

The Concordian

A Newsletter of Concordia Lutheran Church – ELCA
Superior, WI January 2021 Vol 40 No. 01

"Called to Nurture and Live our Faith, Encourage our Service, and Actively Share the Gospel"

From Pastor Michelle

Happy New Year!

Yes, the picture is me—at least it's my feet and my shadow. I was out at Wisconsin Point on September 4 of 2020, and—at that point—just wanted to prove that I had walked in the waters of Lake Superior in 2020!

As I scrolled through my photos, wondering what might be an appropriate picture as we move from 2020 to 2021, this caught my eye, but I scrolled past, looking for something that showed my face. But I didn't find anything I wanted to use that showed my face, and I came back to this.

It's not really a flattering image, as my jacket was tied around my waist and I'd spent no time at all thinking about the "shadow" portion of the image... I just wanted to catch my feet in the water!

When I looked at it again today, however, it seemed to portray a sense of motion, specifically, movement forward. After a year of feeling rather stuck, because of a pandemic that is infecting millions in this country, and which has contributed to the deaths of hundreds of thousands, this picture helps me to see something of a future—though that future is not fully defined. Right now, there's just a shadow ahead, cast over the millions of multi-colored grains of sand constantly shifting as the waters continue to ebb and flow over, around, and under them.

At least two different vaccines that provide significant protection against the novel coronavirus that causes COVID19 are available as we move into 2021, and they expect these vaccines to protect also against the ways the virus is mutating, but we can't yet get "back to normal." One thing we will need to determine this year is what normal will look like in 2021 and moving forward.

At the end of 2019, we had purchased the camera that we are now using to have our worship services available online. We had planned to broadcast only short portions of the service, those parts that would not need extra copyright permissions, but



the inability to gather in person at all changed that, and we've obtained licensure to allow for the entire worship experience to be available.

When it is again (relatively) safe to gather in larger groups, I don't imagine we will want to dial back on the availability of our online offering. This can be scary. People have become accustomed to worshiping at home and at their leisure. There is genuine fear that those who have access to the online experience will not want to get up earlier to get to the building by 10 on Sunday mornings... However, I know many are longing for the ability to gather in person, to see their friends and family in a space filled with the promises of God.

The details of the future are not known to us, but the shadow that stretches before us would not be possible if it were not for the light that guides our way. Jesus Christ is the light of the world, and we trust that light to carry us through, whatever else the future may hold.

Let us actively share God's promise, walking confidently to the future, because God is with us, in Jesus! Emmanuel!

Blessings! Pastor Michelle



PARISH NURSING NOTES

"It is not good for man to be alone." (Genesis 2:18). The celebration of faith and family during the Christmas season was interfered with this year, and the season is now over. But attention to family relationships is still important year round. Since the family of the 1950's is no longer the norm, we as a church, and a community, need to ask what it means to be "family," how we support families, and how we reclaim its importance.

By definition, a family is a "group of people united by certain convictions or a common affiliation." This means that any group who love and support each other through life's complications is considered family. God's family goes beyond blood lines, color, size, or creed. Without family, people are often set adrift with no direction or support, which tends to make them sell healthy. Positive relationships provide unconditional love and encouragement which fosters self-esteem, positive attitudes, and better health habits. They ground a person and provide building blocks for other relationships. We at Concordia are a family. Our community is a family.

"Now, dear brothers and sisters, I appeal to you by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, to stop arguing among yourselves. Let there be harmony so there won't be divisions in the church." (I Cor. 1:10). How do we build and nurture positive families of all types? All families have highs and lows, so it is important to learn how to deal with both ends of the spectrum. Really listen to the thoughts, feelings, and

wishes of the other person. Attend and support each other's interests and events. Discuss differences of opinions and agree to disagree. If approached properly, conflict can strengthen families by hearing and understanding others. Embrace all family life whether it consists of a biological, church, neighborhood, college, or other supportive "family." Each setting is important to your spiritual, mental, and physical health.

Music is a big factor in promoting harmony and health. Just listening to music releases moodelevating, pain relieving neuro-chemicals such as dopamine and endorphins. But the <u>act</u> of singing does even more. It involves activity in both hemispheres of the brain, which promotes brain health. And it improves both respiratory function and blood oxygen levels. And this is something we can all do. In church, we may have to sing more softly, and wear a mask. But at home you can belt it out (if other than family members are not around). You don't have to be pitch perfect to reap the benefits, and help provide the benefits to others.

