



# THE PITTSBURGH LUTHERAN

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DUE TO THE COVID19 PANDEMIC THAT CLOSED MOST, IF NOT ALL CHURCH OFFICES, WE DID NOT RECEIVE OUR NORMAL RESPONSE FOR NEWS/ARTICLES. PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CHURCH FOR UPDATES. WE PRAY THAT ALL OF YOU ARE SAFE AND HEALTHY.

## PALM DEVOTION

by The Reverend Dr. Douglas H. Spittel, President, Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries

We are afraid and that is precisely when Jesus comes to bless us.

*“Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, ...*

Shut into a building in fear. Sound familiar? The fear that the disciples were experiencing was of a very real threat. Their master teacher had just been executed by the most powerful men in Jerusalem cheered on by a willing crowd. No one could help him. Jesus had warned them repeatedly that “you will be hated by all for My name’s sake.” (Luke 21:17) The disciples were hiding in fear because they quite reasonably assumed that they were to be next.

The Coronavirus pandemic has spawned all sorts of fear. Fear of a real yet invisible virus that is highly contagious and insidiously preys upon our elderly loved ones. Fear of a perceived threat of people with nefarious motives looking to take advantage of our society’s weakened state of isolation. Fear, real or perceived, of loneliness, joblessness, and poverty. We are still Jesus’ disciples and we find ourselves once again locked in an upper room, afraid.

*... Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.”” – John 20:19*



The risen Jesus appears to the disciples in the upper room. Nick Thompson, 22.4.2010: 6th Century, Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna

**PALM DEVOTION (continued)**

Jesus does not tell us what we should be doing or how we should be feeling. He knows we are afraid. He knows why we are locked up in our rooms. He knows our circumstances, after all, He went to the cross for us because of our greatest sickness – sin. He rose from the dead to remove our greatest fear – death. Jesus proclaims His blessing upon us: “Peace be with you” for He is our peace and He is with us. Jesus’ death forgives all our sin. He has restored peace between God and man. Jesus has conquered death; it no longer has any dominion over us. He calms all our fears, proclaiming us free from death, proclaiming us to be at peace.

***“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” - 2 Corinthians 1:7***

Our faith does not give us a new law saying, “Keep a stiff upper lip and be courageous for the Lord!” Much the opposite! Jesus Christ has fought the good fight for us. Jesus Christ has taken away all our sins. Jesus Christ has conquered death. Jesus Christ has created in us clean hearts and renewed a right spirit within us. Read that verse again! ***“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”*** This is a promise, a blessing, a gift! Jesus Christ has given us the new spirit “of power and of love and of a sound mind.” “Of power” over the Devil to counter his accusations and lies with the pure Gospel of the forgiveness of sins in Christ. “Of love” for God and neighbor even in terrifying circumstances. “Of a sound mind” to confront the troubles of this world reasonably and confidently in the sure and certain hope of life everlasting in the resurrection of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

***Christ is risen! Truly He is risen! Alleluia!***



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Mark your Calendar

May

May (Concordia residences Open House Events for the month of May are subject to cancellation. Please call the individual facility for updates)

2. Concordia Spring Fashion Luncheon, Butler Country Club, 10:00 a.m. (**postponed until August 22, 2020**)

3-4 The Open House events scheduled at Concordia of the South Hills will be **cancelled**.

9. Concordia Annual Kids Fishing Derby, Saxony Farm Estate, 8:00 a.m. (**Date has been re-scheduled to Saturday, June 13.**)

12. Open House Concordia of the South Hills, 1:00 p.m. open house followed by tours until 3:00 p.m.

17. Open house, Concordia Haven Apartments, Cabot, 1:00 p.m. seminar followed by tours until 3:00 p.m.

17. Open house, Highpointe at Rebecca, Allison Park, 1:00 p.m. seminar followed by tours until 3:00 p.m.

18. Open house, Highpointe at Rebecca, Allison Park, 11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

18. Open house, Concordia Haven Apartments, Cabot, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

18. Open House Concordia of the South Hills, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

June

12-14. Camp Erin Pittsburgh (Bereavement Camp for kids 6-17), YMCA Camp Kon-O-Kwee Spencer [www.camperinpittsburgh.org](http://www.camperinpittsburgh.org)

13. Concordia Annual Kids Fishing Derby, Saxony Farm Estate, 8:00 a.m.

July

13. Concordia 17th Annual Golf Classic, Treesdale Golf and Country Club, 8:00 a.m.

13-16. Vacation Bible School, Ascension, McCandless, 5:45 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

26. Concordia 139th Annual Summer Festival, Cabot Campus, 12:30 p.m.

August

22. Concordia Fashion Luncheon, Butler Country Club, 10:00a.m.

October

3. Concordia Oktoberfest, Cabot Campus, 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

TBA. Camp Erin Purse Gala, fall 2020

**CALENDAR NOTE: DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT ANY OF THE SCHEDULED EVENTS MAY BE CANCELLED OR POSTPONED. PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CHURCH FOR UPDATES.**



### **The Impact of the Pandemic on Campus Ministry**

*by Augusta R. Mennell, Campus Ministry Director*

As soon as the news became definite that Slippery Rock University students would be going home to study online due to the coronavirus, the question became: how could campus ministry continue to help students?

