



DECEMBER 2025

THE FORTRESS

Newsletter of Concordia Lutheran Church, Preschool & Academy

DATES TO NOTE

- 12.3 . Advent Service
- 12.10 . Advent Service
- 12.14 . Children's Program
- 12.17 . Advent Service
- 12.24 . Christmas Eve
- 12.25 . Christmas Day
- 12.31 . New Year's Eve

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Angel Tree Ornaments

Pick an ornament off the tree!

CLA Christmas Walk Supper

Contact Rachel Kramer

LWML Cookie Walk

Contact Kathy Kramer

Swaddling Clothes

Sign-up or contact
Jamie Kotovsky

PREPARE TO GREET THE SAVIOR

From Pastor

Dear Christian People,

*Arise! Prepare yourselves today;
Prepare to greet the Savior, Who takes your sins away.*

During the Church's season of Advent, we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ our Savior. Contrary to what our culture says, it's not the Christmas season until Christmas. The decoration of our homes, church, and buildings with lights shines the brightness of hope in the dreary darkness of the long nights of December. Christians decorate as with holy vigil looking forward to that most holy night of our Lord's Advent among us.

As we decorate our homes, we also decorate ourselves. More than Christmas "ugly sweaters" or our finest Christmas church clothes, we dress our hearts, our minds, our very being in focus toward Christmas. Jesus, the Son of God is coming! Be ready to meet Him! Be ready in repentance, bearing the fruits of repentance. Restrain yourselves from sin. Seek reconciliation where there is none. Live in peace. Keep God's name holy as children of God, leading holy lives according to His Word. See your life, as God sees it, and as He desires His holy children to live—differently than those of the world—and make preparations accordingly.

Three of the four Collects for Advent are about preparing by stirring up and taking action. Our desire is for our Lord to come and rescue us from our sins and lift them from us. We also pray that we are prepared for His coming, serving Him with pure minds (help us to do this, dear Father in heaven). Celebrating the birth of Jesus also teaches us to look forward to His 2nd coming. Our annual celebration of His first coming in Bethlehem makes us aware and keeps before us the truth that He will come again, for the last and final time. Before that time, He stirs up His power and comes among us in Word and Sacrament to rescue and forgive our sin, and we, by these holy Means, also prepare for His appearing. At His 2nd Advent, He will bring into Paradise all who are prepared in repentance and faith in Christ our Savior. All our preparations will finally come to the joy of completion and we will see our Savior face to face!

Arise, O Christians people! Prepare yourselves today;
Prepare to greet the Savior, Who takes your sins away! (LSB 354 v1)

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance. (Advent 1)

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds. (Advent 2)

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy. (Advent 4)

In Christ our Coming Savior,

Pastor Mueller

Pastor Mueller

Transferred from the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant:

Elizabeth Erdman died on October 27, 2025.
Her funeral service was held on Saturday,
November 15, 2025. Christian burial was at
Oakwood Cemetery, Geneseo.



We find lasting comfort in the promise of God: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life."
Revelation 2:10



RaiseRight™ gift cards are available!

We will have cards ready for you to purchase between church services. You can also place an order for cards you may need for gift giving. Order forms are on the CLA table and checks should be included with your order, made out to CLA. We will be placing an order early in December. Ask Rachel or Kris if you have any questions!

The Baked Potato & Chili Dinner Fundraiser for CLA will be on Saturday, December 13th during the Geneseo Christmas Walk. Come support our CLA students with a free-will donation! We also need help to cook and serve our dinner. If you are interested in volunteering your time, please talk with Rachel Kramer.

Church Library



Book Review

THE BIG FATHER AND HIS LITTLE BOY

From Charlotte Prochaska

A little boy is born to a big father but his little mother dies and the big father is too strong in power that the little boy must flee or he shall die. On his travels, a milkmaid, mute farmer, beekeeper's daughter, adventurous cat, and dog help him learn to trust God who is bigger and stronger than his father. They also help the little boy understand the difference between emotions - like that fear can show up as anger.

I liked this book because everywhere the little boy went everyone taught him about God. When I think about this book I think about everyone who teaches others about Jesus, resembles Jesus, and tells others about God and it makes me feel happy. I think you should read this book because it teaches us to tell everyone about Jesus no mater what!

