# The March 2025 FORTRESS

Newsletter of Concordia Lutheran Church, Preschool & Academy



I've been reading a book of a collection of papers written by Rev. David P. Scaer, pastor and still professor at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne. He also has a book of memoirs of some of the stormy times of the LCMS which I'm also looking forward to reading. Pastor Scaer was an active voice for the truth of the Word and Gospel during the tumultuous "Walkout". The papers he wrote on the issues during those times (and after), apart from references to certain people of the times, could have been written yesterday. The issues plaguing the Christian Church and pure doctrine have not, and do not change over the years. The antagonists and platforms look different, and the

names change, but always at the core of the issues is the spirit of the antichrist, and the spirit of unbelief; "Did God really say...?"

Pastor Scaer answered that question with a resounding "yes!" and then proceeded to write and teach the Lutheran Church exactly what God has said, along with answering "What does this mean?" With objective and biblical evaluation of the issues, Pastor Scaer took on the discussions and contentions of that time. My son, be attentive to my wisdom; incline your ear to my understanding, that you may keep discretion, and your lips may guard knowledge. - Proverbs 5:1

I am continually humbled to learn from reading books by such great men. I wish I could have sat at their feet to learn and ask questions. I'm grateful many men have, and still do, at our Seminaries.

Aside from books, the opportunities for most Lutherans to access such a rich treasure of deep theology is limited in day-to-day life. Sunday mornings, Wednesdays in Lent, and Bible Studies do present opportunities to learn and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and His Word.

We also have examples of many great and faithful men (and wone) in our own church. The "elders" among us are a trove of real-world learned knowledge and applied theology which they have accumulated over the years.

Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life. - Proverbs 16:31 Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.

- Proverbs 19:20

Dear "elders" of Concordia please share your wisdom and experiences with the younger generations, especially in the household of faith. Tell how you struggled with sin, and even with faith at times. Share your favorite Bible stories and verses and explain why. Give an example, make an impression on the people of our congregation younger than you, as you are able, that we may learn from you the importance of Christ and His Church in our daily life.

In turn "young people" (and that could be young in age, young in faith, or merely younger than the "elders" of our congregation), listen to the wisdom of the elders and mature in the faith. Observe them, ask them, learn and glean from them as you would honor your own parents. Learn and grow in the household of faith! "Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity." (1 Timothy 5:1-2)

Our Theme for our Lent Midweek Servies this year is "Reflections on Repentance." We will focus on Psalm 51—King David's Psalm of repentance after his sin of adultery with Bathsheba is uncovered. David learned many lessons in those days which he wishes he didn't have to learn, but now we benefit from him sharing his experience. Our Lenten Daily Devotions "Jesus Christ, My Lord," written by many excellent pastors, will reflect on "…the confession of who we are by nature–fallen creatures needing a Lord," as we learn in the 2<sup>nd</sup> article of the Apostles' Creed. A life of repentance is shown in action, generosity, wisdom, and faith. God grant we live and learn from our "elders", both in person and from books, for the good of our own families, our family of faith at Concordia, and even the whole Church for generations to come before the return of Christ.

God grant you a blessed Lententide in preparation for the celebration of Easter! In Christ, Pastor Mueller



## Pew Ponderings

**From the Pew:** "Confession is a twice daily part of my prayers. Some days I begin by saying, "Father, look not upon my sin this day. Instead, may you see Jesus". I also pray that God would see the blood of His Son, my Savior, covering over all my sins and see also the white robe of righteousness He has placed on me.

I recently read a quote from Martin Luther where he said, "we have nothing and we need everything".

I have also heard that Luther once said that we sinners are all beggars before God. We have no ability to fulfill the Law perfectly like God commands or to save ourselves from our sins. As the hymn Rock of Ages declares, "Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling". We are completely dependent upon God for the "everything" we need. Ponder this - our God loves us so much He sent His only Son to the cross to suffer and die so that we could have "everything" including the forgiveness of sin!