"Get rid all



bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God, through Christ, has forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:31-32). Rejoice with others as well as support them in times of need. Know that forgiveness can nurture as much as praise.

Wouldn't our world family be happier if everyone could live by the guidelines God has given us? In the coming year be loving, supportive, forgiving, happy, helpful, and healthy. And remember the power of music!

Stay happy, helpful, and healthy

Jean

of

Annual Meeting



Our Annual Meetings for Concordia Lutheran Church and for Riverside Cemetery are scheduled for Sunday, January 24, at 11:30 a.m.

In order to limit the possible transmission of the virus, reports will be able to be picked up January 14. Call us to arrange a time for pickup. We can also send a report to any member who requests one, by mail or email. The meetings themselves will be of the shortest possible duration, accepting reports, elections, and adopting the budget (the congregational budget mostly mirrors last year's).

Seating will be distanced by 10 feet. Everyone in the building must be masked for the entire meeting. No coffee, no refreshments. ZOOM attendance possible.

With this short duration, we believe we can safely seat 50 people in the sanctuary. Our quorum is 25. If more than 50 are present, we will seat additional people in another room with A/V connection.

Please call the office and let us know if you can be there, and specify whether you will be there in person or by ZOOM.

Committee Chairs are asked to submit their reports **NOW**, with the possibility it may still be added to the booklets.





<u> Flowers</u>

The Altar guild appreciates everyone's donations to the flower fund throughout the year whether you contribute to lilies, poinsettias or the weekly Altar flowers in honor or memoriam.

Given by: In Memory Of:

January 3, Open

January 10, Dottie Anderson Joseph Anderson

January 17, Open

January 24, Richard Wnek & Family Ethel Wnek

January 31, Open

Memorials

In memory of Larry Quam

Organ Fund Given By: Mike and Joyce Olson

In memory of Karla Hanson

Library Fund Given By: Mike and Joyce Olson

In memory of Roy Peterson

Riverside Cemetery Given By: Pete and Donna Quist

Mike and Joyce Olson

Unspecified, Given By:

Dick and Jean Riedasch Arlene Jacobson Mark Thompson

Ann Marie Novack Jane Grinde Patsy Luder

Rolf and Eunice Grimsrud Tom Steele Shirley Brandser

Sandy and Jim Waletzko Beth Arnson James and Tammy White

In memory of Irene Parenteau

General Operations

Mike and Debbie Johnson Dick and Jean Riedasch Donna Miller

James and Patricia Johnson Karen & Dennis Unger Sally Howes

Rolf and Eunice Grimsrud Nancy & Cliff Lind John Tuura

Marie Peterson Gerald & Frances Ostrom Sue Martin

Charmaine Rosenbaum Jeff & Julie Karna Ray & Mary Reijo Sara Martinson Pat & Char Currie Bill & Cathy Johnson

