

MARCH 2026

# THE FORTRESS

Newsletter of Concordia Lutheran Church, Preschool & Academy

## DATES TO NOTE

- 3.4, . Lenten Suppers &
- 3.11, Lenten Services
- 3.18 &
- 3.25
- 3.8 . Special Voter's Meeting - CLA Sustainability
- 3.15 . Resource Center
- 3.29 . Palm Sunday
- 3.30 . Holy Monday
- 3.31 . Holy Tuesday

## SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

*Swaddling Clothes*

Contact Jamie Kotovsky

*YOW!*

Contact the Board of Ed

## GOD'S WORD IS LIFE

*From Pastor*

DAs I write this, breaking news in the world of sports tells that the Chicago Bears might move to Hammond, Indiana. Perhaps that news will change. I don't know, I didn't read the article.

Maybe Jesus will return first. That would be wonderful.

"Lord, come quickly."

I find myself praying those words with greater frequency, especially as I read the constant stream of news headlines. I'm making a concerted effort to avoid the News, yet the News is constantly present, easily accessible, and consistently in-your-face. "READ ME" the headlines shout with alacrity. It's easier to just read the headlines than to dive into the article and read the details. Then, as soon as the headline is read, or perhaps the article looked a little, the news story disappears and another headline is sensationalized eye-candy.

It's easier to stay on the surface than get into the details. But what does the surface have to offer? A headline demands your attention; a 2-line synopsis of the news article is shallow; and now in many cases, a brief AI summary details main points of the article. There's no reason to read the article now!

Our reasons to actually take time to read and engage with the texts, learn more about a specific situation or topic, and then form opinions and grow in understanding is being diminished by brevity, expediency, and overstimulation.

I wonder if this has affected attitudes toward God's Word and His Church. I can think a surface-level Christianity wants a bible verse here or there, a quick devotion, a good spiritual feeling, celebrations of the blessings of life... and anything negative is detrimental. Is your Christian faith a life of headlines, brief bible verses here and there, a constant stream of teaching of "pop Christianity", and short devotions until the next shiny spark of a church marketing gimmick grabs the attention? This, coupled with an avoiding of the details of God's Word which teaching us about ourselves, our life, and the Church?

That's not how our Lord treats us. God comes to engage with His people. He walked with Adam and Eve. He wrestled with Jacob. He met Moses face to face. He spoke to His prophets. He observed and knew the struggles of His people. And He came down in our flesh to get even more into the details of our life. Jesus wasn't content with passing over the problems of sinners, giving mere summary nuggets of Law and Gospel, or simply affirming sinners in their errors and sins. Jesus brought

the fullness of the Godhead bodily to us, taught the whole counsel of God, suffered and died on the cross for us, and taught His disciples along the way. There was a time in John 6 when many of His disciples stopped following Him because, they said, His teachings were too hard to understand. That's when Jesus turned to the 12 and asked them "Do you want to go away as well?" Peter responded for the 12, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

"The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life," Jesus had said to them. To have the Word is life. To learn the Word is to know Christ, to know about yourself, and to believe that He lived, died, and rose for us. And the more we learn about ourselves, our world, the grace and mercy, and the temporary and eternal promises of God, the more we desire "Lord, come quickly, and deliver us from evil."

Until that final Easter day, Jesus comes among us quickly in His Word, His Church, and His Sacraments. As He teaches and strengthens us in faith toward him and love toward one another through these, He also brings Himself to us in the words, hands, actions and love of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

It doesn't matter really what the Bears choose to do. The News cycle gives us many opportunities to pray, help our neighbor, and to look forward to the coming of Christ among us and at the end. The God, who upholds the universe with the strength of his hands, is the same God who heals, serves, forgives, and unites us together with His nail pierced hands. Lord, come quickly.

