE SUPERNATURAL KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF LIFE GIVEN THROUGH SCRIPTURE TO GUIDE ME TO KNOW WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG.



The wise person knows where to FIND WISDOM. It is in a relationship with God. This is the wisdom I searched for since the springtime in my life. The more I understand this, the more I want to carry on a conversation with Him.

James 1:5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who*

*gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.* This verse reminds me of a continuous prayer I have asked God to answer: "Lord, I need wisdom." God has answered this repeated request.

My opinion is that it *takes time to become wise and significant.*

Wisdom is a combination of knowledge, faith (trust) and righteousness (obedience). But how does the word WISDOM lead to purpose, confidence, honor and all the other good things we desire?

Godly wisdom is developed through a lifetime of Godly decisions, Godly reactions, and the application of scriptural principles to daily circumstances. *Luther believed that wisdom lies in truth, found in Scripture, which is everlasting.*

All eyes are focusing towards the new year. Our hope is 2025 will heal what 2024 has broken in our world. Only when we view Christmas through the eyes of Calvary can we find the hope our souls need. I pray that in 2025, you'll know that God indeed does have a plan for your life. I hope you'll learn how to find wisdom and how to be wise for the rest of your life.

"Father, as we embark upon a new year, remind my heart to leave the old things behind and look ahead to a new year, full of fresh possibilities. Amen."

Pastor Bob Smith, seasonal pastor

## January Premiere!

Here's a Bible study you won't want to miss. **January 5**, between Sunday worship services, Pastor Bob Smith leads the discussion on the video: A Man Named Martin. This three (or more) Sunday series shows us **Martin Luther**.

How did this monk's Spirit-inspired grasp of "God's **justification of sinners** through faith in the Savior" become the cornerstone of Christianity's Reformation? Pastor Smith and Alice will include their **2024 Wittenberg** experiences.

## Poinsettias to Flowers - Praise

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. Poinsettia donors will be listed here next month. **Beautiful fresh flowers** will adorn our altar each **January** week!

"Little Lord Jesus, **give to us** and all Your family Your Christmas joy, peace through 2025!"

## 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**. Find copies of the novel 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 Sunnysdale Circle N, 34233. We will begin at 6:15 p.m.. Even if you have not read the books but desire to join us, **you are welcome!**  
Ellen Gaulke

## 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 **February 2025** Courier seeks articles, due Tuesday **January 21**. Can you **help the crew fold** the news for mailing? Tell Parish Secretary Lei Ann (941-365-0844).

Thank you to December Courier folders: Gloria Bruggeman, Judy Dennis, 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.

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

## Get Ready to Rummage!

Sale Dates: **February 7 and 8**

2025 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fabled Concordia Rummage Sale. That's 50 years of filling a need in our community while building friendships within our church and throughout the neighborhood. Join the Rummage Rockers to organize, set up and run this giant event. We welcome you and any amount of help you can give. We guarantee it will be a rewarding and fun experience.

### What to do now?

**Donate clean items for the sale.** Clothing, housewares, books, appliances, tools, children's items, linens, holiday decorations, lamps, small occasional tables and chairs. Nearly everything is accepted EXCEPT large and upholstered furniture and TV's. No outdated computer monitors or magazines.

### What if I can only work weekends?

**Help with set up and tear down.** Come to Willer Hall on Sunday, February 2 at 10 a.m. between the services to set up the tables. Come back at 2 p.m. on Saturday February 8<sup>th</sup> to pack things up.

Volunteer to help during the sale...**7:30 a.m. till 2 p.m., Friday and Saturday, February 7 and 8.**

### What if I can help work during the week?

Come Monday thru Thursday starting at 8 a.m. to help sort, organize and help price all the goodies. Contact Dawn Mowery 678-230-0208 or the church office.

## Portals of Prayer

"Portals of Prayer" would like to make your New Year merrier. Take home the **daily devotional booklet** after Concordia's worship. All January through March you will be glad you unwrapped this little gift! Why not **share a copy** with a friend?

