

THE Concordia Messenger



“How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!” Psalm 133:1

December 2025

The Art of Dying Well *ars moriendi*

Rev. Samuel Scheltens

In the great Litany (pg. [xxx] in *Lutheran Service Book*), we pray that God would preserve us from a “sudden and evil death.” So often in movies and other media, the dying are shown to be begging for a quicker end. Often a swift death is considered ‘good’. This is how we get the word *euthanasia* – ‘good death’. But what makes this death ‘good’? To the world, a good death is one which you have control over, one which you feel little or no pain, and one which you (to put it frankly) do not even have to think about your own mortality. Why is this good, according to the world? The world believes that you should be ‘in control’ of your own destiny and every aspect of your life. It’s “your” life, “you” should manage it how “you” like. The world also believes and teaches you that all suffering, no matter what or why, is bad. No one should ever feel pain ever, it says. And ultimately, the world does not believe there is anything on the other side of death. A great and unfathomable nothing. A void. Blackness. So there’s nothing to consider or contemplate in death. It’s just like an animal, you’ve reached the end of your purpose and now you can just fade away.

But this is not what we believe, teach, or confess. This death is not good. This is not the way Christians should look at death. So, again, we pray that God would protect us from “sudden and evil death.” Why? Regarding ‘sudden’ death, why is suddenness such a problem? Shouldn’t we be able to ignore our mortality, and enter death in a blissful ‘peace’? Well, we should enter death at peace – but not in a drunken stupor, but in the confidence and peace which only Christ can give. Sudden death is not good for us, because death requires preparation. It requires contemplation of our mortality, our dependence on Christ, and the faith which we confess. If you die suddenly, there is no time to reconcile with family members and other people you may have sinned against, other people have no time to reconcile their sins against you, and there is no time to consider the promises of Christ as you approach Abraham’s bosom. When we pray against a sudden death, we aren’t asking for a tortuous death – we’re merely asking for a death we can see coming, and allow us time to prepare for it.

Regarding ‘evil’ death, this is referring to tragedy. Death which appears in the darkness, at the hands of wicked men. All death is a result and wage of sin, but this sort of death is the direct result of sin in other men. Fatal car accidents, medical malpractice, premeditated violence, the list could go on. Tragic death is sad and hard for family and friends to cope with. The grief accompanying these deaths is particularly difficult.

So when we face death, we pray that we would not die a death full of fear and sin, but that we would enter into eternal life, confident with the saving name of Jesus Christ on our lips, and the fear, love, and trust in God in our hearts.

We can together sing the final stanza of “Lord Thee I Love with All My Heart,” (LSB#708)

*Lord, let at last thine angels come,
to Abr'ham's bosom bear me home
that I may die unfearing;
and in its narrow chamber keep
my body safe in peaceful sleep
until thy reappearing.
And then from death awaken me
that these mine eyes with joy may see,
O Son of God, thy glorious face,
my Savior and my fount of grace.
Lord Jesus Christ, my prayer attend,
my prayer attend,
and I will praise thee without end.*

Director of Christian Education

I'm glad people told me they liked the church history pictures on social media because that task became bigger than I thought; but in a good way. Thankfully, I could usually tell why a particular document or bulletin was saved. One phrase I saw consistently, especially in the two years of Concordia's history was "venture of faith." Rev. Kaiser, the first pastor at Concordia, and I assume others would refer to Concordia as a venture of faith.

The word venture is a risky or uncertain undertaking. Starting a new church in 1956 I'm sure seemed like a venture. I wonder if it was really a venture? When we take the time to discern God's will, make the necessary calculations, and pray; is it all that risky?

In December, I think about Mary and Joseph. Joseph wanted to quietly divorce Mary, but God sent the angel to say what Mary said was true and that she carried God's Son. Joseph still could have divorced Mary. I'm sure there were rumors. Who is the real father of this child? For Joseph, marrying Mary would look like a risk. But the angel told him to not fear to take Mary as his wife. Joseph didn't have to do it and for Joseph's own reputation it would be better not to. Yet, he took a venture of faith.

Joseph puts his trust in the Lord and became the earthly father figure to Jesus. God continued to keep the family safe. After the visit of the Magi, Joseph is warned in a dream to flee because Herod wants to kill Jesus. Who wants to move or go on a long trip with a toddler? Once again, Joseph took a venture of faith and listened to God's Word through the angel and fled to Egypt to keep Jesus safe.

