

# CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT 2024



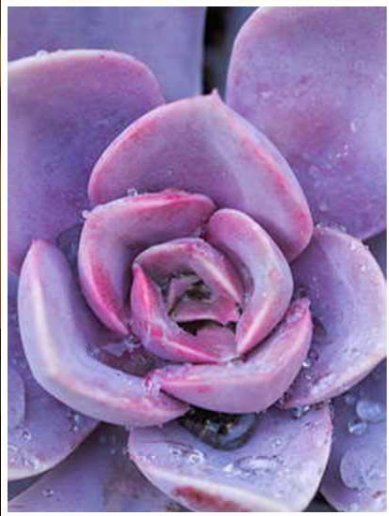


## In Memoriam



### **Carol S. Sutcliffe**

Carol (Schubert) Sutcliffe, age 93, of Manchester died on July 27, 2023, at Woodlake of Tolland. Carol graduated as an honor student in 1948 from Manchester High School, and from Hillyer College with a B.S. degree in 1954, one of the very few women in the accounting program. Carol was active in her church, Concordia Lutheran, and in the Manchester Historical Society. She was a generous and gracious person. She was predeceased by her beloved husband, David, in 2000, and her beloved son, Mark, in 2007. A graveside service will be held at East Cemetery, Manchester, on August 4 at 1:00 p.m. For online condolences, please visit [www.tierneyfuneralhome.com](http://www.tierneyfuneralhome.com).



Sandra M. Brooks  
1943 - 2023

## Obituary of Sandra M. Brooks

Sandra (Werner) Brooks, beloved wife of the late Harold F. Brooks, Sr. passed away on Monday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023. She was born April 29, 1943, in Manchester, daughter of the late Robert E. Werner and Elsie (Roth) Werner.

She grew up in Manchester and graduated from Manchester High School in 1961. Upon graduation, she worked for Bemis and Freeman in Hartford, Mal Tool in Manchester, and worked many years for the Manchester Food Service Program.

She and her husband owned an antique business for many years. She loved to cross stitch and was an avid fan of the Boston Red Sox and the N.Y. Giants.

She leaves two brothers, Robert (Dianne) Werner of Clinton and Lenard (Lynn) Werner of Andover. She also leaves several nieces and nephews and cousins.

A funeral service will be held on Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 10:30 a.m. at Concordia Lutheran Church, 40 Pitkin Street, Manchester, with calling hours from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Burial to follow at East Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Concordia Lutheran Church or a charity of your choice. For online condolences, please visit [www.tierneyfuneralhome.com](http://www.tierneyfuneralhome.com).

## Calling Hours

9:30 am - 10:30 am  
Saturday, September 16, 2023  
Concordia Lutheran  
40 Pitkin Street  
Manchester, Connecticut, United States

## Funeral Service

10:30 am  
Saturday, September 16, 2023  
Concordia Lutheran  
40 Pitkin Street  
Manchester, Connecticut, United States

*The burial will be in East Cemetery following the service.*



# **Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting**

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**June 23, 2024**

## **Call to Order**

## **Devotions**

## **Approval of Agenda**

## **Approval of Minutes- January 2024 Semi-Annual Meeting**

**May 26, 2024 Special Meeting**

## **Reports**

- Pastor
- President
- Nursery School Director
- Treasurer Update on Budget
- GHIAA
- Stewardship
- Outreach
- Worship and Memorial Garden
- Member Care
- Property

## **Transition Update**

Sunday- September 15- Reserve the Date

(Pastors Sara Anderson/Maria Hammons Check-In)

## **Elections**

- Congregation Council
- Legacy for Ministry
- Memorial Garden Board

## **Information**

- The Nominating committee for 2025 elections will be appointed at the January 2025 Semi-Annual Meeting. The January 2023 Semi-annual meeting will tentatively be held on January 26.
- The Congregation Council will meet after this meeting to elect officers.

## **Adjournment**

## **Unapproved Minutes of the Concordia Lutheran Church Annual Finance Report 2023 held February 18, 2024**

**Call to Order** – Mark Winzler @ 11:32 AM

**Devotions** – Pastor Hedberg

**Approval of Agenda** – It was modified to add an item for a Concordia Nursery School update, then moved, seconded and voted to approve the agenda as modified.

**Approval of the Minutes of the June 11, 2023 Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting** – The minutes were approved as written.

### **Reports**

**Pastor's Report** – no additional comments

**Council President's Report** – Mark Winzler added emphasis to the following:

- In preparation for our moving forward, inactive members are being contacted
- Statistics on current membership and participation were highlighted.
- Our endowment fund balances were pointed out and a vote by the congregation would be needed to fund revitalization or any other option not currently outlined in the Legacy Fund distribution guidelines.
- Mark pointed out that he has heard misunderstandings about our moving forward and pointed out the last few paragraphs in his report.
- Our participation with Ministerio Nueva Creación, (MNC), and our decision on our future must be determined independently.
- Mark Mentioned the need for all to attend next week's meeting with Pastors Sara Anderson and Maria Hammons to determine our future direction.
- Members were encouraged to read the revitalization documents prior to the meeting.
- There were no questions.

