

THE CONCORDIA CHIMES

MARCH 2026



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Associate to the Bishop

Congregational Council Contact Pastor

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Monday – Thursday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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The deadline for submitting articles or contents for *The Chimes* is the 25th of each month, or as communicated.

Concordia's WHY/Purpose Statement

To be a welcoming and inviting community
empowered by the Word of God;
So that we may work for social justice and
exhibit compassion for all

Holy Closure Update

Real Estate

At the February 22 meeting there was an update on Real Estate. As indicated previously our real estate agent, Keith Kumnick, has had a number of showings and there are several interested parties.

While specifics about all interested parties can't be provided, I acknowledged at the February 22 meeting that the Town of Manchester has shown interest in 40 Pitkin Street becoming the new Senior Center. This was shared because a number of Concordia members have been present in the building (i.e. Pop Up Shop) when groups from the Town have been touring. We are not releasing the names of the other interested entities in order to preserve their confidentiality.

“Interest” means just that: “Interest”! If you go shopping, you may be interested in a particular item. Sometimes you look and walk away. Other times, you look and then you might want to come back once or more to keep considering.

The Town, just like other interested parties (and remember, the Town is not the only entity interested) have a process to follow. It is unclear whether any interested party (including the Town) will align with Concordia's timeline. So an entity may be “interested” but it does not mean that entity will end of being the purchaser.

Due to the activity and number of people that have toured the property as well as some of the press we have received, you may hear some rumors from friends, neighbors, fellow parishioners or see info about interested parties in the press or on-line. Please only believe what you hear directly from the Council/me! As soon as we are able to share information with you, please know that we will!

Generally, here are the steps for the process ahead (which may be modified, if needed):

- Offers received from interested parties
- Offers reviewed
- Negotiations with one or more interested parties
- One offer is selected
- Non-binding *Letter of Intent* is drawn up and reviewed with attorneys (Real Estate and Concordia's Attorney)
- *Purchase and Sales Agreement* is drawn up by attorneys
- Council reviews agreement and votes to recommend buyer to the congregation.
- **Important Note: A sale requires approval by the congregation. When a sales agreement has been negotiated and recommended by the Council, it will be presented to the congregation for its approval at a Special Congregational Meeting.**
- Special Congregation Meeting is held at which time the buyer is shared as well as the sales info. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present is required in order to approve the sale.
(Note: Only the “identity” of the recommended buyer will be disclosed at this special meeting.)

Property Team (Inventory)

Inventory is Complete!!!!!!! Next Step – Disposition:

- **Open House for CT ELCA churches – March 21 9:00-3:00 p.m.**

Note: Emanuel, Trinity and St. Mark will be invited to come earlier that day than the other churches to see what they would like as most members will be attending one of those churches.

- **Open House for area churches (all denominations) – April 18**

- **Tag Sale – Open to the public and members of Concordia – May 16**

Note: Those who wish to have something will be encouraged to give a “free will offering”. We will not be pricing items.

Help is needed at each of these events (set up, during the event and clean up). Please contact either Ruthie Lynch or Pam Olson if you are able to assist.

Important Note: Some items offered at the two Open House events will be gifted immediately; other items will be tagged to be picked up at a later date designated by us.

Therefore, it is important to note that as items are taken, some areas of the church will begin to look different.

Lastly, as most Concordia members will attend either Emanuel, Trinity and St. Mark the Council has decided to gift each church with something from Concordia so that we will be able to see a part of Concordia in our new church homes at some point during the church year. The items include: the handcrafted crèche from Oberammergau, Germany, the main silver chalice and the Hummel crèche.

Archive Team

- Carol Burnett has been in communication with Sheila Joy from the Archives in Philadelphia who is helping to guide the process of what is needed for the Archives.
- She has spoken with Carol Stoneman about financial records.
- Soon she will be meeting with Margie to talk about several items in terms of their location.
- Some items will be put aside for the Manchester Historical Society (one of which will be a wooden Chalice and Paten (Bowl) which Stephen Perkins made out of the beech tree.
- Items will continue to be put out for members of the congregation to take.
- The pictures of the pastors presently hung in the narthex will be given to those pastors who will be with us at the June 7 Celebration of Ministry liturgy.
- Items will be shipped to the Archives in July.

Highland Park School/Pop-Up Shop

The leadership of Emanuel Lutheran Church has endorsed taking over from Concordia in its relationship with Highland Park School. They also will take over the Pop Up Shop. Those who have worked in our Pop Up Shop have been over to Emanuel to begin the transfer. The relationship with Highland Park goes back many years and it has been our privilege to support Highland Park Families who have been in need.

Special Congregational Meeting- Sunday, March 15

See specific information about the contents of this meeting in a separate article in this issue of the Chimes and in the Sunday bulletins on March 1, 8, and 15.

Easter Breakfast

Our next “event” is Easter Breakfast on Sunday, April 5. Please consider joining us for this time together. Information is contained in this issue of the Chimes.

Communication with Former Members

Council (and others) have compiled a list of former members to be contacted to invite them to come back to the June 7 4:00 p.m. Celebration of Ministry liturgy. We will be in need of addresses for some people. We also may need help in getting the mailing out working with Margie. Stay tuned for more information.

Commemorative Booklet

We are going to put together a Commemorative Booklet to be completed in time for our June 7 Celebration of Ministry. Each of our former pastors (called, interim, transition) will be asked to submit a written reflection etc. for this booklet. This will also contain other memorabilia. Looking for members to assist with this. Please contact Mark.

