



The Rev. Dr. Rolf Hedberg
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Richard Hicks
Minister of Music Emeritus

Sunday Worship



10:00 a.m.

Concordia Lutheran Church
40 Pitkin Street, Manchester, CT 06040

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday

9:00 am – 2:00 pm

closed on all Federal Holidays

office@concordiamanchester.org
www.concordiamanchester.org

Phone: (860) 649-5311

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The **deadline** for submitting articles or items 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

There are going to be two sides to this Chimes article: one light and fluffy, and the other serious. Light and fluffy first.

You all know what February 14th is—Valentine’s Day. So who is this fellow? Historically, we have three choices for who the "real" St. Valentine was, though very little is known about him.

First, there was an historical person named Valentine who died on February 14th during the 3rd century. He is believed to have died as a martyr in Africa along with 24 soldiers. The second candidate was a Roman priest and physician. He comforted Christian martyrs during the time of persecution under Emperor Claudius II Gothicus. Eventually, this St. Valentine was also arrested, condemned to death for his faith, beaten with clubs, and beheaded on February 14th around 270 A.D. The third candidate was the Roman Bishop of what is now Terni. He too was arrested and beheaded during the reign of Emperor Claudius II Gothicus, dying on February 14th around 270 A.D. Scholars believe that the last two Valentines are one and the same person.

But the narrative I like the best is the one that links St. Valentine to romantic love. He was the priest who married couples during the reign of Claudius II. Claudius forbade marriage among young people because he believed that soldiers should be focused on war rather than on wives.

One more story (*this is the last one for those of you who have read the article to this point*). At some point in his life, St. Valentine was placed in the custody of an aristocrat (perhaps a judge) named Cesterius. While under house arrest and the watchful eye of this aristocrat, Valentine tried to convince Cesterius about the truth of Jesus and the Christian faith. Cesterius said to Valentine that if he could restore the eyesight of his blind daughter, he would convert. Her sight was restored, and Cesterius, along with 44 members of his household, converted. The story gets better (*or worse, depending on how you look at it*). An emperor decided to have him executed. On the day of his execution, Valentine wrote a final letter to the girl whose sight he restored and signed the letter with these words – “*from your Valentine.*” Get it? I hope so.

Now, on the serious side of the ledger, albeit briefly, please read Mark Winzler’s letter to the congregation. It is very important as we will be coming up on some important decisions about Concordia’s future.

In Christ,
Pastor Rolf Hedberg



St. Valentine. This Photo by Unknown

Transition Update from Mark Winzler

Associate to the Bishop Pastor Maria Hammons facilitated a meeting with members of the Congregation on January 19.

Our financial status (2025 pledges and budget) was reviewed. (This was sent to you previously). Important Note: While we thankfully did not reach the reduction of \$15,000 in pledges which would move us immediately into either merger or Holy Closure, the amount was close (\$13,464) due to the loss of three pledges (including one because of death).

Pastor Maria then reviewed the status of each of the three area Lutheran congregations (Emanuel-Manchester, St. Mark-Glastonbury and Trinity-Vernon). Both St. Mark and Trinity are, at this point, without a called pastor. Trinity is in the midst of their transition process and St. Mark is just beginning theirs. Emanuel is working on a number of initiatives at present related. A number of questions about each were fielded and responses were given.

Pastor Maria emphasized that the best road is for members of Concordia to attend worship at each of the three congregations to experience worship which for many people is paramount. To accomplish this, there will be no worship at Concordia on Sundays February 16 and 23. In order to attend the third church, members can choose any other Sunday through March 2.

You are asked to sign up on Sunday morning (there is a sheet on the table in the Narthex) or you can call Margie in the office. We want to make sure that no church is "overloaded" with Concordians on any given Sunday.

It is important for members to attend worship at all three churches as we are going to discuss each of the churches at our next meeting with Pastor Maria on March 9. Please do not let things such as distance hinder you at this juncture in time. We want everyone to experience worship at all three!

There was a straw poll taken about which of the three options people wishes to pursue. The poll indicated that 14 people wishes to pursue **merger**, with 7 others wishes **maintenance ministry** to continue and 7 others for **Holy Closure**. (Of Note: The option of partnership with St. Peter's Episcopal in South Windsor had to be taken off the table because of financial reasons.)

No decision has been made yet! We are in the exploratory stage at this juncture in time. If you were unable to attend the meeting on January 19 and would like additional information about that which was discussed, or if you have any questions, please contact me.

