



OCTOBER 2025

# THE FORTRESS

Newsletter of Concordia Lutheran Church, Preschool & Academy

## DATES TO NOTE

- 10.04 . Church Fall  
Clean-up
- 10.12 . Voter's Meeting
- 10.19 . Resource Center  
Open
- 10.25 . Trunk or Treat
- 10.26 . Reformation  
Sunday &  
Luncheon

## SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

*Fall Clean Up*  
Contact the Trustees

*Trunk or Treat*  
Contact the Board of  
Evangelism

*Reformation Luncheon*  
Contact Stewardship  
Board

*Swaddling Clothes*  
Sign-up or contact  
Jamie Kotovsky

## THE SUPPER IS FOR UNITY

*From Pastor*

Divisions created by rogue teachings and practices withing the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod continue to cause confusion and trouble the consciences of members. Those who truly value and cherish God's Word and doctrine are always troubled in conscience when presented with false teaching and practices. When we are told to capitulate to them or "show kindness toward the weaker brother" until they change their erroneous doctrines and practices in their churches, we are essentially being ordered to sear our conscience and overlook their inconsistencies. This is detrimental to faith and to the Church.

This problem rears its ugly head all-too-often in our Synod when it comes to the practice of the distribution of Holy Communion. Who is to receive the Sacrament? Why should or should a person not receive the Sacrament? What's the big deal if a person receiving the Sacrament is Lutheran or not if they believe the Words? (See the Explanation of the Lord's Supper in the Small Catechism for more questions and answers). Questions like these, which are attempts to bring unity, lead to disunity and division in heart and faith—a division trying to be masked and concealed to the eye by the outward reception of the Lord's Supper.

Faith in Christ saves. Thanks be to God believers in Jesus will be in heaven. Even despite erroneous doctrines believed in ignorance, faith in Christ unites us with Christ and with one another.

But differences arise among Christians over what God's Word teaches. Thus, throughout history false teachings (and teachers) have crept into the Church. Led by sinful human reason and some by demonic influence, doctrines and practices have been taught that abscond from God's Word. These teachings divide the Christian Church. When St. Paul dealt with division in Corinth, he said in 1 Corinthians 11:18-19 that there must be factions among you so that those who are genuine can be recognized. The presence of error alerts us to the presence and necessity of confessing the truth. It is this truth, God's truth, we must cling to above all others, and thereby have unity with Christ, in the unity He creates with fellow believers.

This unity in Christ is shown most intimately in the Lord's Supper. Jesus unites us with Himself and one another in this sacramental eating of His body and His blood, in, with, and under the bread and wine, for our forgiveness, life, and salvation.

At the railing, in the Supper, we also testify to our unity in doctrine and teachings of Scripture. The Sacrament is not simply a personal, individual act. It is also an act of public confession. It testifies to our unity in the "teaching of the Apostles" (Acts 2:42).



When you receive the Sacrament at a church's altar, you are giving public testimony that you agree with that church's doctrinal position—and you should have the assurance (for the sake of your conscience and the sake of those yet unprepared to receive the Sacrament) that those communing around you agree as well. Holy Communion is the highest expression of church fellowship. We do this publicly with thousands of other LCMS congregations. At the same time, this practice shows other Christians (and even unbelievers) that there is no such thing as a "generic" Christianity. Sincerely believing the words of Jesus and God's Word, we should decline to serve Holy Communion to persons not of our church body—not because we think they are "bad people" or not Christians, but to protect those still abiding by error in doctrine so as to encourage them toward the truth.

When we encounter LCMS Congregations where the communion practice is to admit anyone who believes in Jesus, or share the Sacrament with any visiting Christian who is given or shown a list of questions and then informed, "if you believe this you may have the Lord's Supper", this does not express unity, but disunity. We must be on guard against such rogue teachings and practices that seep into our Church, and avoid them. This not only for confessional unity, but also for the sake of conscience—both of LCMS Lutherans, and Christians who remain "unworthy and unprepared" to receive the Sacrament, and to protect those who from receiving the Supper to their detriment and become guilty of Christ's body and blood.