June 7- Celebration of Ministry Eucharist- 4:00 p.m.

Rebekka Almond has mailed invitations to former choir members to make them aware of this liturgy and has invited their participation in the choir on this day. She has been coordinating with John Anderson and Richard Hicks on the choir selections to be sung.

Meetings continue with John and Richard. Richard continues to arrange brass and timpani parts for hymns and other pieces.

June 28- Liturgy of Leavetaking

This service is for present Concordia members only. Following this, we will have a final luncheon together at A Villa Louisa from 12 Noon -3:00 p.m.

Reflections/Stories/Memories

We continue to looking for people to share these. There are three months left to do so. Interested? Contact Margie or Mark.

Peace,

Mark Winzler



Highlights of the January 2026 Treasurer's Report

Summary

Well January certainly started out with a bang. Frigid cold, lots of snow and church cancellation on January 26th resulted in low attendance and envelope giving well below the norm. The end of the January we received a full 6-month pledge. Without this pledge the envelope/other funding giving for January would have totaled \$7,270.11. Due to snow removal totaling \$9,562.50, insurance premium of \$3,826.25 and payroll, it was necessary to transfer \$10,000 from our savings account to meet these obligations. The year-to-date budget is based on the preliminary budget which is to be presented at the February 22nd congregational finance meeting. Our 2026 budget is dependent on your **total** 2026 giving commitment. Thanking you in advance for honoring your commitment even when you are unable to attend church.

The Special Funds realized gains in January. The Scholarship Fund gained \$443.15 and the Community Cares and Legacy for Ministry gains totaled \$23,681.01.

Report Details

The below information represents the envelope and stretch giving for the month of January as well as the percentage against the monthly and yearly budget amounts.

Month	Actual Recd. (Envelope & Other Funding (Stretch))	Monthly Budget	Percent Received Against Monthly Budget	Received Year to Date	Year to Date Budget	Percent Received Against Year-to-Date Budget
January	\$19,270.11	\$12,833.34*	150%	\$19,270.11	\$12,833.34*	150%

* Based on the 2026 preliminary budget

Additional January Revenue

Open Offering:	\$16.00
Initial Offering:	\$50.00
Festival Offering:	\$135.00
Church Service:	\$100.00
Utilities Assistance:	\$140.00
Snow Removal Assistance:	\$660.00
Miscellaneous Income Non-Budgeted	\$145.00
Memorial Funds:	\$10,000.00
Total:	\$11,246.00

TOTAL JANUARY OPERATING REVENUES: \$30,516.11

Expenses

1. Utilities:

Vendor	JANUARY 2026	JANUARY 2025
CNG	\$1,298.94	\$1,142.53
Eversource/Earthlight	\$310.60(\$0.00/\$310.60)	\$616.93 (\$267.13/\$349.80)
Cox	\$482.37	\$470.43
TOTAL	\$2,091.91	\$2,229.89



Highlights of the January 2026 Treasurer's Report

Additional January Expenses:

Staff Salaries:	\$5,324.60
Fringe Benefits:	\$148.24
Program Expenses:	\$436.02
Program Support Expenses:	\$776.20
Facility Maintenance:	\$11,398.21 (\$9,562.50 – snow removal)
Commercial Insurance:	\$3,826.25
Seasonal Sharing:	\$565.00
Holy Closure Expenses:	\$700.00 (pictures of organ)
Miscellaneous – Non-Budget:	\$308.93
TOTAL:	\$23,483.45
TOTAL JANUARY EXPENSES:	\$25,575.36

Bank Account as of 1/31/2026 (ACS)

Beginning Balance:	-\$1,068.85
Total Revenue:	\$40,373.09 (Includes pass-through revenue from CNS Taxes)
Total Expenditures:	\$35,870.96 (Includes Tax expenditures)
Current Balance:	\$3,433.28
Monthly Cash Flow:	\$4,502.13 (Revenue less Expenditures)

Special Funds (as of January 31, 2026)

Fund	Previous Month Market Value (Dec. 2025)	Current Market Value	Current Month Gain/Loss (includes withdrawals)	YTD Gain/Loss (includes withdrawals)
Thrivent				
Scholarship	\$34,891.62	\$35,334.77	\$443.15	\$443.15
Fidelity				
Community Cares	\$69,845.17	\$71,217.01	\$1,371.84	\$1,371.84
Legacy for Ministry	\$1,135,837.09	\$1,158,146.26	\$22,309.17	\$22,309.17
Total Fidelity	\$1,205,682.26	\$1,229,363.27	\$23,681.01	\$23,681.01

Memorial & Tributes Savings Account (as of January 31, 2026)

Previous Month's Balance (Dec. 2025)	Deposit	Withdrawals	Current Month Balance
\$28,426.09	\$25.00	\$10,000.00*	\$18,451.09

*Borrowed to pay January bills and payroll.