From the Pastor: Subjective and Objective Justification is vital to understand correctly-and it's actually quite simple! We remember that justification is the doctrine upon which the church stands or falls; one is either justified before God by the blood of Christ (thanks be to God!), or one must justify themselves before God (fat chance). When any human effort is added to justification, sinners become responsible to make a case why they should be allowed into eternal life, and the church falls. The Scriptural doctrine of **Objective (or Universal) Justification** is simply this: Christ is the Savior of all people and He bore and atoned for all sins, and righteousness has been procured for all people unilaterally without any dependance on man's response to it. The message of the Gospel, therefore, is that all your sins are forgiven (not may be or will be forgiven!) because of what Christ has done (see 2 Corinthians 5:18-19). God sees the whole world with "cross-eyes"-the cross of Jesus! Subjective (or Individual) Justification, then is God forgiving YOU and declaring YOU righteous for the sake of Christ (See Romans 4:5-8). Justification is thus by faith, not by works. God justifies a person when he or she hears the Gospel and the Holy Spirit creates faith in the Gospel in that person. The Gospel is not the Good News with an "if", as in "God forgives you all your sins if you..." No, it's a declaration (like you can hear every Sunday!), "God forgives you your sins." No ifs! Everything we need is a gift of God, including justification and faith! Confessing your sins is a sanctified exercise, seeing where sin has encroached in your life, and turning away and to Christ for forgiveness and life. God has not withheld the blood of His Son from you, but covers all your sins and iniquities. This is a gift! You are justified by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, apart from works of the Law! (NOTE: Some assistance with clear verbiage from a Bible Study by the CTCR on objective and subjective justification)

"Pew Ponderings" will be featured monthly as long as we have Ponderings submitted to Pastor. Anyone in the congregation may share their ponderings with Pastor, who will share and respond to it. All Pew Ponderings will be kept anonymous, unless otherwise directed. To submit your pondering, email your thoughts to Pastor Mueller at pastor@geneseolutheranchurch.com



March
202
25



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 8:00 AM Service 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Study 10:30 AM Service 12:00 PM Adult Instruction	3 6:30 PM Bible Study	4 10:00 AM Bible Study	<ul> <li><i>Ash Wednesday</i></li> <li>12:00 PM Ash Wed. Service</li> <li>3:30 PM SPARKS</li> <li>5:00 PM Lenten Supper - Chili</li> <li>5:30 PM Catechism Class</li> <li>5:30 PM ROCKS</li> <li>7:00 PM Ash Wed. Service</li> </ul>	6 6:30 PM BOE Meeting	7	8 1
9 8:00 AM Service 9:30 AM Sunday School &	10 Pastor at Circuit Pastor's Winkel	11 10:00 AM Bible Study 1:00 PM LWML Mtg	<i>12</i> YOW! 3:30 PM SPARKS 5:00 PM Lenten Supper - Baked Potato Bar	<i>13</i> 1:00 PM CLL Meeting 4-7 PM Swaddling	14	15 ASLETY
Bible Study 10:30 AM Service 12:00 PM Adult Instruction	6:30 PM Bible Study	4:00 PM Stewardship Meeting	Baked Potato Bar 5:30 PM Catechism Class 5:30 PM ROCKS 7:00 PM Lenten Service	Clothes Open 6:00 PM Care Committee Meeting		SG. NE
<ul> <li>16 8:00 AM Service</li> <li>9:30 AM Sunday School &amp;</li> <li>Bible Study</li> <li>10:30 AM Service</li> <li>12:00 PM Adult Instruction</li> <li>12:30 PM Deacon's Mtg</li> </ul>	17 6:30 PM Bible Study	18 10:00 AM Bible Study	<i>19</i> 5:00 PM Lenten Supper - Soups 7:00 PM Lenten Service	20 6:30 PM Church Council Meeting	21	22 9 AM - 12 PM Swaddling Clothes Open
23 8:00 AM Service 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Study 10:30 AM Service 12:00 PM Adult Instruction	24 6:30 PM Bible Study	25 10:00 AM Bible Study	26 YOW! 3:30 PM SPARKS 5:00 PM Lenten Supper - Lasagna 5:30 PM Catechism Class 5:30 PM ROCKS 7:00 PM Lenten Service	27 6:30 PM Evangelism Meeting 6:30 PM Trustee Meeting	28	29
30 8:00 AM Service 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Study 10:30 AM Service	31 6:30 PM Bible Study					

## March 2025



- Bella Brown
   Isla Kotovsky
- 12 Tyler Blaser
- 28 Alice Miller
- 31 Nate Blaser

Members who are 18 years old and younger



5	Shawn & Kris Anderson	27 years
7	Russ & Deanna Coulter	33 years
17	Sylvan & Marta Licht	52 years
18	Don & Kathryn Nelson	64 years



Kim Kennett & Melody Watters

#### **DEACON SCHEDULE**

8:00 AM: Shawn Anderson & Brian Wahlheim



10:30 AM: Mark Ouart & Andy Raschke

#### No Altar Flowers During Lent

- 2 Altar Flowers Available
- 9 Sanctuary Flowers Available
- 16 Sanctuary Flowers Available
- 23 Sanctuary Flowers Available
- 30 Sanctuary Flowers Available