Would you like the church office to mail you your copy? Ask, and you shall receive (941-365-0844). Pocket size, or large print? Either way, keep your "**Portals**" handy at your bedside or kitchen table.

"Wake us up with You, Jesus! Always feed us Your sweet Word!"

## Worship's Scripture

### Dec. 21, 22 - Advent 4

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

### Dec. 28, 29 - Christmas 1

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

### Jan. 4, 5 - Christmas 2

1 Kings 3:4-15  
Ephesians 1:3-14  
Luke 2:40-52

### Jan. 11, 12 -

#### Baptism of Our Lord

Isaiah 43:1-7  
Romans 6:1-11  
Luke 3:15-22

### Jan. 18, 19 - Epiphany 2

Isaiah 62:1-5  
1 Corinthians 12:1-11  
John 2:1-11

### Jan. 25, 26 - Epiphany 3

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10  
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a  
Luke 4:16-30

## Bible Befrienders

Concordia loves Bible groups!

**Sundays, 10 a.m.** two options: go with Pastor Stephen or Pastor Bob. 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."** January's theme is **Unshakeable**. See eight Biblical women and men, each dreadfully stressed. Still they point us to the Rock! In this cast of characters can you find yourself? Jesus will reveal His strength. 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."

## 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!"

## Gifts to the Giver of All

**Offering envelopes** for your 2025 tithes and gifts are now available for pick up in **the church entryway**. 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!"



## January Birthdays

01	Becky Naughton
02	Missy Powter
04	Andrew Whitlow
05	Ron Billingsley Lana Cruzio - 12th Chery Riedler
06	Sean Powter - 1st Barbara Thomas
07	Kira Endriss Joel Schaefer - 16th Ann Schulz
12	Chris Basinger Penny Miller
13	Ray Blackburn
14	Pastor Ted Wuerffel
15	Eric Endriss Monica Regnier
17	Sara Thomas
18	Elaine Staudt
19	Stephen Madigan
21	Cathy White
22	Dominic Snapp - 12th
23	Christie Basinger Clara Spitler
25	Alice Williams

## January Anniversaries

07	Vicar Euder and Judelande Paul - 3rd
11	Ken and Diane Horn - 56th Lee and Sharon Woerner - 28th
19	Mike and Sue Bell - 34th

**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!**

### Memorials Received

**In memory of Shirley Schwisow**, from Jan Schnarr; and from Jim Thomas.

**"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).

## 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

## 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 of 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.**"

# January 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<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> ***7 p.m. Al-Anon Mtg.	<b>31 New Year's Eve</b> Church office closed	<b>1 New Year's Day</b> Church office closed ***7 p.m. AA Mtg.	<b>2</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>3</b>	<b>4</b> 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion
<b>5 Christmas 2</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>6</b> ***	<b>7</b> 2 p.m. Elder's Meeting	<b>8</b> 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***	<b>9</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>10</b> 10 a.m. Remove Christmas decorations from Sanctuary and Willer Hall	<b>11</b> 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion
<b>12 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 6:15 p.m. Book Club at Gaulke's home	<b>13</b> ***	<b>14</b> 6 p.m. Council Meeting	<b>15</b> 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***	<b>16</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 6 p.m. New Year Event Mtg. in Concordia's Library	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion
<b>19 Epiphany 2</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>20 MLK Jr. Day</b> Office Closed ***	<b>21</b> February Courier article deadline	<b>22</b> 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***	<b>23</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>24</b>	<b>25</b> 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Free Panera Bread 4:30 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion
<b>26 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>27</b> ***	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal ***	<b>30</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>31</b>	<b>1</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.

## Serve Neighbors - Jesus' Care

**Thank you** to everyone who spread Christmas cheer, donating items to the **Refugee Resettlement** helpers and/or the **Pregnancy Resource** ministry.

Jesus gives us so many opportunities to reflect the kindness that He has given to us. Where do you **share Jesus' care** with Sarasota? What next could be your adventure, touching others with some of the help Jesus has given to you?