Holy Closure Fund (as of December 31, 2025) (Note: Although the Holy Closure Funds are held in the Memorial & Tributes Savings Account, they are not reflected in the above M&T table)

December 30, 2025 Balance	Month Deposits	Month Withdrawals	Comments	Current Balance as of November 30, 2025
\$99,011.90	\$0.00	\$0.00	Deposits: Withdrawals:	\$99,011.90

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you. Carol Stoneman, Treasurer

**Approved Minutes of the Concordia Lutheran Church
Congregational Council Meeting
Monday, January 12, 2026, in person**

Present:

Mark Winzler – President
David Smith – Vice President
Carol Stoneman - Treasurer
Susan Bourret – Secretary (zoom)
Ruth Sprong-Heyden
Nancy Lynn Knauff
Ruthie Lynch
Bobby McKinney
Randy Olson
Tina Ruggerio (zoom)
Pastor Maria Hammon (zoom)

Excused:

Rebekka Almond
Sandra Baranowski

Call to Order – Mark Winzler @ 7:01 PM

Devotions: Mark Winzler

Approval of Agenda The agenda was approved as written.

Motion for council to move to Executive Session was moved, seconded and passed.

Motion: To move into Executive Session to discuss real estate matters with realtor Keith Kumnick attending executive session.

Holy Closure Items:

Additional transition team member attending: Jeanine Barber

Holy Closure:

The pipe organ is listed on the Clearing house site

Planning for the January 18th Quercus string quartet event reception are being finalized

Communication with Former members and former choir members is being discussed

June 7th reception will be catered

June 28 banquet will be at A Villa Louisa at noon.

Approval of Minutes The minutes from the December 14th and 27th 2025 council meetings were approved with corrections.

President's Report

Mark has met with Pastor Joanna about the Lenten services, the pop-up shop and support of Highland Park school. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday services will be at Emanuel, Maundy Thursday and the Easter Vigil will be at Concordia.

Treasurer's Report

The December 2025 treasurer's report summary was presented and received. We continue to meet our obligations.

Old Business

The 2026 Budget is ready to present to the congregation at the January 2026 meeting.

New Business

Holden Evening Prayer will be held in person at Concordia on Wednesday nights during Lent.
Review of voting members for the upcoming congregational meetings.
Review for the agenda for the January 25th congregational meeting.
Approval of Wine for Fastnacht.

Adjournment: 9:21 PM



Season of Lent

“The Lenten Season begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts forty (40) days (excluding Sundays which are always feast days celebrating the resurrection). Lent- the word originally meant ‘spring’ - is to be understood as a time to reflect on Baptism and its basis in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Lent is, therefore, a time for rebirth and a renewal in preparation for the celebration of Easter. In the Gospels one finds a constant conjunction of cross and discipleship. The traditional color of Lent is purple, to suggest somberness and solemnity. Veils are draped over crosses throughout these days.” (*Manual on the Liturgy*- pages 24-25).

Lent may originally have followed Epiphany, just as Jesus’ sojourn in the wilderness followed immediately on his baptism, but it soon became firmly attached to Easter, as the principal occasion for baptism and for the reconciliation of those who had been excluded from the Church’s fellowship for apostasy or serious faults. This history explains the characteristic notes of Lent – self-examination, penitence, self-denial, study, and preparation for Easter, to which almsgiving has traditionally been added.

As the candidates for baptism were instructed in Christian faith, and as penitents prepared themselves, through fasting and penance, to be readmitted to communion, the whole Christian community was invited to join them in the process of study and repentance, the extension of which over forty days would remind them of the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, being tested by Satan.

Ashes are an ancient sign of penitence; from the middle ages it became the custom to begin Lent by being marked in ash with the sign of the cross. The calculation of the forty days has varied considerably in Christian history. It is now usual in the West to count them continuously to the end of Holy Week (not including Sundays), so beginning Lent on the sixth Wednesday before Easter, Ash Wednesday. (*from Common Worship, Lent, Church of England*)

Wednesdays in Lent

Holden Evening Prayer

March 4, 11, 18, 25

7:00 p.m. In-Person at Concordia

Thursdays in Lent

Holden Evening Prayer

March 5, 12, 19, 26

7:00 p.m. In-Person at Emanuel in the Community Room

Pre- Easter Cleaning

Once again this year, in preparation for Easter Sunday, we are asking for your help in cleaning the **sanctuary, narthex, and chancel (altar area) on:**

Friday, April 3
10:00 a.m. through 3:00 p.m.

Come anytime during that time period!

This includes, but is not limited to:

- **Cleaning pews (in sanctuary/chancel/choir loft)**
- **Cleaning choir loft**
- **Cleaning window sills**
- **Cleaning all wooden areas in chancel: pulpit/altar/kneelers/paneling**
- **Cleaning flower stands/tables**
- **Washing white marble behind the high altar**
- **Washing high altar/altar rail/side shelf**
- **Polishing communion vessels**
- **Polishing the brass candlesticks/torches by pulpit/paschal candle stand**

Please join us!

Palm/Passion Sunday

March 29- 10:00 a.m.

Liturgy begins in Garden

Concordia | Emanuel | Ministerio Nueva Creación

Maundy Thursday

April 2

At Concordia 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday

April 3

At Emanuel 7:00 p.m.

Easter Vigil

April 4

At Concordia 7:00 p.m.

Easter Day- Resurrection of our Lord

April 5

9:45 a.m. Organ Prelude

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Special Congregational Meeting
Sunday, March 15 - 11:30 a.m. - Kaiser Hall

Agenda

Call to Order

Opening Prayer

Determination of 501 (c)(3) groups/organizations for our Legacy Giving

(Pastor Maria Hammons, Associate to the Bishop)

Adjournment

***** YOU MUST BE A QUALIFIED VOTING MEMBER TO VOTE *****

Those in attendance at the meeting on February 22 were given the “Legacy Giving” brochure (along with a letter of introduction) in preparation for this meeting. (This information was sent by “snail mail” to those who were not able to be present.)