When I first heard of this situation, I thought we would have to close up campus ministry work until students returned to campus in the fall. Just as quickly a thought occurred to me: "Why not see what can be done to help students in this new situation?"

God brought good out of bad when two students from South Korea called All Saints campus ministry to ask if they could store two pieces of luggage at the church while they went home to study online until Labor Day. Cho is part of All Saints' church family. He attends church every Sunday and comes to student meals regularly. His friend had luggage he wanted to store as well.

While we unloaded the luggage, Cho's friend saw the Sunday School room where I teach young students on Sundays. He smiled as he looked at the room nostalgically, noting the Ten Commandments posted on the wall and the Lenten materials lying on the table. He remarked to me that he had attended Sunday School when he was young, but that he had quit going some time ago. He said he no longer comes to church because friends don't, but mostly because his mother, who had been a Christian, had been converted to Buddhism by her best friend.

I thanked him for sharing his story and told him I would be very glad to talk more about his situation when he returns. He indicated that he might do that. He willingly took "The Gospel of John" which I offered to him to read on his trip back home. He proudly told me that he still remembers John 3:16, and he happily recited it to me.

I feel great joy that out of this awful virus pandemic, something very good has happened: a student has been reminded of the faith he once held. He has been shown that the door to faith is still open.

I don't know what campus ministry will look like this summer, since most students are gone. A few internationals are here in Slippery Rock. We are letting them know that we are here to make their lives easier. Reverend Larry K. Loree is an excellent cook and has volunteered to prepare meals for those who are eager for home cooking - meals that could be boxed and given to students so that no one would be affected by the virus.

Campus ministry continues to help students even though they are studying online, often thousands of miles from SRU. We are helping with our prayers and our many phone calls. Daphne, who has come to study the Bible, wanted her family to see her church before they took her home to study online. Later, I called her.

**The Impact of the Pandemic on Campus Ministry (continued)**

*by Augusta R. Mennell, Campus Ministry Director*

I let her know that she would be missed and that I would pray she would get the internship she wants at Disney World. I pray she'll continue growing in faith by reading the Bible.

I phoned Cho just before he flew home to South Korea. He is shy, but is glad to be assured that we at All Saints can't wait for him to return.

Eefa is not a student. Her husband is a professor at SRU. She is from Bangladesh and had lived in North Dakota while her husband earned his PhD. While there, she told us, she discovered that Christians are very kind. We call Eefa often to talk to her and her daughter. We use these calls to help ease her loneliness, especially during these days of being indoors due to the virus. Campus ministry hopes the calls will make her life happier. She is a Buddhist, but we hope she'll become interested in Christianity.

Also, we call the son of a Christian mother. He was born in India, grew up in Africa, and now works in New Jersey, after graduating from SRU. He is a pantheist (God is everywhere and in all religions). We call him so he will know that we care about his life, which consists of twelve-hour work days and now excruciating pain due to wisdom teeth extraction which has become infected. We tell him we are praying for him.

All Saints campus ministry is excited to see what God will give us to do during this crisis. The students will never forget that at a time like this, God was there for them. And also that campus ministry stands with them. We will never stop calling and praying for them.



**Daphne Strayer and her family.**

## LOCAL MISSION

### Mileposters News

During a family movie event for Mileposters, the quad stoker team and their mother viewed the Japanese animated film 'My Neighbor Totoro' with two prospective riders and their parent. Response was enthusiastic, and generated several pictures drawn after the showing was over. Twelve unchurched individuals have attended events since November 2019, eight of them more than once.

Starting in March, using the original Mileposters tandem (pictured at Milepost 19, Boston), there were three exploratory and training rides on the Youghiogheny River Trail, between Milepost 18 (Dead Man's Hollow) and Milepost 29 (Douglas Run), plus one with the triplet on the Steel Valley Trail, for a total of 323 miles since the first of the year. Despite a lot of rain those weeks, trail conditions were good; generally March and early April are not favorable for riding because of the soft surface. By April 8, the area was starting to turn green--pictured is the campground entrance at Dravo Landing, where there were hundreds of spring peepers (frogs) singing. Because of the warm winter, trilliums at Milepost 23 are in full bloom, about three weeks early.



## NEWS FROM AREA CONGREGATIONS

### ASCENSION LUTHERAN

*McCandless*

Join the fun in the sun with Mystery Island Vacation Bible School (VBS) at Ascension Lutheran Church (8225 Peebles Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237).