**2022 Year End Treasurer's Report** – Carol Stoneman summarized the report and stated that report was a good snapshot of the 2023 yearly finances. Carol highlighted that envelope and stretch offerings exceeded the budget by 3%. Expenses exceed the budget by 9%.

**Legacy for Ministry Report** – Legacy funds showed a gain of \$164,394.72 for 2023.

#### **Worship and Memorial Garden Report**

Ruth thanked Gail Adams for volunteering to be the Worship and Memorial Garden Treasurer. The revenue under Memorial Stones included payment for 2 interments that were purchased in 2023. Daley-Connerton is our new engraver. The Home Depot charge was for Polymer Sand to stop the weed growth in the brick cross area.

**Concordia Nursery School Finance Report** – The change to kindergarten enrollment at age 5 years may impact nursery school enrollment.

**Report from the Stewardship Committee** – David thanked everyone for their support. An update was communicated during the meeting as additional pledging came in after the report was distributed.

**Reception of all of the Reports** – There was a motion to receive all of the reports, the motion was seconded and the vote passed.

## **Motion**

**Approval of 2024 Proposed Ministry Budget** – Carol Stoneman identified updates to the budget. In going through the Budget Revenue Carol pointed out the following:

- Since only one AA Group was using the building, instead of two, the revenue projection is down.
- The major reason that the proposed budget expenses for Staff Salaries and Fringe Benefits for 2023 were projected to be lower is that in 2022 the budget included a Transition Pastor for half of 2022 and a half time Pastor for the other half of 2022. The 2023 Proposed Budget contains the expenses for a Transition Pastor for the entire year.
- The projected deficit for 2023 is \$11,519.00, Carol reminded us of the projected \$40,000 deficits that we have dealt with in the past and have overcome.

**It was moved, seconded, and the motion passed to adopt the Proposed 2024 Budget.**

## **Election of Synod Assembly Voting Members**

Bobby McKinney, Nancy Knauff and Zach Baranowski were elected as the voting members. Pastor Hedberg and Mark will also attend.

## **Appointment of Nominating Committee**

David Smith, Carol Stoneman, Ruth Sprong-Heyden were appointed to the nominating committee.

## **Nursery School Update**

Laura Hart will be stepping down as director. Once we decide our direction, we need to inform her so they can plan for next year. Chestnut Hill nursery school will not operate next year, leaving Concordia as the only option for this kind of program.

## **Radical Redevelopment / Revitalization Discussions**

Attendees sat in 4 groups to comment on the topic and come up with questions for next week's meeting. The comments and questions were compiled and sent to the transition team and Pastors Sara and Maria. Mark will meet with Pastors Sara and Maria to prepare for the discussion with the congregation on February 24, 2024 (next week).

**Adjournment** – a motion to adjourn was seconded and passed at 1:26 PM

## **Why 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.

## **Mission Statement**

As Lutheran Christians, Concordia understands God is calling us to be:

A Christian community with responsibility to support each other, our neighborhood and the larger community,

A gathered Assembly marked by the practices of prayer, study, reflection and worship,

Selfless Disciples who communicate and practice the faith through acts of faithful stewardship, service and forgiveness.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Bourret



## List of Meeting Attendees

- |                       |                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. David Smith        | 12. Ruthie Lynch            |
| 2. Susan Bourret      | 13. Kathy Noyes             |
| 3. Jan Salvatore      | 14. Janet McGarity          |
| 4. Philip Stoneman    | 15. Carol Stoneman          |
| 5. Ruth Sprong-Heyden | 16. Rolf Hedberg            |
| 6. Jim Britton        | 17. Lois Hedberg            |
| 7. Carol Burnett      | 18. Jane Casserly           |
| 8. Donald Slater      | 19. Kay Corl                |
| 9. Nancy Lynn Knauff  | 20. Tina Sollinger-Ruggerio |
| 10. John Corl         | 21. David Beauregard        |
| 11. Mark Winzler      | 22. C. Paul Goodrich        |
| 23 Sharon Jaworski    | 24. John Jaworski           |
| 25. Bobby McKinney    | 26. Lanie Turner            |
| 27. Jan Bellino       | 28. Sandra Baranowski       |
| 29. Candace Wilson    |                             |

## Unapproved Minutes of the Concordia Lutheran Church Special Meeting held May 26, 2024

**Call to Order** – Mark Winzler @ 11:14 AM

**Meeting to discuss a motion submitted by the congregation council to approve funding from the legacy fund for the steeple and Brandt lounge flashing repair.**

The congregation was reminded of the history of repairs and need to fix the leak to prevent further damage.

The meeting was opened up for questions. Joel Baranowski was present to answer questions such as possible work warrantees, removal of the steeple as a solution and when the damage to the pipe organ would be repaired. Joel also provided addition history about former repairs with thanks to Dan Burnett for providing the information. Information about the challenge to find dependable capable vendors to provide repairs for this complex unique problem was also shared. The vendor chosen has the people who can be trusted to show up and do a good job.

Special thanks to Joel, Dan, Phil Stoneman, and John Corl for all their help with this project.

Once questions had been answered a voice vote was called. The members present constituted a quorum. The following motion was unanimously passed.