A reminder that when we speak of “Legacy Giving”, we are **NOT** referring to our Legacy Fund, but rather “Legacy Giving” refers to our collective mission assets remaining (sale of building, other funds etc.), after expenses.

Pastor Maria will lead us through a legacy workshop process and will explain everything in detail. Before the meeting, you are asked to think about the names of 501 (c)(3) groups, organizations, and entities which you would like the congregation to consider gifting. These organizations should in some way connect to Concordia’s current or past ministries, or to the broader church. At the end of this meeting, we will have identified and voted on which 501(c)(3) organizations will receive financial gifts from Concordia. NOTE: The amounts will NOT be determined at this meeting, just the organizations/ groups/entities. The amounts come later.

The following IRS Legacy Directives are included in the Synod’s Legacy Giving brochure that was handed out on Sunday (or that you should soon receive in the mail).

“The congregation will approve legacy directives which will direct the disbursement of the mission assets of the congregation in a fashion that will honor the legacy of the Saints who have gone before, prosper the Church, and advance the Kingdom of God.

Determining how to direct the church property can be an enormous project. The Internal Revenue Service has strict guidelines for the disposing of non-profit assets. According to the IRS: Assets of an organization must be permanently dedicated to an exempt purpose. This means that should an organization dissolve, its assets must be distributed for an exempt purpose described in this chapter or to the federal government or to a state or local government for a public purpose. If the assets could be distributed to members for private individuals or for any other purpose, the organizational test is not met. IRS section 501(c)(3), Chapter 3.”

In other words, once something is given to a church, it belongs solely to the church. If a church closes, where the items go is to be determined by the remaining members. No individual can come back and say, “I bought that for the church, so I want it back.” Another important aspect of the non-profit tax code is also found in Section 501(c)(3) in the ‘Dissolution’ clause. If a church decides to close its doors, the congregation is required to dispose of the remaining assets by transferring them to other charities with like charitable purposes.

Flowers for Easter



Each Easter we invite members and friends of Concordia to purchase Easter flowers for our worship space. Please consider making a gift of flowers to Concordia this Easter. We are also happy to report that **Atrium Brass Quintet** will provide special music for our service; gifts may be made to offset that expense as well. Financial gifts to support our ministries are also welcome.

Each plant cost \$12.00.

Gifts for musicians and ministries are given at the givers discretion.

Please attach payment with this form and return to the church office by Sunday, March 29th.

Thank you!



I/We give _____ Easter Flower(s) to Concordia

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

I/We give \$_____ to Concordia for Musicians

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

I/We give \$_____ to support *Concordia's ministries*

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

Name(s): _____

Phone Number and/or E-mail: _____



Please return this form in its entirety to the church office by Sunday, March 29, 2026.

Concordia's Annual Easter Breakfast Returns! Sunday | April 5, 2026 | 8:30 A.M



You are cordially invited to join us for breakfast, delightful treats, and engaging conversation.

We eagerly anticipate celebrating Easter Morning with you and your family.

A free-will offering will be collected.

Contribution:

- I can bring: _____ Coffeecake or muffins

Assistance:

- I can help with:
 - _____ Set Up
 - _____ Serving
 - _____ Clean Up

Name(s): _____

Number of People Attending: _____

Phone Number *and/or* Email:



Please submit this form to the church office by Sunday, March 29, 2026.

THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

Eligible Thrivent members include those with benefit membership who have \$750 or more in annual premiums of qualifying life and health insurance products OR have \$20,000 or more in contract value of qualifying life insurance and annuity products. Qualifying members are able to direct some of Thrivent's charitable outreach funds each year. It can be done one of two ways described below **no later than March 31, 2026:**

BY PHONE

- Call Thrivent at 800-847-4836.
- When prompted, say "Thrivent Choice", then press 1
- Speak to a representative who will help you direct Choice Dollars.
- Call between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. (Central Standard Time); Monday-Friday.

ONLINE

- Visit Thrivent.com
- Log in by entering your user ID and password. (If you haven't yet registered on Thrivent.com, click "Register for Account Access".)
- From the "Shortcuts" on the home page, select the "Direct Choice Dollars". In the search box, type "Concordia Lutheran Church, Manchester, CT" OR
- Follow the prompts to select your charity and finish at "Direct".

Concordia needs revenue in support of its mission during these last six months. It will make a meaningful difference. At this time, you can designate your remaining balance all at once!





40 Pitkin Street, Manchester, Connecticut 06040

email: office@concordiamanchester.org

telephone: 860-649-5311

A Congregation of the New England Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

February 3, 2026

Thomas J. Tierney, Owner

John F. Tierney Funeral Home

219 East Center Street

Manchester, CT 06040

Dear Tom,

Please know that while this letter is way overdue in reaching you, the sentiments expressed in it are heartfelt.

On behalf of the Congregation of Concordia Lutheran Church and, in particular, members of the Memorial Garden Board, our deepest thanks and appreciation for all that you have done (and continue to do) to assist us with the transfer of the cremains from our former Memorial Garden on Pitkin Street to East Cemetery.

You and your staff have walked hand in hand with us on this journey, which is painful in and of itself because it was the first visible sign of our closing at the end of June, 2026.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the time spent with Susan Bourret and Ruth Sprong Heyden going over every single detail associated with the transfer such that all would go smoothly for the day of the transfer. You have been, beyond words, wonderful in the care and concern you have exhibited for us throughout this process.