John & Nancy Braud Edith Warner Dan & Nancy Kronlund

Bruce & Judy Pohjonen Michael Tuura

Janet, Bev and Larry Mattson Robert & Janice Whittaker

Riverside Cemetery Given By: Pete and Donna Quist

Bus Fund Given By: Ken and Debi Harmer

Mike and Joyce Olson

In memory of Loved Ones

Given By: Swenson Family Foundation

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri New Year's Day Office Closed except by appt.	Sat 2
3 10a-11a Worship Facebook Live	4 Office Closed except by appt.	5 9a-9:30a Staff Meeting 11a Pastor's Text Study (ZOOM) Office Closed except by appt.	6 Office Closed except by appt. 1p Confirmation Class (Zoom)	7 Office Closed except by appt.	8 Office Closed except by appt.	െ
10 10a-11a Worship Facebook Live	11 Office Closed except by appt. 6p-7p Property Management Committee	12 9a-9:30a Staff Meeting 11a Pastor's Text Study (ZOOM) Office Closed except by appt.	13 Office Closed except by appt. 1p Confirmation Class (Zoom)	14 Office Closed except by appt.	15 Office Closed except by appt.	16
17 10a-11a Worship Facebook Live	18 Martin Luther King Office Closed except by appt. 6p-7p Worship and Music Committee	19 9a-9:30a Staff Meeting 11a Pastor's Text Study (ZOOM) Office Closed except by appt.	20 Inauguration Day Office Closed except by appt. 1p Confirmation Class (Zoom)	21 9:30a-12p Lake Superior Conference Pastors (ZOOM) Office Closed except by appt.	22 Office Closed except by appt.	23
24 10a-11a Worship Facebook Live 11:30 Annual Meeting, Concordia and Riverside	25 Office Closed except by appt.	26 9a-9:30a Staff Meeting 11a Pastor's Text Study (ZOOM) Office Closed except by appt.	27 Office Closed except by appt. 1p Confirmation Class (Zoom)	28 Office Closed except by appt.	29 Office Closed except by appt.	30
31 10a-11a Worship Facebook Live	Notes: We can accom Reservations are requi there to take your call.	ccommodate up required. Call 7 r call.	Notes: We can accommodate up to ten households within the worship space for Sunday worship. Reservations are required. Call 715-394-3762 by Noon on Saturday. Leave a message if no one is there to take your call.	s within the wors oon on Saturday.	hip space for Sunday worship. Leave a message if no one is	nday worship. ge if no one is
	Worship c	ontinues over call	Worship continues over Facebook Live at: www.facebook.com/ConcordiaSuperior/ call for assistance in accessing the video	at: www.faceboo	ok.com/Concord	iaSuperior/

Boe Engebretson Financial Awards

Boe Engebretson Financial Award Applications for members who are full-time students at college or technical school will be **due April 1, 2021.**

NO EXCEPTIONS!

The application is available on our website, <u>www.ConcordiaSuperior.org</u>, or you can call the church and we can send one to you in the mail. (715) 394-3762

With the uncertainty around the ability of our students to accomplish service projects safely, we are offering an alternate activity for applicants. We will schedule four group meetings by ZOOM with the pastor. Each applicant wishing to use these to satisfy this year's service requirement must attend and participate in three of the four meetings. Two will be scheduled in February and two in March.

If you have known time constraints, please contact Pastor Michelle Rowell before January 15 so that she is able to schedule the meetings when you expect to be available, and publish those times in the February and March newsletters.



Dialra Hamaan

Concordia Lutheran Council and Committee Relationships

Education

		Education	Blake Hanson
President	Kris Hanson 715-977-1260	Evangelism	Matt Ketola
Vice President	Shawn Quist 218-343-6795	Concordia Cares	715-363-2567 Jan Lippitt 218-390-6917
Secretary	John Gronski 218-340-1813	Worship & Music	Ken Harmer 218-390-8218
Treasurer	Doug Score 218-260-0657	Youth & Family	Mike Olson 715-398-0343
Audit	Mark Thompson 715-392-3166	Property & Management Stewardship	Shawn & Mark John Gronski



To enhance the nursery area, she has provided a new rocking chair was put together, & purchased nursing covers for mothers who wish to use them.

The children's activity bags have been replaced and filled with updated materials & activities.



Pastor Michelle has donated some reusable masks to the Head Start Program to be given to parents of children in the program.

Information on the Head Start Program is available at church, or interested families can call 715-392-9896 regarding enrollment information. Head Start serves prenatal, infants through preschool children.

From Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

Northwestern Synod of Wisconsin



The CRISIS of CHRISTMAS¹

Dear Members and Friends of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin,

Christmas 2020 will occur while we are living through of a series of crises. Here's the list: the pandemic, economic losses, protests against racial injustices, an ongoing climate crisis, and a divided country following a contentious presidential election. I'm not going to lie, it's been stressful for me, and I imagine it

has been for you, too. As Christians, we have been moving through these crisis-filled days with the expectation that God is present and God's promises are true. We move forward with hope.

The two Chinese characters for the word "crisis," 危机, have often been translated as "danger" and "opportunity." Others say that a better translation is "danger" and "change point." What dangers do you see as your congregation moves toward celebrating the Birth of our Savior – Christmas - in a totally new way? What "opportunities" or "change points" do you see that could propel your church forward in a positive way into God's future?

Mary experienced a theological crisis when the angel Gabriel revealed to her God's plan to enter this world by the baby in her womb. Mary's body was the center of a theological crisis² - much like the theological crisis caused by a virus that has invaded the bodies of our loved ones, and the theological crisis of abused and broken black and brown bodies, and the theological crisis experienced in the misuse of this planet on which all bodies live. Where is God in the crisis? What does this mean?