Peace in Christ, *Rev. Stephen M. Mueller*  
Pastor Mueller

God desires, we "pray without ceasing", holding tight to God and His good and gracious will. Due to this command, **Prayer Connection Cards** have been created to help nurture our life of prayer at Concordia by encouraging us to pray for our church leaders, teachers, and others. The cards are available to pick up at the back of church and we encourage you to pray for the person on the card. Thank you for joining in this effort!

**We have the opportunity, the duty and the privilege to make a difference for the good of our state and our nation by exercising our right to vote! The Illinois primary is Tuesday, March 17th.** Early voting begins on Thursday, February 5th. Not registered to vote? Go to your County Courthouse to the Clerk's office and they will help you register. All you need is a current drivers license to register. In the USA, we have been given the right to choose our leaders. For the sake of freedom, please exercise this God-given right!

Volunteers are needed to prepare and clean up the **Coffee Station** on Sunday mornings. Helping to foster fellowship, this low-stress, high-impact role involves brewing coffee, making sure supplies are full and, if you are able, rinsing out the empty pots. **Time Commitment:** Arrive early (approx. 7:30AM) for preparation. **Requirements:** No experience needed; very simple training is provided. **Sign-Up:** Talk to Arline Sigwalt!

**The Lutheran Study Bible App**

**NOW AVAILABLE**

Available on the **App Store** | GET IT ON **Google Play**

**LCMS publisher Concordia Publishing House has some wonderful resources to aid in your reflection, study, and prayer during Lent. Check out their new Bible App or stop by our own Concordia Resource Center on March 15 between services to select physical items available for purchase.**

We're now online!  
To place an order for pickup,  
**PLEASE VISIT THE ONLINE ORDER REQUEST:**

**SWADDLING CLOTHES**

Sharing the mercy of Christ with our neighbors through the gifts of clothing, food, friendship, and the forgiving Word of God.



Contact the office or scan the QR code to

# ENROLL NOW

for the '26-'27 school year!

The picture above is a praise mural that our 4-year-old students made by dancing to praise music after walking in paint during National Lutheran Schools Week.



## PRESCHOOL PRESS

*From Mrs. Roberts*

### Greetings and blessings Concordia Church Family!

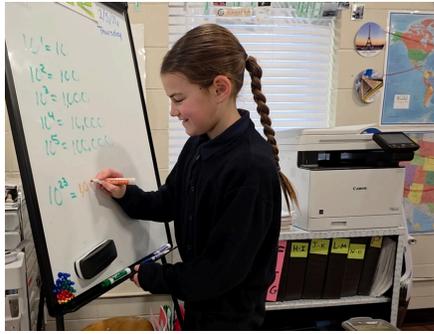
We're getting an early taste of spring and have enjoyed some days on the playground in the middle of February. Our students are hoping for more snow and at the same time enjoying the time outside.

It wasn't just warmer outside for February; we had warm hearts from celebrating Valentine's Day with our friends and families.

We love to share the love of Jesus and reflect on our ability to love each other - because He first loved us (1 John 4:19.)

I was surprised and honored by the Concordia Board of Education and Staff with a luncheon and gifts in honor of 10 years at Concordia Lutheran Preschool. God's hand brought me here and it has been the biggest blessing in the last decade to partner with you in the mission of reaching children and families with the love of Jesus. As we celebrate 25 years of ministry through the preschool, I couldn't be more grateful to be a part of the journey.





# ACADEMY ANNOUNCEMENTS

*From Mrs. Coppejans*

February brought both celebration and reflection to Concordia Lutheran Academy. We shared God's love and kindness with one another on Valentine's Day, then turned our hearts toward introspection as we entered the Lenten season, remembering Christ's sacrifice and preparing for the hope of Easter.

As the February comes to an end, we look forward to spring parent-teacher conferences as Quarter 3 wraps up in March, as well as some much needed time off to relax and refresh over Spring Break.



**CLA is looking for volunteers to help during lunch and recess time on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:20 am to 12:30 pm.** If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Rachel Kramer.