### **MOTION:**

**To approve up to \$45,000 from the Legacy Fund to repair the steeple and the flashing over Brandt Lounge**

**Adjournment** – a motion to adjourn passed at 11:33 AM

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Bourret

## A Pastoral Letter for the June 2024 Semi-Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Friends in Christ,

Before I wrote this letter I looked back on what I wrote last year and I began that letter in the following way: “If I were to give this report a title, it would be this: ‘The Journey Continues’. Indeed, the journey still continues, but we are entering a new and more decisive time on that journey as we are in the process of discerning next steps with regard to Concordia’s future.



So, in consultation with Synodical personnel, Pastor Sarah Anderson, assistant to the Bishop and Kim Bergstrand, we have had helpful conversations and have received direction with regard to steps forward and how to proceed from here. These include meeting benchmarks and visiting other congregations in our area that may be an opportunity for joint ministries going forward. I am sure that you will find more details about these things in other reports.

And so we keep moving forward not only in discernment but also in mission. We had a wonderful Three Kings Celebration which involved members of Ministerio Nueva Creación (MNC) and Concordia and was led by Bea Santiago who Pastors MNC. This event was open to the Manchester Community and as the saying goes, “A good time was had by all.” We had a full house with wonderful food, fellowship and activities. We have also opened a ‘Pop-Up Shop’ which gives people of underserved communities access to clothing, various kinds of cooking utensils and other necessities. Our name is “out there” and the wind of the Holy Spirit is active among us and through us.

Now we continue to move forward. Our future is neither certain nor guaranteed, but what is certain and guaranteed is this: the Spirit of the living God leads us and Jesus is with us every step of the way in all of our deliberations and in all of our discerning.

God Bless You All,  
Pastor Rolf Hedberg

## **Congregation President's Report**

The focus of the second of our two semiannual meetings each year is on program, that which we are doing as a congregation. Here are some highlights from the past year (in no particular order):



### **Manchester Schools/Highland Park**

Latasha Easterling Turnquist, the Chief of Family Partnership and Student Engagement for the Manchester Schools met with Council and Transition Team to talk about ways that Concordia could be of more service to the community. As a result, the partnership with Highland Park School has grown. In addition to supplying items outside of Thanksgiving and Christmas, the Family Resource Director makes us aware of other needs to which we can respond.

### **Pop-Up Shop**

Out of this a "Pop-Up Shop" was born, a place where Highland Park parents can come to stop (free of charge) for a multitude of items including clothing. Thanks to the dedicated members who have worked to make this store an outreach to the community: Carol Burnett, Jan McGarity, Bobby McKinney, Joanne Murphy, Ruth Sprong Heyden, Pam Olson, Bea Santiago, Nancy Lynn Knauff, Sharon Jaworski and Carol Stoneman.

### **Lenten/Holy Week Worship**

Once again this year we collaborated with Emanuel Lutheran Church and Ministerio Nueva Creación to plan and hold worship together for Ash Wednesday, Midweek Lenten, and Holy Week.

### **Scouts**

Scout Troop 123 (which used to meet at Community Baptist) and Cub Scout Pack 47 (which used to meet at South Methodist) are now meeting at Concordia. We are the chartering organization for both groups. David Smith is church's liaison to both. Many scouts (and their parents) came to worship on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in February, Scout Sunday.

### **Social**

Both the annual August Pool/Barbecue gathering at Mark's house and the Fastnacht Dinner before Lent began were well attended. Concordia members and guests enjoy being together!

### **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination**

We honored Pastor Hedberg with a festive worship service and lunch on the occasion of the anniversary of his 50 years of his ordination. Associate to the Bishop Pastor Steven Wilco preached.

### **Three Kings Event**

Concordia and MNC hosted the Town of Manchester's Three Kings Celebration on Saturday, January 20. Over 20 Concordia members were involved in planning and being on site for the event.

## **Membership**

We updated our membership directory (it had not been done since about 2009). As a result, **our membership stands at ninety-three (93).**

This number (93) reflects those people who.....

- a) have made a contribution of record from 2023 to present (this giving recorded by the Financial Secretary and a statement of giving issued to the person)

**OR**

- b) attended church at least once from 2023 to present.
- c) are children of those people in “a” or “b”.

## **Voting Members**

As indicated in the constitution, being a member of Concordia does not automatically grant a person the right to vote. The constitution states that a person must.....

- a) Attend church/commune within the year

**AND**

- b) Make a contribution of record within the year.

## **Transition**

After spending much of 2023 exploring possibilities to become a multicultural/bilingual (redevelopment/revitalization) congregation, the congregation met in February with Associates to the Bishop Pastors Sara Anderson and Maria Hammons to further explore this issue. Following discussion a “straw poll” was taken. Those present voted not to pursue this option.

Focus then turned to the remaining options: Status quo, merge with another Lutheran congregation, partner with another congregation or holy closure.

Those present at the February 25 Session came to consensus on pursuing two avenues over the next six months: Maintenance Ministry (10 votes) and Partnership (9 votes).

As a follow-up, Pastor Sara Anderson met with the Congregation Council and the Transition Team in March to talk about next steps: what we should be doing during this six-month time period before Pastors Sara and Maria come back to check-in with the congregation. Here is a brief summary:

### **1) Maintenance Ministry**

We need to establish some benchmarks. These benchmarks, if attained, would necessitate moving out of maintenance ministry and instead move the discussion to either Merger or Holy Closure.