In a crisis, God comes to us. John 1:1,14 In the beginning was the Word... and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh and lived among us. Jesus is God, divine and human. God took up residence and moved into our neighborhood. God goes where God's people go and is who the people are.³ This is the theological promise of John's gospel. God is present with us in our times of crisis and suffering. This is the foundation of Luther's theology of the cross.

God is revealed through the crisis of Mary's pregnancy and Jesus' untimely birth in a Bethlehem barn. God is revealed in the crucifixion; through the body of Jesus, hanging on a cross. God is revealed through the risen body of Jesus on Easter Morning.

No matter how different Christmas is for you this year, no matter what crisis arises, God is there, present as promised, in the WORD made flesh. May the story of Jesus' birth bring you much needed joy and hope this holiday season and may the presence of God comfort you in the new year. AMEN

Rev Jauri Ma. Olum

¹ Photo credit: Design by Artist Paul Johnson for the 2019 Concordia College Christmas Concert Mural

² Thank you to Dr. Karoline Lewis for her thought provoking presentation to NWSWI on 11/7/2020 that inspired this article.

³ Dr. Karoline Lewis, Working Preacher.org, Dec. 2016

From Churchwide Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.

Precisely in our distress, in our dislocation, the Lord shows up.
Emmanuel—God with us—makes his home in the very places we find foreign or isolating.



The room was spare and dimly lit. We sat on folding chairs in a circle—young Honduran women and some of us from the ELCA. We had come to Honduras to observe the work of AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities). This is the ELCA's strategy to help youth who have been forced to flee their home countries because of violence, abuse, extortion by gangs and extreme poverty. *Amparo* is the Spanish word for shelter or refuge.

In this case, AMMPARO partnered with the Lutheran World Federation and the Mennonites to resettle returned migrants—those who had tried to seek asylum in the United States but had failed or had been denied and deported back to Honduras.

One by one they told us their stories of fear and desperation. Not a one undertook the long and dangerous trek north on a whim. They told us about the abuse they had suffered, about family members who had been killed by gangs, about the inability to make a living because of the extortion by organized crime. They talked about the bitter sadness of leaving home and family, and the uncertainty of the future.

I remember one young woman in particular. She was pregnant when she tried to migrate to the United States. She had the baby somewhere along the way. She was far from home, mostly alone and desperately wanted her mother to be with her. None of this is what she had hoped for when she was growing up. Circumstances beyond her control had forced her into this new and strange existence. She and her baby were now back in Honduras—but not at home. Home was too dangerous.

Remember last Christmas? Remember all of the preparations, the travel to be with family? Remember the holy beauty of the Christmas Eve liturgy and receiving Christ's grace and forgiveness at his table? The shopping and Christmas caroling? The in-person gatherings? All that has changed. The pandemic hasn't forced us from our homes but into our homes, sheltering in place, isolated. Not together, but physically distanced. Not gathered with family and friends, but forced apart because of the threat of infection. Forced by circumstances beyond our control into this strange existence. Oh, there will be Christmas carols piped into grocery stores and other essential services, but they will be painful reminders of how life used to be.

We are reminded of the experience of the exiles in Babylon: "By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our harps. For there our captives asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!' How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land" (Psalm 137)?

I told the young Honduran woman about another young woman who was forced to leave home because of a government decree. She, too, was pregnant and made a long and difficult journey. She, too, was far from home and without her mother when the baby came. She had to find shelter wherever she could. This wasn't what she had hoped for when she was growing up. Circumstances beyond her control had forced her into this new existence. That young woman was Mary and the child was Jesus. Precisely in our distress, in our dislocation, the Lord shows up. Emmanuel—God with us—makes his home in the very places we find foreign or isolating. The young Honduran woman, and all of us, can find hope because of the birth of Mary's child. There is no God-forsaken place and we are never alone—not in hospital rooms, or sheltering in place, or Zoom calls or on dangerous roads.

Many of us will not be physically home for Christmas, but we are truly home in Christ.

Worship Aids for the Coming Weeks

Sunday, January 3, 2021 Second Sunday of Christmas

Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

Prayer of the Day: Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Readings

Jeremiah 31:7-14, Joy at the gathering of God's scattered flock

Psalm 147:12-20, Worship the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion.

Ephesians 1:3-14, The will of God made known in Christ.