Is there just one God? . . . Who is God? . . . What is God like? . . . Does God love me? . . . Can I know God? Our kids grapple with questions like these every day. At Mystery Island, we'll uncover the truth about our Creator God. There's a sea of confusion about who God is and what He's like, so we'll track down the one true God and learn how amazing He is through the pages of Scripture. Grab your sunscreen and get ready for a taste of paradise as you track down the one true God at Mystery Island on July 13-16 from 5:45-8:15!

To register or for more information, please call Ascension's church office at 412-364-4463.

### Fashion Luncheon Postponed

As our community and country become more and more aware of the potential devastating outcomes of the COVID19 virus pandemic, we wanted to reach out to you to let you know of our change of plans for our 2020 Fashion Luncheon, originally scheduled for Saturday, May 2, 2020.

Our spring luncheon falls within the 8-week window where large gatherings are being discouraged or prohibited. Out of an abundance of caution and protocol, we have re-scheduled our Fashion Luncheon for Saturday, August 22, 2020 at the Butler Country Club (same location).

If this change in date affects you negatively and you are no longer able to attend, please let us know and we will refund your registration money immediately if you have already paid.

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**REDEEMER LUTHERAN SCHOOL**

*Oakmont/Penn Hills*

While Redeemer’s physical locations are closed, school has not slowed down! Thanks to God’s providence and a hardworking faculty, RLS was able to switch to remote online learning without losing any instructional days. Redeemer students have not missed one day of school due to the covid-19 closure!

Teachers have been tirelessly working to create online videos, live classroom experiences, and digital assignments, using every possible resource to continue to provide quality education for the students. Many days have been marked as special occasion days such as School Spirit Day, Disney Day, etc., with families encouraged to share pictures to be posted on the school’s Facebook page. Faculty and staff also have created spiritual resources to share with families during Lent and Holy Week, including videos shared by email and on Facebook.

Please continue to pray for Redeemer as we discern the best way to manage the rest of this school year and prepare for the fall. We rely on the Lord’s providence and wisdom; He remains our Rock during this time of uncertainty!



**RLS families share some of their Holy Week artwork!**



## CLM Coronavirus Update

Concordia Lutheran Ministries is monitoring the COVID-19 situation daily to remain educated about and prepared for whatever challenges may come our way, which involves implementing new best practices, changes to policies and much more. As we adapt to tackle each new day, protecting the health, safety and wellness of our residents, patients and staff members will always remain our top priority.

The situation is in constant fluctuation. Concordia's leadership teams are constantly checking on the CDC's latest guidelines for all three states where we have locations: Pennsylvania, Florida and Ohio.

**New Admissions Will Be Isolated.** As an extra precaution, Concordia facilities will isolate all new admissions who have not been tested for COVID-19 in private rooms (when available) for up to 14 days to better protect our residents and patients.

Concordia has developed a multi-part program to lift our residents' and patients' spirits:

**A card/video campaign from the community to our residents and patients.** To send a card, community members will need to contact the Activities Department at the location they're interested in (the phone numbers for our locations are on our website, [www.ConcordiaLM.org](http://www.ConcordiaLM.org)). To send a video message, community members, family members or staff who are interested can email us at [SendASmile@concordialm.org](mailto:SendASmile@concordialm.org) to get specific instructions on how to send a video, which will then be shared with residents and patients.

**A shopping service for all Concordia retirement living residents.** Concordia is coordinating a shopping service for our retirement living residents, in which Giant Eagle will prepare residents' orders to be delivered to the retirement living buildings. Residents will later be billed for their groceries. For more information, contact Director of Retirement Living Connor Hagey at [CHagey@concordialm.org](mailto:CHagey@concordialm.org) or 724-352-1571, ext. 8343.

**The immediate expansion of Concordia's Tele-CareGiver Program.** Established in 2001, Concordia's Tele-CareGiver Program is a free service that utilizes volunteers who make daily phone calls to home-bound individuals to ensure that they are able to answer the phone – a daily “check-in” and friendly voice every day. If you are interested in learning more about being a client or know of someone who may benefit from this service, call 724-352-6260.

**Video conferencing with loved ones available for all residents and patients.** The Activities Staff at all Concordia locations are making it easy and accessible for all residents and patients to be able to video conference with their loved ones at least once a week.

**Daily online devotions.** Look to Concordia's website, [www.ConcordiaLM.org](http://www.ConcordiaLM.org), to soon see daily devotions from Concordia Chaplaincy Staff and maybe even some special guest devotions from pastors at our member churches. The devotions can be found on the “About” section of our website: <https://www.concordialm.org/about?service=4>.

**A daily online puzzle.** Look to Concordia's social media channels for a daily pictogram, puzzle or trivia question to answer: o **Concordia Lutheran Ministries** on Facebook

- **concordia\_lm** on Instagram
- **@ConcordiaLM** on Twitter