When the child Jesus grew, a greater venture of faith would take place. Jesus told his disciples in Luke 9 that the Son of Man must suffer, die, and in three days rise. Jesus knew going to Jerusalem was a venture of faith. However, it wasn't a venture. We may see it as such with our human perspective, but our omniscient God knows it's just what needs to be done. Jesus knew what would happen. Jesus knew he would suffer, be murdered, and rise again. Jesus knew he would be the sacrifice to atone for the sins of all times, places, and people. Jesus knew it was him because no one else could live a life free from sin except the one who is True God and True Man. It wasn't risky. Jesus knew what would happen. Jesus trusted and submitted to the Father's will so that all who believe in Jesus as their Savior may be saved and go to heaven. There was no risk involved, just humble submission.

It was driven by faith and trust. When Concordia began years ago, it must have seemed risky. Yet, God worked through His Word and His Sacrament to grow His church. God was there because God promises to be found in His Word and Sacrament. We

continue to seek God every Sunday through His Word and Sacrament. I pray we all continue to see God in His Word throughout the week as well. While I'll always appreciate the poetry of the venture of faith; I wonder what steps can we as individuals and a church take in faith through this Advent and Christmas season and into the new year? Where will God guide us as we continue to listen to Him and seek Him with all our hearts?

~Sarah Shadday

Sunday School/Bible Class

Sunday School 10:45am

Young Children are learning about John the Baptist and Jesus.

Older Children are learning about Resilient Minds.

Youth are attending the adult Bible Study.

Adults are studying the Small Catechism with Pastor Scheltens.

Women's Sunday Night Bible Study 6 pm are continuing Donna Snow's book *Unshakeable*.

Women's Tuesday Night Bible Study 7 pm is on break until 2026.

Preschool

We would like to thank those who helped with our Thanksgiving celebrations. It is always a special time for families to come into our church, see their children perform a program, and spend time together. Thank you for those who helped make those days special.

The Preschoolers will work hard to get ready for the Christmas Program. We hope to see people from our congregation there since it is during our normal Advent service time. Congregation members will see some children from our congregation, and also some children from Vacation Bible School. The congregation is also welcome to join us for the cookie reception in Fellowship Hall following the program.

Concordia Church- recent death of Family Members

- Family of Juliet Renee Werner in her passing, born premature at 25 weeks. Daughter of Reid and Jenna Werner. Granddaughter of Jim and Julia Yeater.
- Family of Dan Bass in his passing. Susan Bass Henrickson's father-in-law
- Family of Orpha Emkes in her passing. Mike Emkes's mother

(Please continue to remember these in your prayers)

Preschool 3's - Singing Praises to the Lord and Jammin' on their Musical Instruments during Thanksgiving festivities



Fellowship

We will once again be hosting **Advent Dinners** starting at 5pm on Wednesday, December 3rd and 10th before the Advent services which start at 6:30pm. Congregation members are welcome to bring desserts if they wish for the meals; otherwise, all food is provided. On Wednesday, December 17th at 6:30pm we will have our Preschool Christmas Program with a cookie reception to follow.

On Sunday, December 14th during the Education Hour we will have our **Church Christmas Party**. There will be time to talk, play games, and make crafts. Light refreshments will be served. All are invited. We will also have a cookie exchange that same day. If someone would like to participate but can't make cookies for any reason, please talk to Sarah Shadday. Extra cookie can be made for everyone to participate. Otherwise, pick a favorite type of cookie and bake at least two dozen. We'll set out cookies and everyone can take some of each other's cookies. Church will provide the trays people can use to take their cookies home. Some cookies will be used in our homebound member's gift baskets.