**Many organizations** ask for Concordia volunteers. Might you help children learn to read or study or sing? Some of us volunteer at A New Beginnings **Early Child Care** on Concordia's campus. Or, have you heard about **Rocket Phonics**? Or the Suncoast School for Innovative Studies? Maybe you've seen the local lack of **affordable housing**? For many years, Concordia people have worked with **SURE**: Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity. With other churches and community leaders, we seek justice for our neighbors.

What's your cause? Wherever you make a difference, where you want to help, please let me know. **Concordia people care**. Please contact Debbie Leslie if you have any questions or suggestions (941-726-9306).

## A New Year, New Ideas

Bring your ideas and enthusiasm to a combined meeting of Outreach, Fellowship, and Education in **Concordia's library** (end of Willer Hall) on **Thursday, January 16 at 6 p.m.**

We'll be talking about how to better **reach out** to our neighbors, how to engage with new people in the community and how to make families with children feel welcome. Everyone is welcome.

Questions? **Contact** Dawn Mowery, Diane Scott, Julie Smith or the church office.

"As we worship, **Jesus, You come!** You give us all we need in Your Word and Feast. You fill us with Yourself! Send us then to tell, care, share, and grow. Let Your world know!"



## Christian Stewardship Is...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Who among us gives as we should? We rejoice because the only **steward truly good** gave His all for us! 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."



## A Note From the President

Happy New Year Concordia. Best wishes to all you for a prosperous 2025. I hope everyone enjoyed the holiday season and celebrating the birth of Jesus. Many activities are happening, and we hope you will be there to enjoy the fellowship. The Rummage Sale is drawing near. This is the 50<sup>th</sup> year of doing this event for the community. I know the Rummage Rockers are busy planning and preparing for the big day. Please keep checking the bulletin and Courier for events coming. We have items on the docket for Council for the year 2025. We plan on several improvements to the grounds in the coming months. I want to thank everyone for attending the Congregational Meeting. It was nice to hear comments from all of you after the meeting. We have a good team on the Council that wants to help make Concordia better. We have set the date for Celebration of Service with Pastor Stephen and Ellen. We are planning the event for February 23<sup>rd</sup> in the afternoon. The Dream Team that is putting this together will have more details to come later. Please mark that date. When more details come about, do not delay in getting tickets, we anticipate we will have only so many spots available.

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

*photo -*  
Sunday  
session,  
Concordia's  
Congregation  
Meeting  
plans for  
2025



### 2024 –2025 Concordia Council

**Outreach** - Dawn Mowery, **President** - Dennis Jesse, **Vice President** - Alice Williams,  
**Education** - Julie Smith, **Fellowship** - Diane Scott, **Secretary** - Ruth Bogenberger,  
**Properties** - Dave Meadows, **Treasurer** - Thomas Mann and **Worship** - Cory Biladeau.  
*Not Pictured:* **Service** - Debbie Leslie and **Financial Secretary** - Rick Reese  
December's Congregational Meeting elected DeAnna Whitlow, the next Council **Secretary**

## We Remember Pat

Patricia Jean Lenke, 99, formerly of Warsaw, IN, passed away peacefully on November 7, 2024, in Sarasota, FL. She was born in Indianapolis, IN on March 17, 1925 to Chester C. Cooley and Deborah M. Shultz Cooley.

Having recently returned from his service in WWII, Pat met George H. Lenke, Jr. on a blind date New Year's Eve. She married this handsome pilot on September 20, 1947 in Elmhurst, IL.

In 1957, the Lenke family moved from Elmhurst, after Pat's family company, Da-Lite Screen, was relocated to Warsaw, IN. Here she raised her three daughters, Barbara, Sandra, and Nancy. Pat enjoyed an active social life, was involved in community affairs and made many lifelong friends. She spent over 50 wonderful years in her beloved Warsaw and Lake Tippecanoe homes before becoming a snowbird and wintering in Bird Key, Sarasota, FL.

In 2012, Pat moved from her home in Bird Key into an apartment in Plymouth Harbor, Sarasota, FL, to be close to her husband. She was especially fond of spending Friday nights at dinner with 'her girls,' who called her 'the mother of the table.'