Mark Winzler



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

As a result of our meeting this past Sunday (January 19) with Associate to the Bishop Pastor Maria Hammons, our next step is for members to visit three area Lutheran Churches. The purpose of these visits is for members to experience worship. You are also encouraged to look on the websites of the three churches to learn about their ministries.

On **Sundays February 16 and February 23**, there will be no worship held at Concordia. Please use each of these two Sundays to worship at two different churches.

For the third Sunday, there is not a designated Sunday. Therefore you can go on any of the following dates: **February 9 or March 2**. There will be worship at Concordia on those Sundays. (Note: February 9 is Concordia's semi-annual meeting at 11:30. March 2 is Fastnacht with Social Hour at 11:15 and dinner at 12:30. You can visit another church and then come back if either of those is the Sunday you choose.)

Emanuel Lutheran- Manchester (10:00 a.m. worship)

60 Church Street, Manchester

Lutheran Church of St. Mark (9:00 a.m. worship)

75 Griswold Street, Glastonbury

Trinity Lutheran (9:00 a.m. worship)

20 Meadowlark Road, Vernon

There was a straw poll (non-binding) taken at the end of this past Sunday's meeting about which option to pursue with the following results:

Merger w/ another Lutheran Church- 14

Maintenance Ministry- 7

Holy Closure- 7

Pastor Maria will be back to meet with us again on Sunday, March 9 to debrief on our visits and then determine a path forward.

So that we do not all go to the same church on the same Sunday, there will be a sign up list available this Sunday (January 26). You can all call Margie in the Church Office (Mondays through Thursdays 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.).

If you are going to visit a church this coming Sunday (January 26), please also let Margie know which church.

If you have any questions, please contact any member of the Congregation Council (C) or Transition Team (T): **Sandy Baranowski (T), Jeanine Barber (T), Susan Bourret (C and T), John Corl (T), Pastor Hedberg (C and T) Ruth Sprong Heyden (C), Nancy Lynn Knauff (C), Ruthie Lynch (C), Jan McGarity (C), Bobby McKinney (C), Tina Ruggerio (C), David Smith (T), Carol Stoneman (C and T), Mark Winzler (C and T).**

Agenda
Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting
February 9, 2025

Call to Order

Opening Devotions

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Congregation Meeting Minutes

June 2024 Semi-Annual Meeting

Reception of Reports

Pastor's Report
Council President's Report
Treasurer's Report
Legacy for Ministry Board Report
Worship and Memorial Garden Board Financial Report
Concordia Nursery School Board Financial Report
Stewardship Committee Report
Internal Audit Committee

Concordia Nursery School Status

Approval of 2025 Proposed Ministry Budget

Revised Legacy For Mission Document

Election of Synod Assembly Voting Members

(Friday-Saturday, May 30-31 Worcester, MA)

Appointment of Nominating Committee

Adjournment

Semi-Annual Meeting-Program (Tentative)
Sunday, June 15, 2025



****PLEASE SEE
THE 2024 YEAR END
TREASURER'S REPORT
in the
Annual Finance Report 2024
program document
(pages 12-19)****

Approved Minutes of the Concordia Lutheran Church Congregational Council Meeting

Sunday, December 8, 2024, in person

Present:

Mark Winzler – President
Jan McGarity – Vice President
Carol Stoneman - Treasurer
Susan Bourret – Secretary
Pastor Hedberg
Tina Ruggerio
Ruth Sprong-Heyden
Ruthie Lynch
Bobby McKinney
Nancy Lynn Knauff

Excused:

Call to Order – Mark Winzler @ 11:30 AM

Devotions – Jan McGarity

Special Order The transition team and council continue discussion of Concordia’s future. We talked about the congregational meeting on November 24th and the upcoming December 15th meeting with Pastor Maria Hammons. Mark will speak with Pr. Hammons with feedback from the transition team. A realistic representation of our current situation and the urgency of moving forward was shared.

Approval of Agenda as modified to add the Finance Committee motion

Approval of Minutes of the November 10th meeting as written.

Pastor’s Report

Pastor Hedberg continues to support us with Sunday Services, office hours, conversations and contacts with parishioners.

President’s Report

Transition work continues with communication with the congregation and discussion with the transition team.

Treasurer’s Report

The November treasurer’s report was distributed, reviewed and received.

Old Business

Pledge statistics were discussed with the transition team present since we are currently approximately \$800 from our \$15,000 loss in pledges benchmark that would limit our choices moving forward to Merger and Holy Closure.