© Child Birthday - 12 years or younger

- \* Senior Birthday 80 years or older
  - 1 Mary Junior Hunter Vincent ©
  - 4 Kenny Grom
  - 5 Molly Ryan © Logan Akers ©
  - 7 Addison Anselmi ©
  - 9 Martin Fleming
  - 10 Janice Borkgren \* Jonathon Fleming
  - 11 Dane Moriarity
  - 12 Terry Blackert \* Holden Boone ©
  - 13 Kyle Misfeldt
  - 14 Andrew Hock
  - 15 Emily Wheeler
  - 16 Pat Kohrell
  - 20 Bill Parrish
  - 22 Bonnie Myers
  - 23 Mark Ouart Marilyn Brondos
  - 24 Jerald Deutsch \* Lenore Vandevoord
  - 25 Stacy Franklin Logan Stein
  - 26 Brian Wahlheim
  - 27 Dace DeGerengel © Angela Rahn
  - 28 Phillip Jahn Marilyn Yerkey \*
  - 31 Jeff Brown Barb Miller Marc Motzer Don Nelson \*





## **Blessings and Greetings to you Concordia Church Family!**

Spring is just around the corner and we are budding with excitement for all God has in store for us. We are preparing our hearts for Lent and looking forward to the glorious hope we have because of our Savior, Jesus. Here's a recap of our last month and what's ahead.

Our preschool had an exciting month in February. We shared the love of God with one another as we celebrated Valentine's Day. We had a couple ice and snow days that took us out of school. Our preschool had our first major travel adventure on February 26. The CLA joined the preschool in a field trip to Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, IL and we had 62 in our combined groups. We traveled by car, Amtrak train, foot, and city bus to get there and did the reverse to return to Geneseo. We departed from the train station in Princeton, IL and were blessed to have Kathy and Bill Kramer see us off. It was an amazing time learning about God's creation in the ocean and waters. God's hand guided us as we traveled and I'm so grateful. We made a lot of great memories.

Preschool registration opens up on March 3! If you know anyone looking for a high-quality early childhood education program, send them our way by having them contact our office. We are looking forward to having three full classes next year! The weeks are going to fly by as we approach the end of our school year, and we will use every opportunity to share Jesus and teach our youngest learners about the world around us. I'm so grateful for your prayers and support for our preschool. God bless you for all you give and do!

Blessings and Peace, Amy Roberts



### One of Concordia's missions is right here in our church!

Concordia Lutheran Preschool is the only preschool program in Geneseo that shares the message and love of Jesus with its students every day. What an amazing way to share the love of God with children that may otherwise not hear the word of our Lord! Want to help give the blessing of a Christian education? Donate or even sponsor a preschool student! Please contact the office for more details.



## Concordia Lutheran Academy 2024-2025

## Celebrating Faith, Learning, and Fellowship at Concordia Lutheran Academy

As we reflect on February, we are grateful for the many ways God has blessed our school this month. From academic growth to shared moments of fellowship, it has been a month filled with His faithfulness. The month began with a celebration of the 100th Day of School, and we marked the day with a Glow Party because we are "100 days brighter." Then Valentines Day created an excuse to send some sweet notes to shut-in members of Concordia and to local nursing facilities. We hope our valentines brought a bit of light and love into each recipient's day. February ended with the chance to enjoy a taste of spring with the warm weather that ushered in many outdoor activities and moments of joy. These sunny days reminded us of the beauty of God's creation and the blessings of the changing seasons.



Registration is now open for the 2025-2026 school year. Please spread the word, "There is a place for your scholar at CLA!" More information can be found on our school website or by contacting the church office. Thank you for your unwavering support of our school!



The pièce de résistance to our busy February was joining Concordia Preschool on their field trip to the Shedd Aquarium, where students marveled at the wonder of God's creatures in the sea. From the vibrant coral reefs to the majestic dolphins, it was a beautiful reminder of His handiwork and the intricacy of His design. The trip gave our students a deeper appreciation for the world God has made, sparking curiosity and awe.





We look forward to what God has in store for us in March, as we continue to grow in faith, knowledge, and love.



#### **Funds Status as of February 15, 2025**

Approved 2025 budget is \$346,182

Please continue to pray for Concordia and the important work planned and approved by the

Voters 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.

Income

Expenses



This Lent, take a deeper journey of reflection with a daily Lenten Devotional from Steadfast Lutherans!

Income less expenses

To enrich your prayer life during this season of repentance, this devotional offers daily reflections and prayers to guide you on your Lenten journey.

You're welcome to pick up one, or some, for yourself and others. Copies are in the Fellowship Hall!