She loved celebrating her St. Patrick's Day birthday; she was always dressed in green and accessorized with her signature shamrocks. As a child growing up in the Chicago area, she was certain the city dyed the Chicago River green in honor of her birthday. Pat was a worldwide traveler, delighting her daughters with the suitcases filled with souvenirs from her trips. She loved spending winters in Maui, HI, and many photos show Pat and her best friend, Lois, floating in the ocean for hours, holding hands, and talking non-stop.

For those who have known her over the years, all would agree that there never was a more kind, thoughtful, or generous person than Pat. If you had a birthday, she sent you a card or flowers; if you were anywhere in the world where bad weather might be occurring, you knew she was worried for you; if you were sick, she sent a card and advice on how to feel better. (The USPS occasionally sent her thank-you notes for purchasing so many stamps over her lifetime.) Though the arthritis in her hands was painful, it never stopped her from writing to friends. For Pat, it was always more fun to give than to receive.

Maya Angelou wrote "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel". This was one of Pat's favorite quotes and she certainly personified this sentiment during her lifetime.



Pat was blessed with 65 years with her husband, George, who passed away in 2013. She is survived by three daughters: Barbara Gmitter, Lakewood Ranch, FL, Sandra (Don) Brickel, Franklin, TN, and Nancy (Norman) Johnson, Pittsburgh, PA; six grandchildren: Kameron (Sean) McConnell, Wilmington, DE, Shannon (Patrick) Hawkins, Georgetown, KY, Adam Brickel and Samantha Brickel, Franklin, TN, Holly Johnson, Bradenton, FL, and Erica Johnson, Winston-Salem, NC; three great-grandchildren: Mallory McConnell, Wilmington, DE, Elizabeth (Thomas) Hazlett, Georgetown, KY, Christian Hawkins, Georgetown, KY; and one great-great grandchild, Cassandra Hazlett, Georgetown, KY. We will miss this loving and wonderful lady.

Pat was a faithful Christian and was a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Warsaw, IN and Concordia Lutheran Church, Sarasota, FL. As she aged, Pat wondered if when she was newborn her parents had brought her to baptism. She was thrilled with that watery birth into Jesus' family when Pastor Stephen (re?)baptized her at Concordia on her 90th birthday. Pat was always glad to talk about Jesus' Good News and to receive His Sacramental body and blood when her pastor and elders visited.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Just Peachey, 13839 Royal Saddle Dr. Carmel, IN 46032, a charity that supports breast cancer research or Concordia Lutheran Church, 2185 Wood St., Sarasota, FL 34237.

A Celebration of Life will be held on January 11, 2025, from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. at Toale Brothers Funeral Home, 40 North Orange Avenue, Sarasota, FL.

# 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 2025** issue of "*The Courier*" is **January 21**. 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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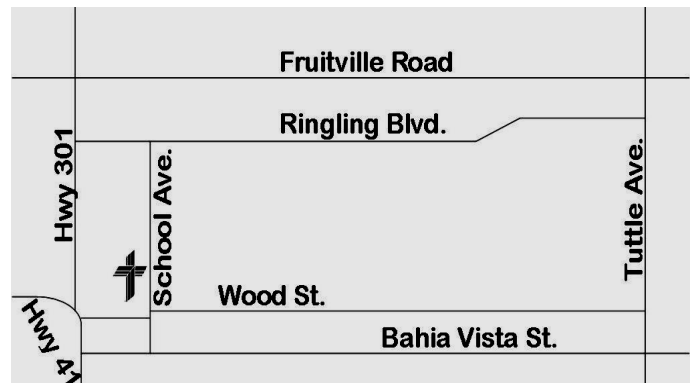
## Concordia Lutheran Church

### 2025 Church Officers

President..... Dennis Jesse .....614-286-0101  
 Vice-President ..... Alice Williams.....941-957-1090  
 Treasurer ..... Thomas Mann .....630-379-7630  
 Secretary ..... DeAnna Whitlow .....941-356-7119  
 Financial Secretary .... Rick Reese .....941-544-0656

### 2025 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

January 2025

## 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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Sarasota, FL 34237-7915  
Ph: (941)365-0844  
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.