GHIAA Power Summit on November 21st was well attended and 14 people from Concordia were present. It is an inspirational, well-organized event with a clear presentation of the issues to be addressed.

The Legacy Committee regulations document is close to being completed with just minor updates from this meeting. It will be ready for congregation approval at the next semi-annual meeting in February. A motion was made and passed.

Ashley from the Nursery School will be invited to our next council meeting to discuss the feasibility of a 2025-2026 session.

Seasonal Sharing for MACC families and Highland Park continue. If donations don't cover the cost, outreach memorial funds will need to be used to make up the difference.

New Business

Our by-laws outline who is eligible to vote during an official meeting of the congregation. A list of recorded giving will be developed for review.

The next semi-annual meeting will be in early in February.

2025 Budget was distributed and reviewed. At this time there is a \$34,000 deficit.

Finance submitted a motion for the distribution of 10% of a gift from the estate of Carol Sutcliffe to outreach based on the memorials and tributes policy. The motion was approved.

Property none

Two Motions were Submitted / Passed by Council this meeting

- 1. The Council voted to present the modified Legacy document for a congregational vote at the next semi-annual meeting.*
- 2. Motion to disperse 10% of the Carol Sutcliffe bequest to Concordia in the following manner:
 \$1000 to MACC food pantry
 \$1000 to GHIAA/CLJ (Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance/Center for Leadership and Justice)
 \$700 to the Creative Living Community of CT (Coventry).*

Adjournment: Adjourned at 1:41PM.

Information:

- December 11 & 18 – Holden Evening Prayer
- December 15- Congregation Meeting with Pastor Maria Hammons
- December 24 – 8:00pm Christmas Eve Eucharist
- January 5 – Executive Committee
- January 12 – Council Meeting

Approved, and passed: Agenda as modified, Minutes of November Council Meeting, two motions passed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Bourret

The following is an excerpt from a sermon based on Luke 3:15-17; 21-22 that was delivered by Lucy Tavares in Spanish and by me in English to Ministerio Nueva Creación on Sunday, January 12th. I hope you enjoy it.

Sermon title: What's Epiphany?

By: David Smith

I just had an epiphany! I have to deliver a sermon today on the Epiphany!

What is an epiphany? What does it mean? It is not a word used commonly in a sentence. It's a noun and is the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12). I learned an interesting thing about the Magi in the painting by *James Tissot*. The saffron robes worn by the Magi signify they were



astronomers. Their journey to see Jesus

portrayed the significance of his birth in conjunction with the star. Epiphany also means the religious celebration held on January 6, and can mean the manifestation of a divine or supernatural being, or in everyday parlance it means a revelation as if provided by God.

From Jesus' birth, it was an Epiphany for the Magi to come from foreign lands following the star to see the baby Jesus. This foretold of his blessing to all. In this case the epiphany was the manifestation of a divine being. The star was brighter than all the rest and remained over Bethlehem throughout the Magi's journey guiding them to the very place.



On January 6, we celebrate Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan river. Once baptized the clouds broke and a spirit resembling a dove descended on Jesus as all who were present heard the voice of God saying, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." Epiphany in the church calendar celebrates this event.

John the Baptist when baptizing thousands and thousands in the countryside denies he is the messiah and foretells of Jesus coming. It's interesting because even though he is great, he says he's nothing compared to the one that's coming, who will baptize with an unquenchable

fire. Almost like a mini sun on Earth. It's quite an image, but despite the fire, the imagery of Jesus' baptism is the water of the Jordan and the spirit descending as a dove. Jesus will judge the living and the dead, but his ministry is one of peace and righteousness. He will not be a warlike messiah as the Hebrews were hoping.

The word of God is heard in approbation of Jesus' baptism which underscores its' importance to us in our lives. Baptism is not a trivial thing. It is a spiritual rebirth that comes each and every day. Isn't that awesome! Each and every day we are born anew and have a brand new chance to do things better. To fix mistakes as best we can, to cleanse the dirt out of our lives, and to turn over a new leaf to live rightly with God. We all want to please God in accounting for our lives when the end time comes, and He is such a loving God, he gives us a chance to start over each and every day.

Some may say, all right then, I'll be bad today, and good tomorrow, so there. To which I say, you may never know when your ticket will get punched. The poorer your decisions, the deeper the hole you'll have to climb out of, and you may not have as much time as you think.