### **2) Partnerships**

We have to identify other possible partners (non-Lutheran) in the Manchester area.

- We then will gather information (informally) about them.
- A small group would then attend worship to get a feel for the worship and church community. Those attending would not state who they were or why they were there.
- A determination will then be made whether to reach out to the pastor/church leadership to begin a conversation.

The Council and Transition Team then met on Sunday, March 17 to craft some benchmarks and to identify some potential partners. Those benchmarks and possible partners follow. This information was shared with the congregation at a meeting on April 7.

### Maintenance Ministry Benchmarks

**If one or more of these benchmarks are reached, then we will move out of maintenance ministry to consider either Merger or Holy Closure:**

- 1)** If there is a loss of \$15,000 or more of income at any point during a calendar year.
- 2)** If there is a loss of \$15,000 or more in pledges for the following year.

Note: The Legacy Endowment Fund cannot be used to support our yearly budget except for areas of outreach beyond Concordia.

These include: a) Nursery School Scholarships, b) New England Synod Mission Support, c) Manchester Area Conference of Churches and d) Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance

- 3)** If our average monthly attendance at worship goes below thirty-five (35)
- 4)** If we cannot meet the minimum amount of people designated for: a) Congregation Council and/or b) Legacy Board and/or c) Memorial Garden Board
- 5)** If we cannot maintain the same handful of people who are “staffing” the following: a) Ushers b) Counters c) Altar Guild d) Lawn Mowers e) Coffee Hour f) Choir g) Worship Assistants

### Possible Partners

Center Congregational Church- Manchester  
Second Congregational Church- Manchester  
North United Methodist Church- Manchester  
South United Methodist Church- Manchester  
Presbyterian Church of Manchester- Manchester  
Episcopal Churches

- St. George's- Bolton
- All Saints -East Hartford
- St. James- Glastonbury
- St. Luke's- Glastonbury
- St. Peter's - South Windsor
- St. Peter's- Hebron
- Grace Episcopal- Windsor

During late April and May members of the Transition Team/Council visited four churches:

**Manchester:** North United Methodist and Center Congregational; **Bolton:** St. George Episcopal; **East Hartford:** All Saints Episcopal

At the May Council meeting those who had attended worship etc. at the churches reported back to Council on their findings both in terms of worship, but also other information they had learned. (Note: Those who attended did not identify themselves as being from Concordia and just said they were visiting and most left right at the end of the liturgy so that they would not be peppered with questions.)

As a result of the discussions, the focus was to take the next step with North United Methodist and St. George's Episcopal. Bishop Hazelwood has been contacted. He has advised us to move ahead and when if we do meet, then he will contact the Bishops of the respective churches as a courtesy. A letter will now be sent to churches to talk about meeting together to talk.

Additionally, the Transition Team/Council expressed interest in visiting another church: St. Peter's Episcopal in South Windsor. This was done on Sunday, June 2. Those attending will report out at the June 9 Council meeting. Further information will be shared at the semi-annual meeting on June 23.

As a reminder, whatever path we end up going down:

- a) **This is Concordia's decision.**
- b) The "Synod" does **NOT** have a predetermined plan for us, nor does it have any input/control over our decision.
- c) The "Synod" does **NOT** want Concordia's building (the Synod is not in the Real Estate Business).

**Attendance**

<b>Date</b>	<b># in Attendance</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>30-Day Rolling Average</b>
4/7/2024	46		
4/14/2024	39		
4/21/2024	42		
4/28/2024	45		
<b>Average</b>	<b>43</b>		
5/5/2024	44		43
5/12/2024	49		44
5/19/2024	54	Baptism	46
5/26/2024	49		47
<b>Average</b>	<b>49</b>		

**Transition Pastor**

Pastor Hedberg has been with us since September of 2021. In addition to leading Sunday worship, Advent Midweek, Christmas Eve, Lenten Midweek, and Holy Week worship, Pastor Hedberg has been in the office one day a week plus attending Congregation Council Meetings, Executive Committee Meetings, Finance Committee Meetings, Legacy Board Meetings, Transition Team Meetings as well as meeting with/contacting members who are in need of pastoral care.

During these meetings he has, many times, brought thoughts and ideas "to the table" with his pastoral lens which have helped to guide us. We are in his debt and are deeply appreciative of his willingness

to continue to be with us as we continue to discern Concordia's future. He continues to exhibit his care and concern for us which is deeply appreciated while providing us with "food for thought" at the same time. He will be with us one Sunday a month in July and August (so Lois and he can enjoy their place "up north", but back fully in September.

### **Parish Administrator**

We have been blessed for the past four years to have Jane Geason serve as our "Temporary" Parish Administrator. Everything has been running smoothly and efficiently. It is clear that for Jane, this is not just a "job". She sincerely shows her care and concern for the church throughout her tenure. She has been a wonderful presence, has thought "outside the box" and has warmly welcomed those with whom she comes into contact.

We wish Jane well as she now retires (as of June 30) as she enjoys life with her husband Mark and their family. All the best to you!