"Closed communion is not meant to be a judgmental practice, in the sense that we are condemning people. It is a practice which preserves and upholds the truth and power of the Sacrament. It is a practice which we Lutherans feel protects those who do not believe the same things as we do. It is a practice which recognizes that a person's church membership does mean something. To belong to a church means to confess what that church believes and confesses. To commune at a church's altar is the highest expression of confessing oneness with what that church teaches."<sup>1</sup> Christ Jesus is truly present in, with, and under the bread and wine to bring us unity with Him and with one another in the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation He bestows upon us in this Holy Sacrament.

Peace in Christ Jesus!

*Rev. Stephen M. Mueller*

Pastor Mueller

<sup>1</sup> From "Communion Fellowship: A Resource for Understanding, Implementing, and Retaining the Practice of Closed Communion in the Lutheran Parish" accessed in part at <https://steadfastlutherans.org/blog/pdf/AnExplanationOfClosedCommunion.pdf>



## KITTY, MY RIB

*From Ben Ott*

My mother recommended to me *Kitty, My Rib* by E. Jane Mall. The author introduces us to Katherine Von Bora, the wife of Martin Luther, who he calls Kitty. Although their marriage didn't start out as what we would consider a traditional start, Martin eventually fell in love with his beloved Kitty. This novel tells of the many issues and complications that Kitty had to deal with, such as escaping the convent, helping her family not face bankruptcy, opening her home to those in need, and more, while raising a family. This novel gives a softer side of Martin Luther and the strength of Katherine. *Kitty, My Rib* is a simple read that is both happy and sad. I enjoyed reading this book and seeing the softer, more family man side of Martin Luther. I too recommend this book. This would be a good read with Reformation coming up.

OPEN FOR SHOPPING - OCTOBER 9<sup>TH</sup> 4-7 PM & OCTOBER 25<sup>TH</sup> 9-NOON

# SWADDLING CLOTHES

Volunteer to help our community today!

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





# PRESCHOOL PRESS

*From Mrs. Roberts*

Blessings to our Concordia Church Family!

Our 2025-2026 school year is off to a fantastic start! We have three classes this year and a total of 19 students. We are exploring and learning about God's world and his Word. We are so blessed to have new and returning families who chose to have Jesus as a foundation of their child's early childhood experience, and we recognize the responsibility of having them in our care. We are so grateful for your partnership with us in caring for these earliest learners as we prepare them for their next steps in education. September has been a busy month! We kicked off this year with a field trip to the Geneseo Model Railroaders exhibit and got a preview of the model trains on display for Planes, Trains and Automobiles on September 5th.

This was a new experience for our preschool and it was amazing. This event is open just to preschoolers and their families. We loved seeing the trains up close and will be back next year. We visited Tanner's Apple Orchard for the first time with our families and enjoyed picking apples, learning about the apple operation there, and tasting donuts and cider. We celebrated Grandparent's Day with all our classes and loved honoring these special people in our lives.

We're looking forward to enjoying the wonders of autumn and exploring all the changes that come as we get ready for winter. We are so appreciative of your support through your prayers and gifts. You are a blessing as we reach families to experience the love of God through Jesus. May God bless you richly!





# ACADEMY ANNOUNCEMENTS

*From Mrs. Coppejans*

September has been a month full of blessings for our little school family! The preschool planned a wonderful field trip to Tanners Orchard, and our students delighted in the beauty of God's creation. From tasting crisp apples to enjoying time together outdoors, it was a joyful reminder of the many gifts our Lord provides.

We are also thankful to welcome a new scholar this month! Each child added to our classroom enriches our community, and we are grateful to see how God continues to grow Concordia Lutheran Academy.

On the staffing side, we are blessed to have Mrs. Brondos returning part time for a short season, and we continue the search for someone to serve in this role long term. If you know



of someone who may be a good fit, please encourage them to apply. Please keep our school in your prayers as we look for the right person to join our mission of Christ-centered education.