God was happy with Jesus, as he'd begun his ministry among the people, and getting baptized by John the Baptist provided another way for God to show all who Jesus really was. He is now what he was then, and forever will be. He is the son of God, our Savior and Redeemer, and our baptism signifies that we are his forever: that's the Epiphany.

Amen.

2025 New Year's Among Women/Entre Mujeres Celebration



Three Kings Celebration at Manchester High School

Students from Hola Alliance who performed in a play for Three Kings



Three Kings Registration Table

Concordia Nursery School



It has become a winter wonderland at the nursery school! The children have been learning all about winter and are eagerly awaiting a snowy day for us to play outside with all of our snow clothes! Winter is a great time to investigate the different properties of water and how it changes with temperature. We explored this by painting with colorful ice cubes and watching as it melted to make beautiful art! In the coming weeks, we will learn about animals that hibernate in the winter and discuss friendship as we prepare for Valentine's Day.

Ice Skating with waxed paper



Painting with Ice Cubes



Arctic Animals in the Water Table

Thank You Note from Creative Living Community of Connecticut to Concordia Lutheran Church:



CREATIVE LIVING COMMUNITY OF CONNECTICUT, INC

60 Church Street | Manchester, CT | 06040

2645 Boston Turnpike
Coventry, CT 06238

December 30, 2024

Concordia Lutheran Church
40 Pitkin Street
Manchester, CT 06040

Dear Concordia Lutheran Church,

On behalf of Creative Living Community of Connecticut, I thank you for your donation of \$700.00 given through your earmark of supporting projects and programs outside of your congregation! We so appreciate your support of CLCC's mission and vision. Through generous donations like yours, we can continually provide valuable programs and services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout the region and continue with the renovation of the Coventry property house.

Creative Living Community of Connecticut (CLCC) serves dozens of individuals with Autism or intellectual developmental disabilities each week through our vocational, respite, recreation and social programs in Vernon and Coventry. Our vocational programming provides participants with transferable job skills while providing real work opportunities at our Farmstand, on our farm during the summer months and in our greenhouse year-round. This past summer, we were able to hire, at minimum wage, thirteen adults that gained many job skills through their employment with CLCC. Our participants also show off their incredible talents in the Arts in the Afternoon program and can socialize and recreate through various outings, meet-ups, and dedicated events.

There is an abundance of excitement and progress at 2645 Boston Turnpike. Thanks to people like you, CLCC's programs focus on vocational training for neurodiverse workers that is provided at no cost to our participants. These programs not only build skills, but also confidence and friendships. Our residential housing community aims to create an inclusive neighborhood where all members are valued and have a place to call their own. And the renovation of the property house has begun!

Your support is critical to our success in offering all of this and more. On behalf of the individuals and families we serve, as well as our Board of Directors, I thank you again for your contribution and look forward to connecting with you soon.

Sincerely,

Steve

Stephen Gustafson
CLCC President and Board Chair

*Thanks so much
for supporting CLCC!*

Please keep a copy of this letter for tax purposes. No goods or services were received in exchange for this donation.

Thrivent Members who are eligible for the Thrivent Choice Program can direct CHOICE dollars by logging on to www.thrivent.com or by calling 1-800-847-4836 and saying "Thrivent Choice" when prompted. A customer service rep will assist you.

Must be completed by March 31, 2025.



POP UP SHOP NEWS

The next shop day is planned for February 15. We desperately need children's clothing. We also need matching glassware & plates.

Help decorate a bare tree! We are collecting children's underwear, socks & tights. Look for the tree in the narthex & clip any donations you bring to the tree. Let's fill up the tree!

Don't forget heathy snacks the next time you shop! It's hard to concentrate if you are hungry. As always, we are grateful for your help!

Healthy Snacks for



Highland Park Elementary School

Hello everyone! The school is still in session, and we are still requesting from our congregation: **healthy, non-perishable snacks (no nuts please!)**.

Thank You and God Bless!



Lent and Holy Week 2025 Announcement

Ash Wednesday
March 5, 2025

10:00 a.m.-12 Noon
Imposition of Ashes and Prayer
Emanuel Lutheran Church

7:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist
Concordia Lutheran Church

We will also be collaborating with Emanuel and MNC for Holy Week (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Vigil) as well as Mid-Week Lent services – specifics are not yet available—information will be in the March Chimes!

Happy 85th Birthday to John Corl!