### **Laura Hart**

Our deepest and sincere thanks to Laura Hart for the many years she has served Concordia Nursery School. Laura is stepping away from her role as Director to help care for her father who has cancer. She was recognized at worship on Sunday, June 2 and thanked for your dedication to children and their parents and to the Concordia community.

Some thanks.....

- John Anderson and Linda Hilliard who have served us faithfully and well as our supply organists/choir director. Our rich worship and music life continues on!
- Thanks to Susan Bourret, Ruth Sprong-Heyden and Carol Stoneman who week after week have worked behind the scenes on all matters relating to finance.
- Thanks to property team of Joel Baranowski, David Beauregard, John Corl and Phil Stoneman for their leadership in the care of our building and grounds. Special recognition and thanks to Joel for his faithful, untiring care for the building and for his expertise in addressing issues.
- Thanks to my fellow members of the Transition Team (Sandy Baranowski, Jeanine Barber, Susan Bourret, John Corl, David Smith, and Carol Stoneman) for the countless hours we have spent together over the last years on all aspects of the transition.
- Thanks to all members of Concordia for being diligent and supportive financially and for your patience and understanding as we continue to discern our future.

Mark Winzler  
President

# Concordia Nursery School

## Semi-Annual Report

May 28, 2024

Our 2023-2024 school year began with major changes at Concordia Nursery School. Enrollment had decreased to the point where it was no longer feasible to offer programming five days weekly. Where we once had 35 families and a waiting list, we found ourselves with a total of 15 families spread across two different classes. Parents in Manchester are increasingly looking for full-day options, before and after-school care, and subsidized or free preschool programs. Concordia Nursery School remains the only church-based, part-time nursery school of its kind in Manchester following the closing of Center Nursery School in June 2023, and the impending closure of Chestnut Hill Preschool in June 2024.

In order to stay open this school year, we worked with our board and the Council to create a way to minimize costs and increase class size. Previously four-year-olds came on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and three-year olds came on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We decided to combine the two age groups into one mixed-age class that would come together three days a week. Families were receptive to the change and we were delighted to see that it was beneficial to the children as well. We filled the program and had eleven PK4 students and seven PK3 students. The younger children benefited by coming three days weekly instead of only two. The older children had the opportunity to stay for an extra hour each day and enjoy lunch at school each time they came instead of only once weekly as in the past. As teachers, we enjoyed the opportunities for children to interact with peers of wider ages and developmental stages.

Despite the program changes, we entered the year with a significant budget deficit. With the blessing and support of Council, we offered additional financial aid to families who had registered under the original schedule who were now obligated to pay for three additional hours of care per week (approximately \$1000 more over the year). The church has also generously given us additional funds to meet our expenses, including keeping our salaries level even with fewer classroom hours. We are so very thankful for this.

Another major change this year was in the area of staffing. Last summer we said farewell to beloved teacher Kayle Gagnon who had been a part of Concordia for many years - eleven as a teacher following six as a parent and Board member. While Kayle was greatly missed by parents, children and staff, we were thrilled to welcome Sarah Tierinni as our new teacher in August 2023. Sarah's own children attended Concordia and her experience as a talented preschool teacher made her the perfect choice for the position. I continued as Director and Head Teacher, with Ashley Salerno stepping beautifully in to fill Kayle's position.



Further staffing changes are ahead once more, as I wrap up my eleventh year at Concordia and leave Concordia at the end of June to care for my parents. Ashley Salerno will take over as Director effective July 1, 2024, with Sarah stepping into Ashley's position. A third teacher will be hired over the summer to round out the team. I plan to stay on in the role of bookkeeper and occasional substitute as needed.

Enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year is following last year's trend as well, even with the closure of Chestnut Hill. Many low or no-cost options for preschool are now available in Manchester and the wider community through magnet and charter schools. Families have been impacted by inflation and there are fewer full-time stay-at-home parents who can bring their children to a program with the hours we have at Concordia. The viability of our school is entirely dependent on financial support from the church, even if we fill the 18 spaces available for next year. We currently have 14 families enrolled, with many additional families having had tours or inquired about the program. I am confident that we will fill the program again this year. We are thankful that the parish has elected to once again financially support the school for the coming year. We recognize that it is a distinct possibility that the upcoming year will be the last for CNS.

We are deeply thankful for the ongoing support we receive from Jane in the office, Mark Winzler, treasurers Carol Stoneman and Susan Bourret, Nursery School Board members Sandra Baranowski and Julie Chiffer, as well as Church Council members and other parishioners. Many thanks to all, especially the building and grounds members who take such good care of our beautiful facility inside and out!

We realize that there are changes ahead for not only the nursery school, but the church as well. It is my hope that we will accept these changes with an open mind and faithful heart. CNS is a special place and I know that the staff will continue to work to make a difference in our families' lives. It has been my pleasure to be a part of this amazing community for nearly 20 years and I leave a better person because of it.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Hart

Director

**Treasurer Update on Budget**

*To be distributed at the Annual Program Report Meeting on June 23, 2024.*

## Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA) Annual Report – June 2024

Concordia continues to support Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA) financially and by participating in the work being done.

We participated in house meetings with Unitarian Universalist Society East (UUSE) on March 5<sup>th</sup>. This February and March hundreds of faith community members participated in meetings, sharing their personal stories.