February

18,885.53

23,250.74

- 4,365.21

\$

\$

\$

Year-to-Date

\$

\$

47,430.27

66,298.71

\$ -18,868.44

## Enrollment for the '25-'26 school year is OPEN for CLP & CLA!



Concordia is beyond blessed to be able to provide education to children in our community that is rooted in Lutheran tradition, centered on Christian love, and offers high academic standards. Our desire to partner with parents in the instruction and upbringing of their children began over 150 years ago with Concordia's original school and carries on to today.



## Register your 3-year-old to 5<sup>th</sup> grader today or share this opportunity with others!



Please 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**, please fill out this form and return it to the church office. Payment must accompany your order. Make checks payable to Concordia Lutheran Church. Please turn your form and payment into the church office by **Friday, April 4**<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 20<sup>th</sup>.

Name:	ame: Phone:			
	Number of Lilies:			
(Check one - then fill out the lines with any related information.)				
GIVE THANKS TO GOD	☐ TO CELEBRATE THE OCCASION OF	IN MEMORY OF	OTHER	

#### Congratulations to our members who will make these marital milestones in March!



17<sup>th</sup> - Sylvan & Marta Licht - 52 years 18<sup>th</sup> - Don & Kathryn Nelson - 64 years

**This is a reminder to 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.

#### **Swaddling Clothes**

For those who would like to volunteer the duties are simple - welcoming those who come to utilize our program, having them sign a waiver, and then helping them pack up the items they will take home. There may also be clothes to sort or diapers to count and package. Please consider helping and sign up on the sheet on the Swaddling Clothes bulletin board outside of the nursery! God bless you for your help! Shopping hours will be held on: March 13<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-7:00 PM and March 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM



**REMEMBER:** Please contact the office to inform us of any name, address, marital status, email, or phone changes.

**Reminder...**when you enter 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 Fishbowl for the roof and window loans were so successful, it was decided we would continue with the Fishbowl in the back of the church. We will now use the funds collected to repair our musical equipment, as in our organ.

#### Do you know your Deacon Team?

Each deacon team is assigned a section of the alphabet that covers the **last names** of members. Please feel free to contact your deacon team with any matters pertaining to the welfare of the congregation!

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



In 2025, we will be going to the *All Things New* conference at Calvin University in Grand Rapids, MI - July 29-August 1.

Contact the office for more details or visit: higherthings.org/events/all-things-new-2025/





April Deadline: March 15th

## goodshop

Go to goodshop.com to get the latest coupons and offers at thousands of top retailers like Amazon, Macy's, Target, and Best Buy. Then, a percentage of your purchases is donated to your chosen cause.







The Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry is open: Mondays 9:00-7:00, Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00-4:00, and Fridays 9:00-12:00. Food is distributed, and donations are gratefully accepted during business hours. We also have collection boxes in the vestibule at Fareway, NOSH, and Inspire Continuing Care for donations. The Clothing room is closed on Fridays. The Food Pantry will be **closed on April 18** in observance of Good Friday.

Because of the community's generous support, the Food Pantry provided food assistance to **356** households in January. Thanks to the many donors who make this possible! The Food Pantry rescues food from Aldi, Dollar Fresh, Dollar General, Fareway, Jewel, McDonald's, NOSH, Pizza Hut, and Walmart (Geneseo and Silvis). We are grateful for our partnerships with these businesses! We also receive food from River Bend and Midwest Food Banks. Since we are able to purchase food at a low cost from River Bend Food Bank, your monetary donations can go farther than if you purchased food from a store to donate. We are grateful



for any and all types of donations! Guests at the Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry are able to choose the food they take home, so food is not wasted and guests get the food they need.

The Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry now has a van, a gift from the congregation at Grace United Methodist Church in Geneseo. Now that the Food Pantry picks up food from three stores outside of Geneseo, it was not feasible for the Pantry employees' vehicles to be utilized due to traveling distance and quantity of food. Donations often require multiple trips due to the size of personal vehicles. The donation of the van will enable the Food Pantry to pick up larger quantities of food in less trips, which will help meet the increased need. Thank you, Grace United Methodist Church!

Do you want to achieve significant life changes and receive help and support setting and reaching your goals? Then the **Five Loaves** program at Geneseo-Atkinson Food Pantry is for you! Call 309-944-3165 or visit geneseofoodpantry.org for more information.

Dietitians from Hammond-Henry Hospital taught a **free healthy cooking class** on February 20 in the Matthew 25 room at the Food Pantry. Guests were provided with recipes for lower cost healthy dishes, a cooking demonstration, and free samples of healthy food. The Dietitians will be back to teach a class on **March 11 at 1:00**, and it's open to the public.