OPEN FOR SHOPPING - DECEMBER 11TH 4-7 PM & DECEMBER 27TH 9-NOON

SWADDLING CLOTHES

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

Volunteer to help our community today!

ACADEMY ANNOUNCEMENTS

From Mrs. Coppejans

November was a month filled with reflection, gratitude, and opportunities to honor others. Early in the month, our students observed Veterans Day by walking to the Aisle of Flags as well as learning about and seeing pictures from the Honor Flight that received our cards. It was a meaningful time to remember the men and women who served our country and to give thanks to God for their courage and sacrifice.

As Thanksgiving approached, our classroom focused on recognizing God's daily provision with thankful hearts. Students completed a variety of gratitude



Greater Peoria Honor Flight #37

projects, reflecting on the blessings God gives in family, community, and creation. We ended the month with our classroom feast—a joyful celebration of fellowship and thankfulness.

Now, as we enter the season of Advent, our hearts turn toward hope and joyful expectation. December will be a busy and wonderful month at Concordia Lutheran Academy. We will be serving our community through a special cookie baking service project,

making a joyful noise during the CLP & CLA joint Christmas program, and sharing the joy of Christ's birth as we go caroling. The end of the semester approaches quickly, and we give thanks for the growth and learning the Lord has granted throughout these months together.

In all these things, we look forward to celebrating the good news of Immanuel—God with us—the true source of our hope, our peace, and our joy.

CLA at the Aisle of Flags



CLA Thanksgiving Feast of Snacks



Memorize a verse with us!

*Let him who has my word
speak my word faithfully.*

Jeremiah 23:28



2025
GENESECO
Christmas Walk



WINDOWS
OF HOPE
DECEMBER 13, 2025

EVENTS AT CONCORDIA

316 S Oakwood Ave - (309) 944-3993

3:15 PM - GMS SWING CHOIR

under the direction of Amy Croft

3-7 PM - COOKIE WALK

homemade cookies and treats for \$9 per pound
supporting the mission of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League

3-7 PM - SUPPER

Chili & Baked Potato supper with all the fixings - free will donation
supporting the mission of Concordia Lutheran Academy



Lutheran
Women
in Mission



Youth

on

WEDNESDAY!

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

Sept. 3 - April 29

NO YOW!
DEC 24 & 31

DEC 17
WEAR YOUR FAV
CHRISTMAS ATTIRE

SPARKS: 3:30 - 5:00

BREAKING BREAD: 5:00 - 5:30

CATECHISM CLASS: 5:30 - 7:00

ROCKS: 5:30 - 7:00

CLOSING: 7:00 - 7:15





The LWML met November 11, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. Kathy Kramer opened with prayer. After prayer we enjoyed fellowship and a delicious dessert by Mary Hull.

Our meeting started with prayer by Kathy Kramer. Our hostess for the day was Mary Hull and she gave a devotion about Thanksgiving. We all joined in singing hymn "Before You Lord We Bow".

Our Bible study for the day was given by Linda Hull and it was entitled Folding Hands With Prayer. Linda gave us many Bible passages on the word "fold" and how it is used in the Bible.

Roll call was answered by telling about Veterans in our families. There were 16 members present. The minutes from the last meeting were read and approved. Our treasurer reported a balance of \$1,593.90. Cards were sent by Kathy and several thank-you and newsletters were received.

OLD Business: Treasures from the Holy Land were donated by the Emmerson family on behalf of Norma Emmerson. Norma made many trips to the Holy Land. We all got to choose a piece to take home from that area of the world.

NEW Business: Starting in 2026 we will have a collection of items for the Food Pantry every 4th Sunday of the month. The first one will be January 25th 2026. A collection box is in the fellowship hall in back of the church

LWML Christmas Cookie Walk is December 13, 2025 beginning 3:00 p.m. and ending 7:00 p.m. There will be a set-up of tables starting at 1:30.

We will serve the Erdman Funeral. Mite box devotion was read by all and mites were collected.

Respectfully submitted, Patricia Kohrell

Celebrate Our Savior's Birth with Concordia!