Analysis of the concerns voiced in these meetings are taking place in May to identify issues to address this year. Issues will be communicated with GHIAA members and Action Teams will be formed to work on action items identified. Where appropriate, action teams will work to encourage legislators to submit and pass bills impacting these issues identified. Letters will need to be written, phone calls made and meetings with legislators held.

This Year's highlights:

Thursday, June 20, from 6:30-8:30 pm, at the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry in Hartford a **GHIAA Delegates Assembly** will take place. Results from the analysis of our recent House Meeting campaign and key themes that emerged from the stories will be shared.

During the 2023 legislative session, fair education funding reform saw \$150 million added to this year and full funding for the Education Cost Sharing Formula next year. Changes were proposed to this funding this February. GHIAA members were asked to contact their legislators to encourage them to keep the funding needed to support education.

The last day of the legislative session this May, the Connecticut General Assembly passed a bill that will preserve \$54 million of reserve funds in the MIRA (Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority) account. Currently, that money is being spent to subsidize the cost for suburban towns to have their trash hauled away now that the incinerator plant has closed. MIRA left behind a polluted wasteland on the riverfront in Hartford and has not been devoted to cleanup and remediation. GHIAA leaders brought this injustice into the light of day and spent hours at MIRA board meetings raising this concern and researching this issue, and it paid off. We thank House Speaker Matt Ritter, the Hartford Delegation, and Mayor Arunan Arulampalam for their support and commitment to this important issue.

Clean Slate legislation that was passed in 2021, has yet to be implemented. This February, many GHIAA members joined our allies from CONECT and ACLU-CT at the Capitol to call on Gov. Lamont to finally implement this legislation. There are 67,000 people who have earned a chance at a fresh start that are still waiting to have their records expunged.

GHIAA offers the following training for all participating congregations:

**Core Team Training** is available each year to learn skills and practices of community organizing.

**Racial Justice training** is an impactful opportunity for learning and growth. Each year this curriculum specifically for GHIAA, with both foundational concepts and real-life applications is facilitated for our congregations.

Concordia and Ministerio Nueva Creación (MNC)'s GHIAA teams have participated in GHIAA since it began. Social Justice is part of our mission as the body of Christ.

We ask for congregational support of this work. As items are identified and bills go before the legislature, please write your legislators in support of these bills. If you don't know who your legislator is, we can provide you with that information. Please feel free to contact one of us if you have any questions about the work GHIAA does or want to know how you can participate.

Respectfully, your GHIAA team: Nancy Lynn Knauff, David Smith, Carol Stoneman and Susan Bourret

## Report from the Stewardship Committee



*Thus says the Lord, the one who created you, O Israel, who formed you, O Jacob: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine." -Isaiah 43:1*

We are thankful for the continued leadership we have with Pastor Rolf Hedberg. The Stewardship Committee will be meeting in June to plan our program to carry us through 2024 and into 2025. Care to join us? As a committee, we can always use fresh faces and new ideas. It is not a very large time commitment, and we'd love to have you.

As the year began, we were pleased with the tremendous response to our Stewardship program. We remain in gratitude for the members who increased their pledges this year, and for those who maintained theirs, and of course, for all who give of themselves to maintain our beautiful church and its ministries in thanksgiving to God. We're thankful to those who continue to maintain the church building and grounds, see that the bills are paid, and ensure we can continue to worship as a community of faith.

We are called with a resounding faith that will maintain and look after the church and our members. We are entering a new chapter this year as we plan for the future. We will also be on the lookout to help those less fortunate in our community and to reach out and make connections with our neighbors to attract those in need of church.

Respectfully submitted,

The Stewardship Committee

Pastor Rolf Hedberg  
David Smith, Chair  
Carol Stoneman  
Nancy Lynn Knauff

## **OUTREACH PROGRAM REPORT - JUNE 2023 - MAY 2024**

### **Highland Park School**

In August, a group from Concordia and Ministerio Nueva Creación met with Latasha Turnquist, head of the Manchester Public School Partnership and Engagement Department. Latasha reviewed with the group a report based on surveying the Family Resource Coordinators at the Manchester schools and provided an overview of the needs of the Manchester community and specifically, the schools. As a follow-up to this meeting, the group met with Jill Morey, the Family Resource Coordinator for Highland Park School who informed the group about four specific needs at Highland Park School: 1) kids come to school hungry; 2) there are twenty-one needed to work with students; 4) there was an immediate need for a family (mother and 3 children) for housing as the husband/father had died and they were burnt out of their apartment. Jill provided information regarding sizes for clothing donation, including shirts, pants, underwear, socks, etc., and Concordia responded overwhelmingly providing clothing to the 21 students. Since September, Concordia continues to supply healthy type snacks for the students. Volunteers are still needed to read to children or help with homework. No background/fingerprinting is necessary as long as a Board of Education employee is in attendance while the volunteer is helping. Concordia also donated hats, mittens, socks and waterproof gloves during the winter months.

### **Hispanic Heritage Day - September**

**Concordians participated in the Manchester Hispanic Heritage Day for the second year on Saturday, September 16th at Mahoney Recreation Center.** Assistance was provided in setting up and manning the kids' game tables.