Your donation of your time and associated expenses with the transfer was deeply appreciated and went "above and beyond" anything that we expected. Please know that our gratitude is sincere.

Now you are working again with Susan and Ruth making plans for the future interments of members after our church closes. A simple "thanks" seems shallow, but know that the sentiment is real.

In addition to the thanks said verbally to those gathered at East Cemetery in November, 2025, there was written acknowledgement of your kindness in our church newsletter which reaches every member, and others as well.

It has been and remains a pleasure to work with such a dedicated professional as you!

Sincerely,

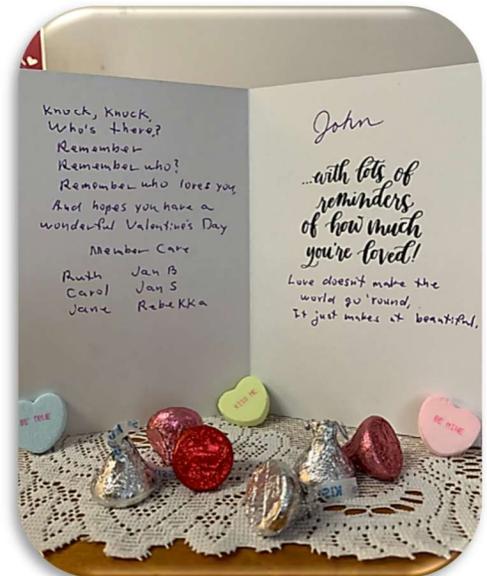
Mark L. Winzler
President

Member Care ❤️

On Tuesday February 10th, Concordia's singing Valentines serenaded Kay, John, and Irene with our versions of "Ain't She Sweet", and "You Are My Sunshine".

Concordia mugs filled with candy were delivered to our captive audience (mentioned above), as well as Petey, Edna, and Joanne.

We all enjoyed lots of conversations and hugs.



POP-UP SHOP NEWS



Below are personal thank you's from just a few of the families you helped with your donation:

"I would like to say thank you to all of the people that helped my family"

"i want to thank all the donors! it's so amazing of you all to be such a blessing to the families and i at highland park!!! i appreciate the support you have given my family and some relief you have given me to get needs met!!! thank you so much"

"Thank you for all the help I received I do appreciate it very much."

"Happy New Year!!!

Thank you for making our holiday enjoyable and exciting. I cannot express how much I appreciate your help! Continued Blessings in 2026"

"Thank you so much your generosity really helped my family"

"I would like to thank you and all of the donors for their generous gifts we have received this holiday season. From gift cards to food/clothing, we definitely are forever grateful for everything you all do so our children don't miss out. Thank you all for everything you do all year round, not just during the holidays.

With much gratitude,
The Garrard Family."

"I really want to say thank you, to everyone who helped during the holidays. It was very much appreciated especially because I can't work. You guys made my kids Christmas a lot more better. Thank you again"

"I will like to say thank you all so much the families the churches the school the EVERYTHING! You all put did yourselves with so much love and joy! Thank you so much !!!"

"Omg yes I really appreciate all the help for my home and family! I was able to fill my fridge after a stressful holiday and that made the new year ring in smooth! Thx again and hope God returns 10 fold!

Gutierrez Family ❤️"

Dear Concordia Lutheran Church,
On behalf of Highland Park School I want to extend our heartfelt thanks for your incredibly generous donation this holiday season.

Because of your kindness, many families were able to put food on their table and provide meaningful Christmas gifts for their children.

Your support truly made a difference and brought comfort and joy to families who needed it most.

I've included personal messages from the families who received support. Some chose to include their names, all are deeply grateful for your compassion and generosity.

With Sincere thanks,

Jill Morey
Highland Park School
Family Resource Coordinator

"Thank you soooo much for making Christmas magical for my daughter Azariah, your kindness means the world and we are so grateful for your generosity and thoughtfulness

Thank you for all for being such an angel

Regards

Alecia Samuel's (azariah Miller's mom)"

"Estamos totalmente agradecidos por lo que hacen por nosotros y por la ayuda que nos dan Dios los bendiga 🙏"

Translation:

We are incredibly grateful for what you do for us and for the help you give us. God bless you 🙏

"Thank you so Much every Year for Helping My Family. With a Big Family Every little thing Counts and we are always Appreciative. Small things do big wonders!"

"Thank you so much for all the donations you have made to Highland Park Elementary School. The donations have helped my family greatly, especially my children. Thank you for the kindness you have shown to the school and the community."

"My sincere gratitude goes out to all our sponsors who have been a great help to many families out there. We are so grateful for your support towards HPS."