As the psalmist writes, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). We rejoice in the ways the Lord is answering prayers for our school, and we trust Him to provide for our needs in His perfect timing.

Our scholars enjoyed wearing their 'Make a Joyful Noise' shirts for the first time on the last Friday of September! We are happy to help encourage everyone to praise the Lord!



RaiseRight™

**Don't forget to order through  
RaiseRight to support CLA!**

Order forms are available in the fellowship hall. Orders are placed on the 15th of each month. Get your orders in now for Christmas! Do you need gift cards for groceries or other weekly shopping trips? Check out our on-hand supply! Ask Rachel or Kris on Sundays to see what we have!



*Memorize a verse with us!*

*Delight yourself in the Lord,  
and he will give you  
the desires of your heart.*

*Psalm 37:4*





# Youth

# on

# WEDNESDAY!

**3x the youth.  
3x the Word.  
3x His grace.**

**Sept. 3 - April 29**

## SPARKS

**BRING A  
BUDDY!  
OCT. 8TH**

YOW! will kick off each week igniting the SPARK in our elementary-age youth! All kids and their friends in grades K-5th are invited to attend. From 3:30 - 5:00, they will hear God's Word through a lesson and verse, have activities designed to help them understand how the Bible applies to them, and engage in energizing games. This year we are putting the Bible to the test with mock trials in our YOW! courtroom!

## BREAKING BREAD

The importance of eating a meal together is something frequently highlighted in the Bible. Every Wednesday from 5:00 - 5:30, a meal will be offered to ALL K-12 youth attending YOW! that day.

## CATECHISM CLASS

Why do we believe what we believe? How do we know what we believe is true? Beginning at 5:00 with our meal and continuing from 5:30 - 7:00, Catechism Class answers these questions for 6th-8th graders.

## ROCKS

What gives us the ROCK solid foundation to boldly live our faith and explain it? Come find out! After our meal together until 7:00, High Schoolers will build on the teachings from catechism class. Group activities will be announced throughout the year - stay tuned!

## CLOSING

At 7:00 - 7:15 Catechism class and the Rocks will gather in the church for a closing with Word and prayer.



**Reformation Sunday**  
9:00 AM - Sun. School & Study  
10:00 AM - Service  
11:30 AM - Luncheon



**College & Military Care Packages**  
are being sent out by the LWML. If someone in your family is a college student or in the military, please give their address to the office so they can receive a care package!



Concordia LWML started the monthly meeting with a potluck at 12:00. We enjoyed good food and some socializing and our meeting started at 1:00 with Kathy Kramer leading us in prayer. Our hostess for the day was Rojean McMullen.

Our Bible study for the day was lead by Joyce Dodge. Our theme this year is prayer and our Bible study was titled "How to Pray".

Rojean read a devotion about heaven. Roll call was answered sharing an answered prayer from scripture. There were 12 members present.

Minutes were read and approved with one correction. Barb Miller gave the treasurer's report and we have a balance of \$813.46. Kathy reported on cards sent and received and newsletters that we received.

Old Business: Our annual Zone Fall Rally will be next Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at Immanuel, Rock Island. Our ingathering will be diapers for Pregnancy Resources. The guest speaker will be David Ward the CID Coordinator. The Rally theme will be "Precious In His Sight".

New Business: We have 8 confirmation youth and the names were passed out to their confirmation partners.

LWML Sunday will be on October 5, 2025. Coffee cakes and rolls with juice, milk and coffee will be available to the congregation after both church services.

We will be helping the CLL serve Skip Farnam's funeral lunch on Monday, September 15, 2025.

Our next meeting will be October 14, 2025. College/Military packages will be assembled and mailed at this meeting.

Kathy gave the devotion and the mites were collected.