### **Seasonal Sharing - Thanksgiving and Christmas**

**Highland Park School:** For Thanksgiving, Concordia provided 47 - \$25 gift cards Shop Rite and Stop & Shop to assist families in purchasing food. At Christmas we provided gift cards to Walmart and Target

**MACC:** The MACC Joy of Community Sharing program changed in 2023. Instead of providing groceries to our 10 adopted families, gift cards to grocery stores were provided at Thanksgiving and Christmas based on the number of family members. Gift cards were also provided for 36 individuals for Christmas gifts. Because 6 of our 10 families were adopted by Concordians and we received such generous monetary gifts for Seasonal Sharing from you, we were able to provided gift cards for food and gifts for Christmas.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone that "adopted" families and gave monetary gifts for this year's MACC Joy of Community Sharing.

Throughout the year, Concordia supports MACC with donations for food, personal products, paper products, etc., Thank you to Don Slater who delivers these items to MACC on behalf of Concordia.

### **Three Kings Day Celebration - January 6, 2024**

In collaboration with Ministerio Nueva Creación (MNC) and the Manchester Latino Affairs Council, Concordia hosted a Three Kings event on January 6<sup>th</sup>. A little over 150 Manchester residents including over 90 children, representing Latin American countries, White Americans, Black Americans, and those of Indian descent attended the event. Concordia as well as Emanuel Lutheran, South United Methodist, Unitarian Universalist East and MNC donated wrapped gifts for the Three Kings to present to the children who attended. Over 25 Concordia and MNC volunteers participated in wrapping gifts that were not wrapped, decorating Kaiser Hall, serving the meal, cleaning-up, managing traffic and making cookies.

A special thanks to everyone that provided assistance prior to and the day of this event.

### **Concordia Pop-up Shop**

After our August meeting with Latasha Turnquist, Pastor Bea, provided information regarding a "pop-up stop" project she had previously been involved with. With a lot of brainstorming, organizing donations of clothing, shoes, books, toy, household goods, etc., the shop opened on Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup>.

Families from Highland Park School (HPS) were the first group to have access to the shop. We coordinated with Jill Morey, HPS Family Resource Coordinator, who was instrumental in reaching out to the families at HPS and creating the appointment schedule. Families were asked if there were any specific needs their family may have with our intent to fill those needs if possible. There were 14 families for a total of 33 people signed up for two (2) time slots, 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Eight out of the fourteen families did come and shop. Nineteen people came and were able to find plenty of items to take home. Thank you to all those who donated items and their time. We are hoping to have one more event before school gets out specifically aimed at children. This would take place in June. We are looking for children's clothing, books, toys, games and snacks. If you would like to help future Pop-Up's, contact Carol Burnett or Ruth Sprong Heyden. This is an exciting time, a time for growth by working in the community with HPS staff and families.

### **Highland Park School Teacher Appreciation Tea - May 8th**

Thirty-five teachers, their principal and assistant principal attended the second Teachers' Appreciation Tea at Concordia on Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. Lastasha Easterlin-Turnquest, Chie of Family Partnership & Student Engagement was also in attendance. This was an opportunity to show our gratitude and thanks to the teachers and administrators for all they do in teaching the children of Manchester. Ruth Sprong-Heyden and Carol Burnett gave an overview of the Pop-Up Shop and thank them for their donations and Jill Morey for coordinating those who came to the store on April 13<sup>th</sup>. We will continue to support and assist to meet the needs of the students, parents and teachers of HPS.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Stoneman on behalf of Outreach

## Report of the Worship & Memorial Garden Board 2023-2024

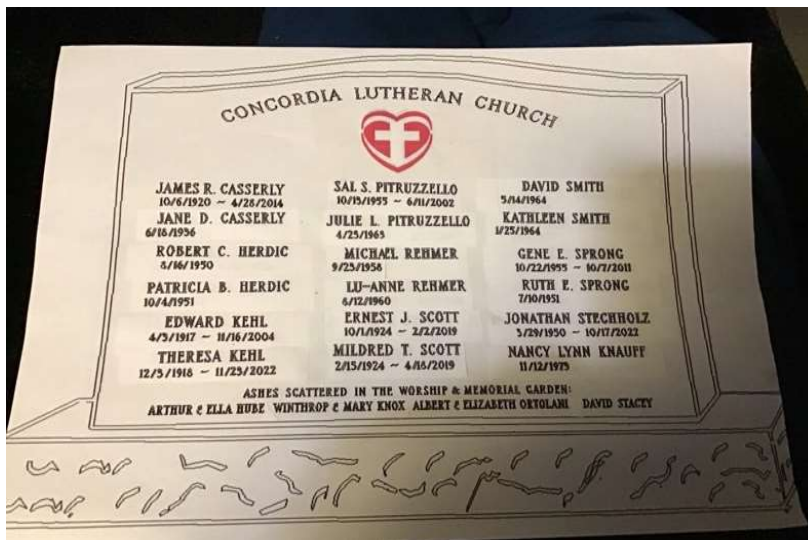
Last summer's activities included the usual mulching, weeding, mowing and trimming. Susan, Jeannie, and Ruth put down polymeric sand in the cross walkway which helped control the weeds. Phil, Paul, Steven & Susan Bourret continue to trim back the overgrowth and dead limbs. David B. keeps a watchful eye on the grass and sprinkler system. Jan Salvatore helps keep the weeds at bay.