*Memorize a verse with us!*

*Blessed be his glorious name forever;  
may the whole earth be filled  
with his glory! Amen and Amen!*

*Pslam 72:19*



# 2026 LENT & EASTER AT CONCORDIA

Wednesday Lenten Services	Suppers - 5:00 PM Services - 7:00 PM
Palm Sunday 3.29.26	Services - 8:00 & 10:30 AM ☩
Holy Monday 3.30.26	Vespers Service - 7:00 PM
Holy Tuesday 3.31.26	Service of Evening Prayer - 7:00 PM
Holy Wednesday 4.1.26	Service of Confession - 7:00 PM
Maundy Thursday 4.2.26	Senior Service - 11:00 AM ☩ Service - 7:00 PM ☩
Good Friday 4.3.26	Chief Service - 12:00 PM ☩ Tenebrae - 7:00 PM
Easter Vigil 4.4.26	Service - 7:00 PM ☩
Easter Sunday 4.5.26	Sunrise Service - 6:30 AM ☩ Easter Service - 10:30 AM ☩

IT IS FINISHED - THE HOLY WEEK PROPHECIES OF ZECHARIAH  
THEY WILL LOOK ON ME, THE ONE THEY HAVE PIERCED... ZECHARIAH 12:10



Help us fill the sanctuary with white lilies to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord!  
If you would like to order an Easter lily for **\$15.00** each, please fill out this form  
and return it to the church office. Payment must accompany your order.

Make checks payable to **Concordia Lutheran Church**.

Turn your form and payment into the church office by **Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup>**.

**No orders will be taken after this day.**

You may pick up your lily(ies) after the second service on Easter morning, Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of lilies: \_\_\_\_\_

IN MEMORY OF \_\_\_\_\_

TO GIVE THANKS TO GOD \_\_\_\_\_

TO CELEBRATE \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

# In our prayers...

**Concordia Family:** Marc Motzer, Marcia Himmelman, Nash, Mary Miller, Joline Parrish, Lenore Vandevord, Jenni DeGerengel, Wendy & Jon Grunwald, Lola Helke, Roger Hull, Jackson Kinnard, Phil Jahn, Cindy Wagoner, Fama Prokup, Martin Fleming, Sue Smithson, Julie Kuse, Janine Persefield, Lois Misfeldt, Brad Watters, our inactive members **Friends of Concordia:** Angela Hull, Donte Nystrom, Renee Hull, Colin, Dan & Lisa Gordon, Tammy Bruns, Craig, Jim & Jennifer Garner, Jeff McQuaid, Tammy Sheldon, Barbara Sigwalt, Joe Moriarity, Debbie DelFiacco, Debbie Hardesty, Justin Rittenhouse, Megan & Daxton Crain, Ann Key, A.J. Gale, Gary Magnuson, Julie Fiers, Karen Wright, Helen Stewart, John Cross, John Gravitt, Tony Snell, Cameron Mayo, Joan Maier, Chris Frisk, Connie Wagner, Alice Wright, Stephanie Kursock, Joan McCarron

**Our church workers. Our Synodical leaders:** Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison - Synod President, Rev. Michael Mohr - CID President. **Our nation's leaders:** especially President Trump and Governor Pritzker. **The Armed Forces, law enforcement officers, and firefighters.**

If you wish to submit a prayer request, please contact Pastor or the office. If you or a member of your family have a medical procedure planned or are admitted to the hospital, please call the church office. In the event of an after-hours emergency please contact Pastor at (309) 944-2827.

Please continue to pray for the mission of Concordia.

As Christian stewards, let us constantly be reminded and thankful that all gifts - **time, talent, and treasure - are gifts from God;**

and be encouraged to use them in God pleasing ways.



**Funds Status as of January 31, 2026**  
**The approved 2026 budget is \$367,948**

	JAN	YTD
<b>Income</b>	18,401.79	18,401.79
<b>Expenses</b>	42,862.01	42,862.01
<b>Income Less Expense</b>	-24,460.22	-24,460.22

## Odds and Ends

- Some things remain the same but are important none the less!