Respectfully submitted, Patricia A. Kohrell

Concordia Ladies League met August 14 with 8 members present with members replying with "My Very Favorite Vacation". The responses generated some great discussion. Nancy Sphect led us in the devotion, "Button Prayers", a very thoughtful presentation with a jar of colored buttons. This also led to many ways CLL can be more helpful and involved. That discussion then led to the various stages of moving from a home to an Assisted Living. Since Nancy recently retired from Hillcrest Nursing Home, she is a good source of information. Next month's response will be "My Favorite Bible Verse."

Minutes from The July meeting were read and approved. Treasurer, Janett Farnam, gave the monthly report showing the only expense was our monthly donation to CLA of \$100. for the school year. The investment account remains at \$15,136.

Joy Noard reported no cards were sent in July but suggestions were made for this month: a Thinking of You to Paul Mosher and Sue Smithson. Please call Joy with any other names that cards should be sent to.

Kathryn Nelson suggested we remind the congregation to volunteer, on occasion, the help with coffee preparations on Sundays. The job isn't difficult and requires about 30 minutes before service. Many enjoy the coffee with their donuts!

The next meeting will be September 11 with Mary Hull and Sherry Wechsler hosting.

We closed with The Lord's Prayer. Respectfully submitted, Judy Deutsch, Acting Secretary

CONCORDIA  
Ladies League



# In our prayers...

**Concordia Family:** Marc Motzer, Marcia Himmelman, Nash, Mary Miller, 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, Julie Kuse, Janine Persefield, Lois Misfeldt, Brad Watters, our inactive members **Friends of Concordia:** Donte Nystrom, Renee Hull, Colin, Steve Lee, Dan & Lisa Gordon, Tammy Bruns, Craig, Jim & Jennifer Garner, Jeff McQuaid, Jay & Tammy 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

**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 August 31, 2025

Approved 2025 budget is \$346,182

	August	YTD
Income	19,211.65	251,453.92
Expenses	28,993.65	229,737.93
Income Less Expense	-9,782.00	21,715.99

## 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 Brian Wahlheim (Church President) or the church office for more details.

**Next Voter's Meeting: October 12<sup>th</sup> - 1:30 PM**

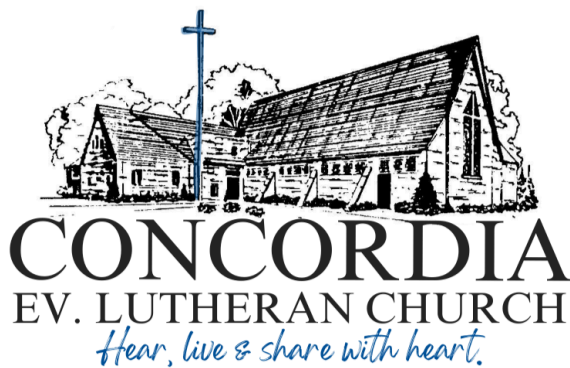
**Remember:** Please contact the office to inform us of a name, address, marital status, number, or email change.

**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.





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 www.concordiageneseo.com

### CHURCH LEADERSHIP:

Brian Wahlheim - President  
 Allison Drockelman - Secretary  
 Mindy Brown - Treasurer

### DEACONS & MEMBER LAST NAMES:

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

### NEXT FORTRESS DEADLINE:

Tuesday, October 15

### OFFICE HOURS:

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

### DIRECTORY

#### Rev. Stephen Mueller

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

**Stephanie Prochaska**, Office Administrator  
 office@concordiageneseo.com

**Amy Roberts**, Preschool Teacher  
 preschool@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!

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

**BAB!**  
**OCT. 8TH**

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

### October Special Dates:

10.4	Church Fall Clean-up	8:30 AM
10.12	Voter's Meeting	1:30 PM
10.19	Resource Center Open	9:30 AM
10.25	Trunk or Treat	10 AM - 12 PM
10.26	Reformation Sunday	
	9:00 AM - Sun. School & Bible Study	
	10:00 AM - Service	
	11:30 AM - Luncheon	