Wednesday Advent Services - December 3, 10, 17 - 7:00 pm
 Children's Christmas Program - December 14 - 10:30 am
 Christmas Eve - December 24 - 4:00 & 9:00 pm
 Christmas Day - December 25 - 9:00 am
 New Years' Eve - December 31 - 6:00 pm at St. John's in Edford



Poinsettias For Christmas 2025



Please help us fill the sanctuary with red poinsettias to commemorate our celebration of the birth of our Lord!
 You may purchase a 6 inch foil-wrapped pot with 4 - 6 blooms for \$12.00.
 Payment must accompany your order. Make checks payable to **Concordia Lutheran Church**.
 Please turn your form and payment into the church office by **December 8, 2025. No orders will be taken after.**

You may pick up your poinsettia(s) after the Christmas Day Service on December 25, 2025.

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Number of poinsettias: _____

- IN MEMORY OF** _____
- TO GIVE THANKS TO GOD** _____
- TO CELEBRATE** _____
- OTHER** _____

In our prayers...

Concordia Family: Marc Motzer, Marcia Himmelman, Nash, Mary Miller, Joline Parrish, Lenore Vandevord, Jenni DeGerengel, Wendy & Jon Grunwald, Lola Helke, Roger Hull, Jackson Kinnard, Phil Jahn, Cindy Wagoner, Fama Prokup, Martin Fleming, Sue Smithson, Julie Kuse, Janine Persefield, Lois Misfeldt, Brad Watters, our inactive members **Friends of Concordia:** Donte Nystrom, Renee Hull, Colin, Dan & Lisa Gordon, Tammy Bruns, Craig, Jim & Jennifer Garner, Jeff McQuaid, Tammy Sheldon, Barbara Sigwalt, Joe Moriarity, Debbie DelFiacco, Debbie Hardesty, Justin Rittenhouse, Megan & Daxton Crain, Ann Key, A.J. Gale, 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, 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 October 31, 2025

Approved 2025 budget is \$346,182

	OCT	YTD
Income	23,631.89	300,190.00
Expenses	29,195.11	287,338.75
Income Less Expense	-5,563.22	12,851.25

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: January 11, 2026 - 1:30 PM

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

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

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

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



CONCORDIA

EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

Hear, live & share with heart.

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

CHURCH LEADERSHIP:

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

DEACONS & MEMBER LAST NAMES:

Shawn Anderson & Brian Wahlheim	A-C
Mark Quart & Andy Raschke	D-G
Derek Drockelman & 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:

Monday, December 15

OFFICE HOURS:

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

DIRECTORY

Rev. Stephen Mueller

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

Stephanie Prochaska & Allison Drockelman

Office Staff

office@concordiageneseo.com

Amy Roberts, Preschool Teacher

preschoole@geneseolutheranchurch.com

Katie Coppejans, Academy Teacher

kcoppejans@concordialutheranacademy.com

Mindy Brown, Treasurer

bookkeeper@geneseolutheranchurch.com

Erica Johnson, Custodian

custodian@concordiageneseo.com

MONTHLY SCHEDULE

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

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

Every Wednesday (Sept-May)
 YOW!

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

**NO YOW!
 DEC 24&31**

1st Thursday
 6:30 PM - Board of Education Meeting

2nd Tuesday
 1:00 PM - LWML Meeting
 4:00 PM - Stewardship Board Meeting

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

2nd Sunday of Jan, May, Oct
 1:30 PM - Voters Assembly

2nd Monday (Aug-May)
 Pastor at Circuit Pastor's Winkel

3rd Sunday
 12:30 PM - Board of Deacons Meeting

3rd Thursday
 6:30 PM - Church Council Meeting

4th Thursday
 6:30 PM - Evangelism Board Meeting
 6:30 PM - Trustee Board Meeting

4th Saturday
 9 AM-Noon - Swaddling Clothes Open

December Special Dates:

3 rd	Advent Service	7:00 PM
7 th	Children's Program Practice	3-4:30 PM
10 th	Advent Service	7:00 PM
14 th	Children's Program	10:30 AM
	Resource Center Open	9:30 AM
17 th	Advent Service	7:00 PM
24 th	Christmas Eve Services	4 & 9 PM
25 th	Christmas Day Service	9:00 AM
31 st	New Year's Eve Service	6:00 PM