**Please put your name on pew envelopes.** We want to give you credit for all your contributions on your year-end records. We appreciate your generosity to all the various missions/activities we sponsor and support!

**Large Print Portals of Prayer** are available to our members with vision difficulties. If you are in need of one, please contact Linda Hull or the church office.

**Voter's Meetings** - Become a voting member of our congregation and help make decisions for our church! The only conditions are being 18 years of age and a current member at Concordia. Please talk to Mark Quart (Church President) or the church office for more details.

**Next Voter's Meeting: May 17, 2026 - 1:30 PM**

**Remember:** Please contact the office to inform us of a name, address, marital status, number, or email change.

**If you admitted to a hospital,** be sure to say you are a member of Concordia Lutheran or have a family member or friend call the office or Pastor Mueller. Otherwise, we may not be aware of your hospitalization. Thank you.

**Check out the greeting cards** in the display rack! For only \$1.00 you can get a pretty card for your occasion and the money goes to LWML missions.

**The little House** in the back of the sanctuary is a collection for A Dollar for Missions! What is A Dollar for Missions? The Central Illinois District (CID) encourages its congregations to invite their members to contribute one dollar per member per week for missions, in addition to their ordinary offerings. This kind of over-and-above giving is called "A Dollar for Missions". These gifts will aid the CID in caring for different needs of its missions such as university churches and student centers.

Concordia Ladies League met on February 12, 2026 with 9 members present. Hosting for the day were Marta Licht and Arline Sigwalt. On a decorated table we enjoyed cake, coffee, candied walnuts and chocolate and yogurt covered raisins.

President Arline Sigwalt called the meeting to order. For the opening she read the poem "Thanks" by Darcie Simms, she also gave the devotion "Repurposing". Mary Hull took roll call with the question: What are you most thankful for? Mary read the minutes for the January meeting and they were approved as read. Janett Farnum gave the treasurer's report and they were approved as given.

Our new yearly booklets were handed out. The Lenten Supper that we will serve will be March 18. We discussed what we might serve for that. More discussion will take place at the March meeting.

It was decided that programs for meetings this year will be decided by each month's hosts. We will try that for this year and see what we think about how it went.

Joy Noard sent out Valentine cards to: Dean and Diane DePauw, Doris Paxton, Fama Prokup, Eileen Eiklor, Janine Persfield, Lois Misfeldt, Phil and Kathi Jahn, Deb Williams, Wendy Grundwald, Wendy Nelson, and Sandy Zanfess.

Our next meeting will be March 12 at 1:00. Hosts will be Nancy Specht and Sherry Wechsler. We closed with The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted , Mary Hull, Secretary

# CONCORDIA Ladies League



**The Lutheran Witness is a magazine from Concordia Publishing House focusing on interpreting the contemporary world from a Lutheran perspective. A 1-year subscription, 11 issues from July '26-July '27, is available for \$27.99. If you would like to sign-up to receive this subscription, please contact the office, or turn in your Lutheran Witness envelope with payment by May 1st.**

Our day started with Joyce Dodge leading us in prayer before we enjoyed a treat prepared by Kathy Kramer. We sang hymn #770, What a Friend We Have In Jesus.

Devotions were given by Kathy Kramer titled "When a Little Says a Lot" from the Lutheran Digest.

Pastor Mueller led us in a Bible study about "The Seasons of Lent, Repentance, Faith, and the Cross".

Our meeting started with roll call answered by telling a quality of a good friend. There were 12 members present. The January 2026 minutes were read and approved. The treasurer gave a report of our checkbook balance of \$483.09. Cards were sent by Kathy and we had several responses from people that purchased our Christmas cookies.