***"Laughter is nature's most potent anti-aging elixir; it keeps the spirit forever young."
~Margie Gallagher, Concordia Lutheran Church Parish Administrator***

Thank You Note from MACC to Concordia



Building partnerships to break cycles of poverty in our community

P.O. Box 3804 – Manchester, CT 06045-3804 ~ www.macc-ct.org

December 31, 2024

Dear Concordia Lutheran Church,

Thank you so much for your generous gift of \$100.00 to MACC Charities from your Parishioners donation. Your support plays a vital role in helping us assist those in need, especially during the holiday season when the need is greatest.

Your kindness and commitment to making a difference are truly inspiring. With your contribution, we are able to continue our mission of providing critical services and resources to those who find themselves struggling. The impact of your generosity will be felt by many in our community, bringing comfort and hope to those who need it most.

Together, we can make a lasting difference in the lives of those who need it most. As we reflect over this last year, MACC realizes its greatest strength comes from the support and partnership of people like you. People who are passionate about creating a community where everyone feels they belong. *Thank You!!*

Many Blessings,

Shannon Baldassario – CEO
sbaldassario@macc-ct.org
(860.647.0440)

Happy New Year!



"To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake it is necessary to stand out in the cold." – Aristotle

"No goods or services were given in exchange for this financial gift."



February, March, and April Birthdays



FEBRUARY

Janet McGarity (9)
Ryan Adams (13)
Robert Copeland Jr. (17)
Ann Kehl (24)



MARCH

Laura McKay (4)
Kristin Link (5)
John Haid (6)
Rachel Adams (18)
Sandra Baranowski (19)
Doug Larson (20)
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)





PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY



Contact parish office for Prayer Requests.
Names will be held in prayer for one month,
unless otherwise requested.

Date Requested	Praying For (person/family)	Prayers For	Requested By
1/8/2025	The family of Bob Bell	As they grieve the passing of Bob Bell	Lanie Turner
12/11/2024	The family of Mark Waxenburg	As they grieve the passing of Mark Waxenburg	Lanie Turner
12/2/2024	The family of Andy Vincens	As they grieve the passing of Andy Vincens	Jan Salvatore
10/27/2024	Robert Feder	<i>Resilience, comfort, and healing amidst profound health challenge since March 2023.</i>	Gail Feder
10/27/2024	Dan Burnett	<i>Strength, comfort, and healing during this significant health challenge.</i>	Carol Burnett

For Concordia's ongoing transition process.

The Intentions of this Community:

- † Concordia Nursery School Students and their families
- † The work of 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 Creación
- † For Pr. Simpson and the people of New Horizons
- † 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, 40 Pitkin Street, Manchester, CT 06040

Rev. Rolf Hedberg, *Transition Pastor*, Phone: 413-544-4859 (cell) 413-596-8011 (home)

Office Ph: 860-649-5311 Email: office@concordiamanchester.org Web: www.concordiamanchester.org

Margie B. Gallagher, *Parish Administrator* Church Office Hours: Mon. - Thurs., 9 AM-2 PM



Fastnacht Dinner With Traditional German Fare

Save the Date!

Please Join Us!

Social hour 11:15-12:30

Cheese/crackers
Beer and wine

Dinner 12:30

Roast Pork, German Potato Salad
Red Cabbage Salad, Applesauce

Sunday March 2, 2025

Concordia Lutheran Church

Suggested Donation \$14.00 per person



Name: _____

Total Number Attending _____ I can bring a dessert _____

Please submit this reservation form by February 23, 2025

EMERGENCY ALERT



CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

RUSH AID

Ways To Donate:

1. **Mail Checks to:**
Lutheran World Relief/for California Wildfire
PO Box 17061
Baltimore, MD 21297-1061
2. **Website:**
<https://give.lwr.org/page/163846/donate/1>
3. **Scan QR Code:**



Dear Friend,

Friends in California are asking for help — your help — as wildfires completely destroy their homes and communities. Houses, schools, churches, grocery stores, businesses ... all reduced to ashes.

You can rush aid to neighbors in crisis who need it.

Our team is already preparing a response, and they need **compassionate and faithful people like you** to make it happen. The destruction and need are overwhelming — and only getting worse. But you can do so much good at times like this.

Thank you for being someone who goes above and beyond to help. And thank you for sharing your God-given spirit of love with families affected by disasters in the U.S. and around the world.

To our neighbors affected by the wildfires, please know you are surrounded by love and prayers, and that help is on the way from your Lutheran partners.

In faith and gratitude,



Ambassador
Daniel Speckhard
President and CEO

P.S. We are also preparing quilts and kits to comfort families affected by the wildfires. **Please rush aid now** and show neighbors in need that they are not alone.