John 1:[1-9]10-18 *God with us: the incarnation of the Word.*

Wednesday, January 6, 2021, Epiphany of Our Lord (No formal worship gathering)

The feast of Epiphany ("manifestation") concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God's glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God's love to all people.

Prayer of the Day: O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Readings

Isaiah 60:1-6, Nations come to the light

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14, All kings shall bow down before him. (Ps. 72:11)

Ephesians 3:1-12, The gospel's promise extends to all

Matthew 2:1-12, Revelation of Christ to the nations of the earth

Sunday, January 10, 2021, Baptism of Our Lord/Lectionary 1, Year B

Our re-creation in baptism is an image of the Genesis creation, where the Spirit of God moved over the waters. Both Mark's gospel and the story in Acts make clear that it is the Spirit's movement that distinguishes Jesus' baptism from John's. The Spirit has come upon us as upon Jesus and the Ephesians, calling us God's beloved children and setting us on Jesus' mission to re-create the world in the image of God's vision of justice and peace.

Prayer of the Day: Holy God, creator of light and giver of goodness, your voice moves over the waters. Immerse us in your grace, and transform us by your Spirit, that we may follow after your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Readings

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 Righteousness and praise flourish like a garden Psalm 126, The Lord has done great things for us. (Ps. 126:3) 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24, Kept in faith until the coming of Christ John 1:6-8, 19-28, A witness to the light

Worship Aids for the Coming Weeks Continued

Sunday, January 17, 2021, Second Sunday after Epiphany

All the baptized have a calling in God's world. God calls not just pastors and deacons but also the youngest child, like Samuel. The story of the calling of Nathanael plays with the idea of place. Nathanael initially dismisses Jesus because he comes from Nazareth. But where we come from isn't important; it's where—or rather whom—we come to. Jesus refers to Jacob, who had a vision in a place he called "the house of God, and . . . the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:17). Jesus says he himself is the place where Nathanael will meet God.

Prayer of the Day Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, most merciful redeemer, for the countless blessings and benefits you give. May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day praising you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Readings

1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20], The calling of Samuel

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18, You have searched me out and known me. (Ps. 139:1)

1 Corinthians 6:12-20, Glorify God in your body John 1:43-51, The calling of the first disciples

Sunday, January 24, 2021, Third Sunday after Epiphany

As we continue through the time after Epiphany, stories of the call to discipleship show us the implications of our baptismal calling to show Christ to the world. Jesus begins proclaiming the good news and calling people to repentance right after John the Baptist is arrested for preaching in a similar way. Knowing that John was later executed, we see at the very outset the cost of discipleship. Still, the two sets of brothers leave everything they have known and worked for all their lives to follow Jesus and fish for people.

Prayer of the Day Almighty God, by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service. Strengthen us by your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

Readings

Jonah 3:1-5, 10, Repentance at Nineveh

Psalm 62:5-12, God alone is my rock and my salvation. (Ps. 62:6)

1 Corinthians 7:29-31, *Living in the end times*Mark 1:14-20, The calling of the disciples at the sea

Sunday, January 31, 2021, Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

In Deuteronomy God promises to raise up a prophet like Moses, who will speak for God; in Psalm 111 God shows the people the power of God's works. For the church these are ways of pointing to the unique authority people sensed in Jesus' actions and words. We encounter that authority in God's word, around which we gather, the word that prevails over any lesser spirit that would claim power over us, freeing us to follow Jesus.

Prayer of the Day: Compassionate God, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring wholeness to all that is broken and speak truth to us in our confusion, that all creation will see and know your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

Readings

Deuteronomy 18:15-20, The prophet speaks with God's authority Psalm 111 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. (Ps. 111:10) 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Limits to liberty: the case of food offered to idols Mark 1:21-28, The healing of one with an unclean spirit

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www.lutherpoint.org Resource Center website: www.synodresourcecenter.org

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Assembly/mailing: Our faithful volunteers

The Concordian

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Sunday Worship Schedule 10:00 am Worship

Online at: facebook.com/ConcordiaSuperior Limited in-person worship by reservation

Mission Statement

As members of the body of Christ at Concordia, we are called to be God's forgiven, gifted, diversified and unified people. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we nurture and live our faith in Jesus Christ, encourage our service in His church, and actively share the Gospel in our community and the world.

NOTICE

If you are receiving this newsletter and do not wish to, please contact the church office. If you know someone who should receive it or wishes to be added, please have them contact our office.