The Food Pantry partners with local nurses to provide two **Foot Care Clinics** to the public each month. Nurses soak feet, trim and file toenails, help with ingrown toenails, and give a light foot massage with lotion. Please call 309-944-3165 or email <u>geneseopantry1@gmail.com</u> to make an appointment. Cost is \$37 but Food Pantry guests are given a voucher.

The Food Pantry accepts any size clothing, accessories, kitchenware, decorations, books, games, toys, movies, and other household items. If donors have large items they want to donate, we post the name of the item on the white board, and if someone is interested in the item, we give them the phone number of the donor to arrange pickup.



Our Volunteer of the Month, **Teresa Krause**, has been volunteering at the Food Pantry since August. She works in the clothing room greeting customers, sorting donations, and helping guests find clothing. Teresa is married to Steve, and they have six children and 17 grandchildren. She enjoys reading, gardening, cooking, and traveling. She is also active in various ministries at First Methodist Church. Teresa said the best thing about volunteering at the Food Pantry is helping people. When she retired, she wanted to give back to her community by helping people in need. Teresa said that one morning she helped a man who was starting from nothing find some housewares for his apartment. He was so grateful, and it warmed her heart. Thank you, Teresa!

If your church is planning any summer events or Vacation Bible School, please consider including a **school supplies drive** for the Food Pantry. A list of school supplies needed can be found at: geneseofoodpantry.org. The Food Pantry has had an increase in students in need, and we depend on donations to provide what they need for school. Thank you for your support!

Food needs: Spaghetti sauce, vegetable oil, cereal, mayonnaise, and canned pineapple

Non-food needs: Lotion, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, and toothpaste

**Clothing room needs:** Men's clothing (all sizes), children's clothing, bath towels, sheets, boy's underwear, and large print books.

Find us on Facebook and Instagram! Our website is www.geneseofoodpantry.org



## Join Us for Worship at Concordia!

#### **Important Dates to Note:**

March 4	Shrove Tuesday	9:00 AM
March 5	Ash Wednesday Service Lenten Supper - Chili Ash Wednesday Service	12:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM
March 12	Lenten Supper - Baked Potato Bar Lenten Service	5:00 PM 7:00 PM
March 19	Lenten Supper - Soups Lenten Service	5:00 PM 7:00 PM
March 26	Lenten Supper - Lasagna Lenten Service	5:00 PM 7:00 PM

### **Worship Schedule**

Sunday Services - 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM

Sunday School & Adult Bible Study - 9:30 AM

Rev. Stephen M. Mueller, Pastor Parsonage phone (309) 944-2827

Lutheran Hour Ministry Radio Program:					
<u>Station</u>	City, State	Freq	Day	Time	
WGEN	Kewanee, IL	1500 AM	Sun	5:30 AM	
WKEI	Kewanee, IL	1450 AM	Sun	5:30 AM	
WGN	Chicago, IL	720 AM	Sun	6:30 AM	
WMT	Cedar Rapids, IA	600 AM	Sun	6:30 AM	
KCLN	Clinton, IA	1390 AM	Sun	9:30 AM	



#### **Updating Prayer List**

As we pray continually for all the saints of God and for our Church family, there have been questions, by praying members, wondering how people on our prayer list are doing. Please contact the church office and let us know how the person you asked to be added to the prayer list is doing.

#### Please continue to pray for:

**Concordia Family:** Joline Parrish, Lenore Vandevoord, Elizabeth Erdman, Paul Mosher, Jenni DeGerengel, Wendy & Jon Grunwald, Roger Hull, Jackson Kinnard, Phil Jahn, Cindy Wagoner, Fama Prokup, Martin Fleming, Sue Smithson, Darlene Ball, Julie Kuse, Janine Persefield, Lois Misfeldt, Brad Watters, our inactive members **Friends of Concordia:** Dan & Lisa Gordon, Tammy Bruns, Craig, Jim Garner, Jeff McQuaid, Kathy Remick, Jayson Sheldon, Barbara Sigwalt, Joe Moriarity, Debbie DelFiacco, Debbie Hardesty, Justin Rittenhouse, Megan & Daxton Crain, Ann Key, A.J. Gale, Judy & Gary Magnuson, Julie Fiers, Karen Wright, Helen Stewart, John Cross, John Gravitt, Tony Snell, Cameron Mayo, Joan Maier, Chris Frisk, Connie Wagner, Alice Wright, Ed Schulmeister, Stephanie Kursock, Joan McCarron