"On behalf of my family and I, I would just like to say thank you all for your generosity during the holiday's. Your help really made a difference and we appreciate it so much!!!! -Chotsini Fleeting"

"No words describe how appreciative my family is for all of the help and generosity exhibited this holiday season from everyone who helped make my kids Christmas possible 🙏🙏 Thank you from the bottom of my heart ❤️
~Shannon Warner"

"Your generous gifts are very appreciated, God Bless.
Eunice D"

Concordia Nursery School – February SNAPSHOTS



*Climbing the Giant
"Snow Mountain"*



*Discovering a Chemical Reaction
with Baking Soda and Vinegar*



*Cooperative Fingerpainting a
Den for Hibernating Bears*



Save the Date

Concordia Nursery School

Farewell Open House



Inviting **All** Past **and** Present Concordia
Nursery School Staff and Families

Join Us to Say Good-Bye

Saturday, April 25, 2026

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

To RSVP, please:

email: concordianurseryschool@gmail.com or call: 860.649.9349

A Lifetime at Concordia

A Reflection by David Smith

As a lifelong member of Concordia, the thought of worshiping elsewhere saddens me deeply. I have visited other churches, but there is something about our worship at Concordia that enables me to feel the Spirit in a way I cannot find elsewhere. I believe the acoustics in the sanctuary play a large part in that, and the fact that the sanctuary is large, bright, and colorful with its windows adds to the experience. As a worshiping assistant, I have grown to love the stained glass imagery around the altar—details I cannot clearly see from the choir loft but that create such a sacred atmosphere. From that vantage point, I have a wonderful view of the full extent of the sanctuary. There are so many aspects of the building itself where I feel comfortable and at peace, and I will miss them all. But most importantly, I will miss the people. **I do hope we will find ways to stay in touch.**

Early Years

I was baptized in the baptistry area of the narthex in 1964. For some, that makes me a youth of the church, but it was quite some time ago. I remember the church before the stained glass windows were installed—the glass we had was an aqua color and looked fine, but the stained glass elevated the windows to a whole new level.

My earliest memories are of Sunday School. Larry Wittkofske was the superintendent, and I was sent to his office on several occasions, usually for running in the hallway and once for talking during a prayer. For each infraction, he would patiently explain that this was church, not a playground, and stress the importance of keeping silent during prayers. I enjoyed Sunday School, especially Helen Wittkofske's fifth grade class. She always greeted me with a warm smile and was eager to teach us about Jesus and help us understand the Bible. Our class was small—I remember Beth Lane, David James, Tammy Kleperis, Linda Weiss, I think Mark Copeland, and at least one or two other kids.

Youth and Young Adult Years

I have fond memories of going to the beach and to Riverside Park as part of Youth Group outings in my teens. I also played on the church basketball team when there was an interchurch league in town, and we played our games at Illing Junior High on Saturday nights. I attended church because you had to in order to play on the team. I was never a terribly good basketball player, but I tried hard and enjoyed the games. A highlight from those days in the early 1980s was the time Ron Schack and I dyed our hair green for a big game against Emanuel—Concordia's basketball team colors were green and white.

Another memory was when we played in a tournament in Bristol with barely enough players to compete. We played two games back-to-back and were no match for either team, who had plenty of players in reserve. There was also a dispute because Tracy Scott was on our team, and one of the other teams objected to having a girl on our team. But as the game went on, the crowd got behind us. Even though we lost badly, they gave us their support and encouragement throughout, going crazy whenever we scored a basket and absolutely wild when Tracy scored. There were always fun things to do at Concordia.

During my college years, I never went to church. It wasn't until later in life that I realized the importance of living your faith, and church attendance was a big part of that—hearing the gospel and receiving the sacrament of communion.

Returning Home

Upon returning in my early thirties in the early 1990s, I needed guidance and direction. I was so grateful that Fred Badger and Barbara Baker remembered me after being away for quite a long time. It was like coming home after a very long journey. I miss them both and think of them often.

Fred was like a mentor to me. He convinced me to study more seriously and shared interests in photography, history, and travel with me. He even convinced me to take a trip to Greece and Turkey with others from the church—Marlene Blake, Gert Waters, Pastor Kim-Eric, and his son. It was a wonderful time.

Barbara was such a remarkable person. We would have very long conversations about life in general, the church, music, and a myriad of other topics. Whenever I came to church, whatever was going on in my life, she was always there—always with a spiritual peace about her, a friendly smile, and a listening ear. Often, in talking with her, whatever was troubling me would reveal its own answer.

It was through both Barbara and Fred that I became interested in committee work and joined the Stewardship Committee, and later the Finance Committee. Charlie Haid, Ed Kehl, Warren Schimmel, Barbara, and I were on the Stewardship Committee then, and we worked hard to maintain financial support for the church.

Years of Service

I will always cherish the many wonderful church dinners I attended over the years. I served on the call committee a few times and worked with Petey Goodrich on a huge project to update the church constitution and bylaws. Petey typed it up word for word, and I was so proud when it was completed and passed through the various congregational votes required to ratify it.

I served on the church council through most of the time from the 1990s until the present, taking a brief break in the 2000s. I served on the Worship & Memorial Garden Committee, which successfully got the garden approved and created. I worked closely with Al Lange Jr., Mark Sutcliffe, Ed Kehl, and others on the committee. We had to fundraise, have a charter drafted, and some members even went to town meetings to ensure it was permissible to have interments and ashes scattered on the grounds. I'm proud of the work we did.

I also served on a committee with Jim Britton and others to fundraise for the major organ repair after the famous honeybee incident, when a massive beehive in the steeple dripped honey into the organ pipes, creating a major cleanup and repair effort.

I was on council when there were fifteen members, and meetings often went late into the night, sometimes with 8-7 votes on contentious issues—like where to place the piano in the sanctuary, whether we should move the baptismal font, changing the service times, and the lighting in the sanctuary. For most of my years on council, I served as Vice President, which is largely a position with few duties other than chairing council meetings when the president cannot attend. One year I was council president, and I was never more delighted to return to the Vice President role after Mark Winzler became eligible to serve on council again following his year off.