LWML Mission Grants at Work

2025-2027 Mission Grant #4 (Omaha Convention)

**The Perpetual Call for Pastors and Teachers
— LCMS Office of Pastoral Education, U.S. —
\$100,000 (see #4, pg 3.)**

Set Apart to Serve is a Synod-wide initiative focused on forming and recruiting full-time pastors and church workers. Supplying the church with church workers is one of the highest priorities of the LCMS, since pastors and commissioned church workers preach and teach the Word of Christ through which the Holy Spirit creates and sustains faith. The demand for more pastors, Lutheran school teachers, and commissioned church workers is urgent. Set Apart to Serve is providing resources to encourage intentional conversations with youth to pursue a vocation in church work. The Set Apart to Serve initiative is leading to increased enrollment in the church worker formation programs at the LCMS Concordia universities and the seminaries. Districts and churches are being encouraged to reach out to their youth through workshops and conferences. This grant will help cover part of the expenses for creating resources, travel, and presentations at workshops and conferences, and staffing.

Christmas Cookie Exchange

This year, for our Church Christmas Party in December, we will host a cookie exchange. Anyone who would like to participate is invited to bring 1-2 batches of ONE KIND of cookie to the party. The day of the exchange, we will line the cookies up and everyone can go through and get some of each kind of cookie so people will end up with a container of multiple kinds of cookies instead of just one kind they brought to the exchange. We will also take some of the cookies and put them into the Christmas gifts for the homebound members. More information will come out later about the exchange and Christmas party, but we wanted to share the information now for those who plan out their holiday bakes!

Dec 2025 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30 9:30am - Worship 10:45am - Sunday School 6pm - Women's Bible Sty	1 6:30pm - Properties 6:30pm - Worship Service 7pm - Elders	2	3 5pm - Advent Dinner 6:30pm - Advent I Midweek	4	5	6 10am - O.A.
7 9:30am - Worship 10:45am - Sunday School 3pm - Advent Glow	8 6:30pm - Worship Service	9	10 5pm - Advent Dinner 6:30pm - Advent II Midweek	11 6am - Men's Bible Study	12	13 9am - Quilting 10am - O.A.
14 9:30am - Worship 10:45am - Church Christmas Party	15 6:30pm - Worship Service 7pm - Church Council	16	17 6:30pm - Preschool Christmas 7pm - Reception	18	19	20 10am - O.A.
21 9:30am - Worship 10:45am - Sunday School	22 6:30pm - Worship Service	23	24 6:30pm - Christmas Eve (Vespers) 11pm - Christmas Eve Midnight	25 9:30am - Christmas Divine Worship	26	27 10am - O.A.
28 9:30am - Worship 10:45am - Sunday School 6pm - Women's Bible Sty	29 6:30pm - Worship Service	30	31 6:30pm - New Year's Eve Divine	1	2	3 10am - O.A.

Treasurers Report

October 2024

Income Descriptions	Oct 2024 4 Sundays	Oct 2025 4 Sundays	Total to Date
Unified Budget	16,482.00	17,435.00	258,971.58
Memorials (Non-Designated)	-	-	227.00
Memorials (Designated)	45,029.75	-	100.00
Designated Gifts	546.61	18,258.31	112,004.30
Reimbursements & Refunds	-	-	-
Rents & Wedding Fees	195.00	120.00	610.00
Miscellaneous*	-	-	121,933.02
Total Income	62,253.36	35,813.31	493,845.90
Average per week Unified Budget	4,120.50	4,358.75	6,640.30
Amount needed per week for Unified Budget	6,728.85	6,728.85	6,728.85

Support is included in Unified Budget Expenses	Oct-25	Total to Date
Missions - District Synod	500.00	7,000.00
Lutheran High School	750.00	7,500.00
Lutheran Hispanic Ministry	187.50	1,875.00
Total Support	1,437.50	16,375.00

Board Expenses	Oct-25	Total To Date	Total Budget
Pastoral Care	7,901.21	68,442.65	125,400.00
Christian Education	6,555.85	72,377.11	81,800.00
Congregational Worship	872.17	8,478.98	7,200.00
Missions & Outreach	1,437.50	22,275.17	21,500.00
Office	2,155.54	22,832.00	32,500.00
Properties	3,473.57	65,821.68	81,500.00
Unified Budget Total	22,395.84	260,227.59	349,900.00

Lutheran Church Extension Fund Steward Accounts	Balance 10-31-2025
Anniversaries & Birthday - 1073	4,705.68
Board of Youth - Trip - 5446***	11,678.65
Building Fund - 2978**	3,025.15
Capital Improvements - 9545	13,984.15
Church Sign	984.56
Church Landscaping	890.85
Heine Family Project	1,749.82
Total Capital Improvements - \$17,609.39	17,609.39
Concordia Cares - 6370	3,551.79
Inheritance Fund - 7423	103,233.30
Preschool Landscaping & Gardening - 2434	150.73
Total in LCEF Steward Accounts	143,954.69
Interest Earned	484.49
Total In Church Checking Account	\$161,934.66
Total in Preschool Account	\$19,993.52