We interred Tessie Kehl's ashes in June.

In response to the letter we sent out in February 2023, three new families signed up to be interred in the garden: David and Kathleen Smith, Michael and LuAnne Rehmer and Nancy Lynn Knauff. We received responses from the last two people who did not respond to the letter regarding disposition of loved one ashes. With the final tally in and with council's approval of providing the funding for a three person plot at East Cemetery, a plot was purchased in January 2024.

In February, Phil Stoneman and I went to the engraver, Rick, at Daily-Memorial Company in Bloomfield. We looked at monument styles and colors. We learned a lot from Rick who answered all our questions. We choose a grey, granite monument 4 feet wide by 3 ft tall. The ballpark figure including installation and engraving is around \$9,000.00. There will also be flat markers designating where people are buried. Tierney's funeral home has offered to transport urns to East Cemetery when the church has decided to have a service to commemorate the burials.

Thank you to Edna who faithfully served the Garden for many years and Jan Bellino who regrettably resigned. Gail Adams keeps us all under control since she is our volunteer treasurer!



Respectively Submitted, Ruth Sprong Heyden, Chair

Board Members: Paul Goodrich, Susan Bourret, Edna Nekiunas, Jan Salvatore, Phil Stoneman, David Beauregard, David Smith and Ruth Sprong Heyden.

## **Member Care**

**It has been another year of member care delivering goodies, smiles, hugs, and holiday songs to Concordia's family.**

**Although we only have a few people who cannot attend our church services, there are several people who now find it difficult to come due to increasing physical health or mobility issues, or transportation issues due to residences that are now farther away. Still, they manage to come due to their dedication God, their beloved church, and the "family" that will be there to support them. For some, hospital visits are becoming all too common.**

**Our mission is to keep those ties strong, and make sure that everyone knows that they are still an important part of something special.**

**We have helped supply food and transportation, or simply done one on one visits or phone calls.**

**Member care must be the most rewarding committee that Concordia has. The spiritual gifts that we receive far outweigh what we give.**

**Please reach out to us for yourselves or someone you know.**

**Jan Bellino**



## **CLC PROPERTY TEAM REPORT FOR JUNE 2023 TO JUNE 2024**

The members of the Property Team are:

Joel Baranowski, Zach Baranowski (when he is in town), David Beauregard, Phil Stoneman, and John Corl.

Joel is the knowledge base, has the contacts, and the expertise.

Zach is more than happy to help out when in town.

David is the member primarily involved in organizing and executing the landscaping.

Phil is the building curser, Prince of Darkness, and he does not look up.

John is the back-up member.

Today there are five active and important tasks before the Property Team, they are as follows:

- o Refurbishing the Concordia Lawn Mower
- o Recruiting and employing landscape workers
- o Replacing the exterior doors and frames for the Furnace Room and for the Scout Storage Room
- o The longest and most difficult task, the sealing and drainage of the Steeple to prevent water from entering the organ chamber and the choir loft has been a high priority job for some time. The first element was to find where the water enters the building. The second, how to seal and drain the water outside the steeple and the church. The third, was to find someone to accomplish the sealing and draining and someone to build a work platform from which to do the work. Joel, with all of his contacts and knowledge has accomplished this.
- o Another task, presently on going is the pruning and fertilizing of all of the new trees planted as part of Zach's Eagle Scout Project. This will be followed by the spraying of the fruit trees and hopefully to harvesting of fruit for the congregation.

During this past year the property team has been busy resolving issues at Concordia. Some of the issues that were resolved are:

- o The reinstallation of the Steeple floodlights
- o Completed the inspection of the 4 hot water heaters and the 2 boilers in the boiler room
- o Replaced the tongue and groove plank and lower frame over organ
- o Organized the scheduling for and the accomplishment of the mowing, trimming weed killing in the extensive church lawn.
- o Repaired the roof over the elevator vestibule outside Kaiser Hall
- o Replaced the Sanctuary and Pulpit Lights with LED lights and aimed them properly
- o Repaired the entrance doors to the church
- o Jury-rigged the organ valves
- o Cleared the plugged the condensate drain on one of the Evaporators (Splits)
- o Resolved the issue with the "hot to the touch" Vestibule door magnetic lock
- o Painted over the water stains in Brandt Lounge
- o Cleaned out the former Youth Room
- o Replaced most of the insulation for the hot water piping in the boiler room and garage
- o Repaired the edge of the front stoop at the Sanctuary canopy
- o Replaced the broken and crumbling brick radial pavers in the Sanctuary entry way sidewalk
- o The replacement of the conference room lights with LED lights and fixtures and the soffit lights outside the exterior doors with LED lights

- o Repaired the wiring at the light in the Youth Room and added two LED light fixtures
- o Installation of water shut off valves to enable the isolation of the water supply to separate parts of the building
- o Performed the yearly 90-minute Emergency Lighting Test
- o On a monthly basis, checked the function of the Emergency Lighting and replaced the non-functioning batteries
- o Replaced the flush valve on the toilet in the restroom near the elevator
- o Fixed the lock on the "Pop-Up Shop" door