As a member of the Finance Committee, there were always budget issues to navigate. I have fond memories of working with Ernie Scott. He showed me the manual ledger he and Millie would dutifully fill out to track all debits and credits and any checks that were written—that was the system. Fred Winzler and I used to

Years of Service (*continuation*)

attend the committee meetings and would often talk about our careers at competing insurance companies in Hartford. I was delighted when Stephen Perkins took over as treasurer, and then later Carol Stoneman, as it was something I never wished to take on myself. I have had the fortune of working with Carol, Susan Bourret, and Ruth Hayden on the committee in recent years.

I was involved in the formation of the Legacy endowment fund from the start and am proud of the work I did in getting its charter drafted and approved. We made good investment decisions, and the fund earned money nearly every year since its inception. It was always great working with Wendy Donagher, Tina Ruggiero, Don Slater, Carol Stoneman, and others over the years on Legacy. It was especially gratifying when we could process the requests each year to provide scholarships for the nursery school and support other charities and ministries. Fred Winzler and I became the primary members to deal with Fidelity whenever we needed to request a disbursement. I still handle that today when needed.

I was a relative late-bloomer in becoming a member of the choir. I got talked into it around 2010 or so and have enjoyed it ever since, especially singing alongside John Corl and learning from how he sings. I just happened to be leaving another meeting at church on the evening of choir practice when Jim Britton and Nancy Lynn Knauff saw me and asked me to try it out. I've been there ever since—it was around the time Richard Hicks became the Music Minister.

A Living Legacy

One offshoot of Concordia that will remain after we close is Ministerio Nueva Creación. I was at the meeting, as a member of the Executive Committee, when we met with Pastor Persida Rivera-Mendez, Lucy Berrios-Tavares, Carlos Tavares, Mannie, and Wanda Bermudez, and they asked if they could worship in the Garden Room at Concordia. Because I was interested in seeing a new church have its first service and wanted to ensure they had what they needed, I attended it. I immediately enjoyed the music and the people and continued to attend their services, which were about an hour after Concordia's.

After Persida retired, we all asked Bea Santiago to take over, and she has done a wonderful job. I'm delighted she's now going to seminary. MNC will now worship at the chapel of Emanuel Lutheran across town, and you'll find me at their services when they gather. Presently they worship once per month.

Moving Forward

What will I do after Concordia? I'm the kind of person who needs church regularly and more than most—otherwise things don't go as well during the week for me. The closure of Concordia comes at another major crossroads in my life, as I intend to retire in June. So everything will be different after this. I plan to attend Trinity Lutheran starting this summer. I also plan to visit Seabury in Bloomfield, where The Reverend Ann Lovejoy-Johnson is chaplain, and attend services at their chapel once or twice per month. Her services are at 2 p.m. on Sundays.

Gratitude

From my earliest age, I learned at Concordia. When I got older, I worshiped at Concordia, did committee work, started new things, and helped keep the church going and in good condition. I have a lifetime's worth of memories, friends, and experiences I'll cherish forever.

Thank you to everyone I've come to know at Concordia. **We must stay in touch.** God's blessings to you all!

David Smith

GHIAA 2026 INITIATIVES UPDATE

Protections against National Guard Deployment

- With the events occurring in Minnesota and elsewhere etched in our minds, we are urging Gov. Lamont to issue an executive order to place limits on the use of the National Guard for immigration enforcement purposes.

Interfaith Immigrant Solidarity Prayer Vigil

- About 100 people, including many GHIAA leaders, gathered for prayer and song outside the Federal Building in Hartford on February 6, bearing witness to grief, outrage, hope, and commitment.

Federal Response Fund

- Last fall, legislators set aside \$500 million to respond to the loss of federal funding for certain human services and safety net programs. Gov. Lamont has spent less than 40% of the money and, with time running out before the Feb. 4 deadline, GHIAA sent an open letter to the governor urging him to act on behalf of our communities. On January 29, leadership announced a plan to carry forward the balance of the fund for use this spring. This gives us and our many allies in this fight an opportunity to continue to keep up the pressure for meaningful state investment in human needs and for reform of the regressive policies that prevent it.

What Comes Next

- We are currently holding an Organizing Leadership Training. We will also hold trainings to combat racism, antisemitism, and anti-Muslim bigotry later this year.
- With guidance from our Strategy Team, we also continue to consider how and when GHIAA might adapt our work to meet the current moment. We have begun a process of engagement and discernment with our clergy caucus around nonviolent civil disobedience, and we anticipate continuing and broadening those conversations in the coming months. We seek to respond to the changing circumstances in which we find ourselves, while also remaining grounded in our faithful values and strategic commitments.