Payments made to kitchen remodel - Aug.	\$68,046.10
Payments made to kitchen remodel - Sept.	\$57,698.88
Payments made to kitchen remodel - Oct.	\$30,973.28
Kitchen Reno To Date	\$156,718.26

Weekly Attendance and Offerings		
Week of	2025	Offerings
November 2, 2025	117	\$7,050.00
November 9, 2025	82	\$3103.11
November 16, 2025	112	\$19,715.00
November 23, 2025	107	\$11,555.50
November 30, 2025	TBD	TBD

INTERCESSION and PRAYER
(Matthew 8:17)

Concordia Members

Surgery/Testing/

Recovery:

- Craig Smith 9/30/25
- Jim Lanning 9/29/25
- Betty Economou 9/22/25
- Lynda Martin 6/16/25
- Jim Roemer 2/12/23
- Tommy Ragsdale 12/11/22
- Peter Economou 4/22/19



Friends of Concordia

- Chuck Buth 9/23/25
- Barb Norris 4/16/25
- Kathleen Sebastian 1/30/25
- Beverly Tewell 1/30/25
- Tyshae Smith 8/28/24
- Josephine Shafer 8/13/24
- Leeroy & Vernon Good 6/10/24
- Ralph McGraw 1/2/24
- Connie Henderson 5/14/23
- Terry & Diana Deamron 9/10/22
- Beverly Stephens 8/20/22
- Ed Stephens 2/18/24
- Terry Haskett 5/15/22
- Missy, Austin & Travis Golden 4/20/22
- Judy Heine 11/22/21
- Pat Brooks 9/23/21
- Rose Swenson 7/27/21
- Susan Soggs 1/7/21
- Rev. Howard Fabricius 1/2/21
- Minna Van Arsdale 8/7/19
- Brandon Frederking 5/2/19
- Steve Stephenson 4/28/19
- Thomas Clark 12/16/18

Battling Cancer / MS

- Kelsey Merena 10/25/22
- David Buuck 9/27/21

Homebound Concordia Members

- Sharon Bruhn, 690 South State Ball Brothers 125, Franklin IN 46131
- Ginny Emmons, 581 Cielo Vista Dr, Greenwood, IN 46143
- Phillis Infante, 1501 S Meridian St Apt 139, Indianapolis, IN 46225
- Pat Barnes, 2339 S 135, Rm 308, Greenwood, IN 46143

Military Servicemen & women.

- Erica Stephenson, Army, National Guard
- LTJG Chloe (Owen) Munoz, 12137 Red Barn Ct, Jacksonville, FL 32226
- Ivan Munoz, (LTJG)
- Zach Goins, 822 Timbervale Trail, Highlands Ranch, CO, 80129 (Navy Reserve)
- CPL Jadon Ranbarger (2166 Marmande St., Kailua, HI 96734)
- PFC Macy Ranbarger (MCAS New River, NC)
- Airman 1st Class, Alexander J. Economou, Air Natl Guard, Ft. Wayne, IN

Advent Glow

Sunday, December 7 at 3 p.m.

Concordia ladies and their friends will gather to celebrate Advent. Our focus this year will be Baby Jesus, baby Sebastian, and babies in need. The musical group, Witness, will serenade us.

In lieu of a baby shower, we are contributing toward a double stroller for the Scheltens. (Drop donations into the bulletin board envelope or give to Becky Lanning.) Church members are encouraged to bring packages of diapers to church the next few weeks for Resources of Hope, which serves foster care families. (TEDD, The Emergency Diaper Dispensary overseen by Lutheran Child and Family Services, has closed.)

So that we know how many tables to set up, please sign up at the LWCC bulletin board. There are THREE lists: 1) attending, 2) ladies willing to decorate a table, and 3) a sign-up for those wishing to donate sweet or savory finger foods for the buffet. Coffee, tea, water, and table service will be provided.