Old Business: Update on the District collection of Mites. The District needs \$130,000 by March in order to fulfill our goal. Shrove Tuesday Prayer Service and Breakfast will be held on February 17, 2026. Members were asked to sign up to bring coffee cakes and rolls for the breakfast. Many members will be participating in the Prayer Service.

New Business: We have chosen the March 10th Lenten Supper to serve a variety of soups and desserts.

Our Mite Box devotion was read and our Mites were collected. The next LWML meeting will be March 10th at 1:00 PM. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Patricia Kohrell





# CONCORDIA

## EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Hear, live & share with heart.*

316 S Oakwood Ave, Geneseo, IL 61254  
 (309) 944-3993 · office@concordiageneseo.com  
 www.concordiageneseo.com

### CHURCH LEADERSHIP:

Mark Quart - President  
 Allison Drockelman - Secretary  
 Mindy Brown - Treasurer

### DEACONS & MEMBER LAST NAMES:

Shawn Anderson & Brian Wahlheim	A-C
Mark Quart & Andy Raschke	D-G
Derek Drockelman & <b>Greg Wisely</b>	H-K
Dick McMullen & Don Miller	L-N
Bill Kramer & Jeremy Dodge	O-R
Kenny Grom & Ryan Hull	S-Z

### NEXT FORTRESS DEADLINE:

Sunday, March 15

### OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Friday  
 School Day - 9am-3pm  
 Non-School Day - 9am-Noon

### DIRECTORY

#### Rev. Stephen Mueller

pastor@concordiageneseo.com  
 Parsonage: (309) 944-2827

#### Stephanie Prochaska & Allison Drockelman

*Office Staff*  
 office@concordiageneseo.com

#### Amy Roberts, Preschool Teacher

preschoole@geneseolutheranchurch.com

#### Katie Coppejans, Academy Teacher

kcoppejans@concordialutheranacademy.com

#### Mindy Brown, Treasurer

bookkeeper@geneseolutheranchurch.com

#### Erica Johnson, Custodian

custodian@concordiageneseo.com

# MONTHLY SCHEDULE

Every Monday (Sept-May)  
 6:30 PM - Bible Study

Every Tuesday (Sept-May)  
 10:00 AM - Bible Study

Every Wednesday (Sept-May)  
 YOW!

**NO YOW!  
 APRIL 1**

3:30 PM - SPARKS  
 5:00 PM - Breaking Bread Meal  
 5:30 PM - Catechism Class  
 5:30 PM - ROCKS

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday  
 6:30 PM - Board of Education Meeting

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday  
 1:00 PM - LWML Meeting  
 4:00 PM - Stewardship Board Meeting

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday  
 1:00 PM - CLL Meeting  
 4-7 PM - Swaddling Clothes Open  
 6:00 PM - Care Committee Meeting

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Jan, May, Oct  
 1:30 PM - Voters Assembly

2<sup>nd</sup> Monday (Aug-May)  
 Pastor at Circuit Pastor's Winkel

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday  
 12:30 PM - Board of Deacons Meeting

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday  
 6:30 PM - Church Council Meeting

4<sup>th</sup> Thursday  
 6:30 PM - Evangelism Board Meeting  
 6:30 PM - Trustee Board Meeting

4<sup>th</sup> Saturday  
 9 AM-Noon - Swaddling Clothes Open

### March Special Dates:

4 <sup>th</sup>	Lenten Supper - Baked Potato	5:00 PM
	Lenten Service	7:00 PM
11 <sup>th</sup>	Lenten Supper - Brinner	5:00 PM
	Lenten Service	7:00 PM
15 <sup>th</sup>	Resource Center Open	9:15 AM
18 <sup>th</sup>	Lenten Supper - Lasagna	5:00 PM
	Lenten Service	7:00 PM
25 <sup>th</sup>	Lenten Supper - Taco Bar	5:00 PM
	Lenten Service	7:00 PM
30 <sup>th</sup>	Holy Monday Service	7:00 PM
31 <sup>st</sup>	Holy Tuesday Service	7:00 PM