Fastnacht Dinner

Sunday February 15, 2026
Concordia Lutheran Church





Fastnacht Thanks

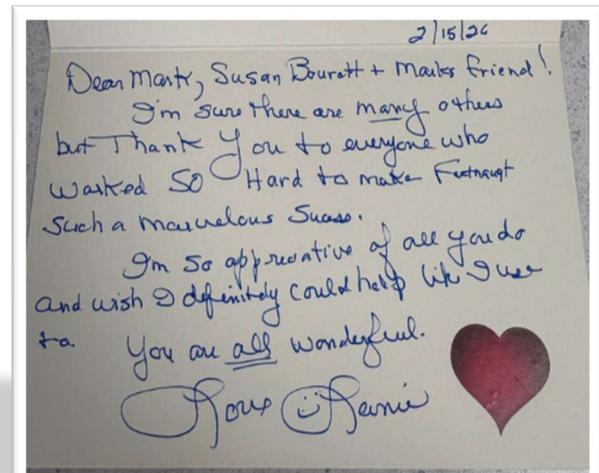
Fastnacht 2026 was a great success! Around **90** were in attendance. An event of this magnitude does not come about by itself, hence I would like to thank the following people:

- **Carol Burnett** for preparing the decorations (she is so creative!) and heading up the set-up group!
- **Rebekka Almond, Susan Bourret, Ruth Sprong Heyden, Bryan Jaworski, Randy and Pam Olson, Jan Salvatore, and Paul Goodrich** setting up the hall.
- **Pam Olson**, for doing the grocery shopping with Mark Winzler and for arranging all of the delicious hors d'oeuvres.
- **Susan Bourret, David Beauregard** (*who also made the applesauce*), **Claudia Danna and Mark Winzler** for serving as the “kitchen crew” on Saturday and Sunday.
- **Carol Stoneman**, who though she was not unable to attend, made the gravy beforehand.
- **Randy Olson** for overseeing the beer and wine for those attending.
- **Ruth Sprong Heyden** for checking in people/accepting monetary donations.
- **Rebekka Almond** for assisting in the kitchen/keeping the coffee going and **Jan Salvatore** for assisting with dessert set-up.
- Those who favored us by bringing a delicious dessert to share. They were scrumptious.
- **Ed Gawlinski** (from Emanuel Lutheran Church) who played the accordion before/after dinner and during the singalong! The music truly added to the festive atmosphere.
- The Kitchen clean-up/dishwashing crew:
David Beauregard, Susan Bourret, Claudia Danna, Lois Hedberg, and Ruth Sprong Heyden.
- Those who helped in any way to clean up the hall. Those extra pairs of hands truly made clean up go much quicker. Thanks to **Bryan Jaworski** for the many trips to the dumpster!
- Everyone who came and enjoyed! It was a wonderful sight to see people mingling with one another with big smiles, hearty laughter and ongoing conversation.

The 2026 Fastnacht was an “*end of an era*”. Fastnacht began in 1959 in the basement of “old” Concordia on Winter and Garden Streets. Many good times were had over decades by many people. Fond memories and good times to remember!

Thanks again for everything! It was a great last Fastnacht!

Mark Winzler





BIRTHDAYS



March

Laura McKay (4)

Kristin Link (5)

John Haid (6)

Rachel Adams (18)

Sandra Baranowski (19)

Gail Adams (25)

Joanne Murphy (26)

Tom Taylor (27)

Cynthia Goodrich (30)

Irene Schack (30)

April

Carol Bowen (7)

Janis Barber (8)

Julie Cosmini (8)

Susan Bourret (15)

Tommy Donagher (20)

Jeanine Barber (28)

Sean Stoneman (28)

Mark Winzler (29)



May

Heather Adams (2)

Kathy Noyes (3)

Zachary Baranowski (4)

David Smith (14)

Karin Turek (16)

EJ Chiffer (17)

David Beauregard (18)

Mark Wilson (18)

Donald Briggmann (20)

Lisa Taylor (21)

★ HAPPY ★
BIRTHDAY!



Prayers of the Community



For prayer requests, please contact the parish office or use the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.
Names will remain on the prayer list for one month *unless you request otherwise.*

<u>Date Requested</u>	<u>Praying For (Person/Family)</u>	<u>Prayers For</u>	<u>Requested By</u>
2/25/2026	Family of Tim DeVanney, Sr.	Comfort as they grieve the passing of Tim DeVanney, Sr.	David Beauregard
2/3/2026	James Kennedy <i>(Mark's friend)</i>	Comfort & prayers following cancer surgery	Mark Winzler
1/28/2026	Miles Turner <i>(Carol's Brother-in-Law)</i>	Healing & strength	The Stonemans
1/19/2026	Family of Gail Hamblett <i>(Lanie's cousin)</i>	Comfort as they grieve Gail's passing	Lanie Turner
1/7/2026	Linda Lange	Comfort & Healing	Mark Winzler
12/17/2025	Joanne Murphy	Comfort & Healing	Mark Winzler
12/15/2025	Ed Adams	Comfort & Healing	Gail Adams
10/12/2025	Kimberly Morrill	Comfort & Healing from cancer	Elaine Briggmann
9/7/2026	Michael Jaworski	Comfor & Healing from cancer surgery	Sharon & John Jaworski
8/17/2025	Dan Burnett	Comfort & Healing	Tina Sollinger-Ruggerio
6/18/2025	Laura McKay	Comfort, strength & healing	Sandy Baranowski

The Intentions of this Community:

- † Concordia Nursery School Students and their families
- † The work of Manchester Area Conference of Churches (MACC)
- † The work of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA)
- † For our Cub Scout Pack and Scout Troop
- † For Licensed Lay Minister Beatrice Luciano and Ministerio Nueva Creacion
- † For our Friends at Emanuel Lutheran and former members of St. Mary's now merged with St. John's Episcopal Church (Vernon)

Concordia Lutheran Church

The Reverend Maria Hammons | Associate to the Bishop Congregational Council Contact Pastor
Mrs. Margie Gallagher | Parish Administrator

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