Thrivent Action Teams are still needed this year. If you are a Thrivent member, you likely have FREE Action Teams which can be \$250 to sponsor an event. Events we're looking for sponsors include: Advent Dinners (November/December), Christmas Cookie Exchange (December), Preschool Christmas Gifts (December), and Preschool Program Reception (December). If you are a Thrivent member and are willing to sponsor one of these events, let Sarah Shadday sarah.shadday@concordia-lcms.com or 314-330-3782 know and she can help with the forms

Lutheran Hour Ministries Radio Schedule

The Lutheran Hour—Sundays
WIRE (91.1 FM) 6:00 AM
WBRI (1500 AM) 6:30 AM
WCBK (102.3 FM) 7:00 AM
WBNL (1540 AM) 1:00 PM

12/7 "Chosen for What?"
12/14 "Pictures of Patience"
12/21 "Everybody is Somebody"
12/28 "Get Ready for the Best"

Lutheran Hour is now broadcast on American Forces Network (AFN). To find other airings near you, check the broadcast guide at lhm.org/guide.

Worship Anew—Sundays
WRTV (TV 6) 7:00 AM

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Website: <http://www.concordia-lcms.com>



Sunday Worship Services
9:30 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Classes
10:45 a.m.

Monday Worship Service
6:30 p.m.



Pastor Sam Scheltens
E-mail pastorscheltens@concordia-lcms.com

Staff:

Sarah Shadday *Dir. Christian Education*
Erica Stephenson *Deaconess*
Sarah Shadday *Preschool Director*
Brad Wheeler *Admin. Assistant*

Office hours Mon. - Fri. 8am - noon

Church Council

President
Bruce Markel

Vice-President
Chris Brooks

Mike Emkes, Elder

Mike Finger, Elder

Mike Ford

Susan Henrickson

Julia Yeater

Recording Secretary
Susan Ranbarger

Treasurer
Tammy Owen

Financial Secretary
Carol Monroe

BIRTHDAYS:

Brooks, Gail	12/4
Reed, Gabi	12/6
Thetford, Emily	12/6
Cummings, Donna	12/9
Dombroski, Don	12/10
Roncza, Laura	12/14
Pardieck, Mike	12/15
Bontrager, Shanda	12/16
Krause, Sabrina	12/18
Sullivan, Joe	12/18
Forster, Chris	12/19
Tinsley, Adele	12/24
Ragsdale, Kris	12/27
Brooks, Chris	12/30
Heine, Dawn	12/31

WEDDINGS:

Jill & Don Scifres	44	12/5
Dan & Diana Sullivan	51	12/14
Doug & Heidi Kearns	41	12/15
Shawn & Gabriele Reed	10	12/19
Marvin & Linda Barkes	62	12/28
Michael & Sarah Marot	31	12/30

Years Date

Upcoming Special Collections

Everyone is so generous with the gifts God has given them. We have a lot of collections these final months. Here is a list of current and upcoming new collections:

Angel Tree gifts this month for the same families from Northeast Elementary. Collection will be in the lobby.

Christmas cards for shut ins, we are collecting them through December 14th. Collection location is to be determined.

The Coolest Monk of All!



Looking Ahead

On the **morning of Saturday, January 10**, we will make a few sensory or fidget mats to give away. These are great for people who need to keep fingers busy, whether they are individuals with ADHD, anxiety, autism, or memory issues. We need items that can be manipulated (large buttons, large beads, simple buckles), different textures of fabric (small pieces of corduroy, fleece, sequin fabric), "filling" for between layers of fabric, applique patches, and items that can be attached to the mat. To get an idea of what we need, check out "Fidget Blankets" on Pinterest, Etsy, and Amazon.

For those not excited about the fidget mats, we will have quilts to "tie" (tie knots to hold quilt layers together). Light refreshments will be served.

West Wing Renovation

It was a blessing the Preschool was able to use the new Fellowship Hall and kitchen for their Thanksgiving celebrations, as well as Concordia's 69th Anniversary. We would like to thank the West Wing Renovation Committee for all their hard work, dedication, and time spent helping make this space beautiful. A special thanks to Steve Corn and the workers at C&C Construction who worked diligently to finish this space. We pray God would use this space to help us learn more about him, grow together as children of God, and share God's Word with our community.



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& Preschool
305 N Howard Road, Greenwood, IN 46142