



# THE PITTSBURGH LUTHERAN

VOL 93, NO 9, November 2023

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## PALM DEVOTION

by The Reverend Dr. Douglas H. Spittel, PALM President

“The Thanksgiving of Faith”



*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” – Philippians 4:6-7*

November is the month of Fall leaves, college football, and our National Day of Thanksgiving. Each year, we travel in record numbers to gather with family and friends around a table bedecked with food to enjoy one another’s company and to give thanks. We often ask one another, “For what are you thankful this year?” to which we ponder and respond with a particular moment of joy or with a more generic answer about life and loved ones.

Saint Paul presents us with what appears to be a challenge. He calls upon us not only to be thankful for this or that thing, but to be thankful for everything. Everything. Even, and especially, for those things that cause us anxiety. His letter to the Philippians exhorts us to pray about everything with thanksgiving. Our prayers are not just to include an offhand “thank you” to Jesus but are to be said from a perspective of thankfulness. How are we to be thankful for everything? How can we be thankful for ill-health, financial troubles, broken relationships, and tragedies?

On Thanksgiving Day, we are called upon to count our blessings. Think about that. How have you been blessed even on your worst day? Christians have a “big picture” faith. That is, everything we believe and trust is based on the promise of the resurrection through Jesus Christ. *Since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. (2 Corinthians 4:13-16)* Our trust in the promise of resurrection and our eternal salvation alters our perspective. Rather than looking at all of life from the perspective of death, we do so (even the bad parts) from the perspective of life.

The tragedies of life, as difficult and painful as they may be, cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Even death itself has no more dominion over us. Suffering leading to death is meaningless, but suffering seen in the light of Christ has meaning. We see all our sufferings in the context of the suffering and death of Jesus for us. Suffering is no longer something that happens to us but is turned into something that can be for our neighbor. It is hard to see or understand how God uses our suffering for the benefit of others. It may be so that others see us endure pain just as Jesus endured the pain of the cross. It may be for us to experience suffering in order that we may be empathetic to the sufferings of others. Whatever the case, we can, with thanksgiving, make our requests known to God.

Thanksgiving stems from faith in Jesus’s forgiveness, mercy, and promise of eternal life. From this thanksgiving comes a prayerful life in Christ that casts off the anxieties of a dying world and instead brings a hopeful mercy and peace to our lives and to that of our neighbors.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

November

5. 155th Anniversary, Zion- Lawrenceville, Dinner following Divine Service, 3:30 p.m.

10. Honoring Those Who Served Our Country, Redeemer Lutheran High School, Oakmont, 9:30 AM

12. CLM Annual Meeting, Haven 1 Dining Room, Cabot, 3:00 p.m.

17. LWML Game Night, Bethel, Glenshaw, 6:30 p.m.

18. Evening of Praise, Christ, Forest Hills, 4:00 p.m., Concert 5:00 p.m. Dinner, 6:45 p.m.

December

10. 10th Annual Live Nativity, Concordia at Cabot Haven II, 148 Marwood Rd., Cabot, PA 16023. Times TBA



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<http://www.palmpa.org>

### Can I be Baptized?

by Augusta R. Mennell, Campus Ministry Director for SRU  
All Saints– Slippery Rock

This story of conversion may sound like a fairytale, but it is not. It's true. We may even wonder if God can bring a person to such a degree of faith that he declares, "I feel like I've always been a Lutheran Church Missouri Synod believer." This from a young man born into, not just a different denomination, but a different religion.

When I first heard this story I wanted to shout the good news from the rooftops, but I cannot because possible harm could come to this student who has left his faith. Some students have been questioned by government representatives when they return to their home countries. To protect him I will do what Doorsteps ([www.ISM.org](http://www.ISM.org), the LCMS publication published by the International Student Organization) has begun to do when they write about international students. I will share of the great news but will omit mentioning real names and avoid photographs as well. I want to tell the story to encourage everyone to realize that God continues to give faith even in the most unexpected ways.

The first time I heard Mohammad's (not his real name) story it was said that when he entered a Lutheran church he saw the font which he recognized as being for baptism. He immediately asked the pastor why he couldn't be baptized. The pastor heard his confession of faith and said that he could be baptized. One week later he was.

The fuller faith story is that Mohammad's parents came from a Middle East Muslim country. Mohammad was born in this country and raised in a Muslim family with parents and siblings who love him. He says he was always aware of God, but didn't know Him. He attended a Christian pre-school in New York City where he learned a number of children's songs such as "Jesus loves me this I know." He enjoyed the Bible stories, songs, and fellowship, but did not yet understand that Jesus was God's Son.

His early schooling was in a public school until COVID hit. About that time his family transferred him to a Catholic school which had a reputation for high standards and good teaching. Amazingly, the theology teacher in that Catholic school was an LCMS member. He became aware of Mohammad's deep interest in the Christian faith, so he taught him what Lutherans believe and gave him books to read. Along the way Mohammad read books like Luther's Small Catechism and Daniel Preus's Why I Am a Lutheran Jesus at the Center, (CPH 2004). He also watched a number of pastors who preach on television. Actually, he felt he was a Christian because of the TV sermons. And yet, as he shared with his Lutheran teacher, he felt something was missing from those TV sermons. He especially doubted TV preachers' teaching on baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Mohammad's teacher scheduled a breakfast with his LCMS pastor so that Mohammad could get answers to his theological questions. They did talk. They did more than that: the pastor realized that Mohammad was a believer and believed the LCMS teachings on baptism and the Lord's Supper. The following Sunday he was baptized in church. That was in October 2021.



## CAMPUS MINISTRY

### SRU CAMPUS MINISTRY (Continued)

The following December 25 he was confirmed and able to take his first Communion, which gave him great joy. However, he did not tell his family until at least nine days later for the simple reason that he was afraid to tell them. Wonderfully, when he did tell them they felt that what faith was doing to their son was better than no faith at all. Not all of Mohammad's aunts and uncles might agree with what he has done, so caution is used in telling the story within the extended family.

This student is a transformed person. He enjoys debating social issues, sharing meals with his college roommate, but most of all his joy in inviting other students to his church, and studying the Bible at the adult Sunday School class before church. He even attends a Sunday night Bible study held at his college nearby, where his pastor, vicar and a church member explain the Augsburg Confession. His joy in the Lord is not forced. He really is very glad to have his faith as a gift from God.

Campus ministry at All Saints is blessed to have students visit All Saints and worship here. Sometimes we meet students who are struggling to keep their faith, students who are unsure of their faith, and students who were raised in the faith, but are wavering now. So a student like Mohammad is a blessing. What a joy to know that God brings faith even today when we may be inclined to doubt that God can bring faith to a generation that seems determined to push God aside. With the help of Rev. Jacob Deal, Vicar Wessel and Church Member Moses Greenspan, All Saints will continue to be grateful for the opportunity to help nurture college students.



And Peter said to them,  
**REPENT** and be  
**BAPTIZED**  
every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ  
for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will  
receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.



REDEEMER LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Oakmont / Penn Hills



Redeemer students participated in the global See You at the Pole event on Wednesday, September 27th, gathering around the flagpole for a time of praise and prayer. Students all around the world gather together for a time of prayer on this day every year. Visit [syatp.org](http://syatp.org) for more information on this incredible event.

The fall athletic season is nearing its completion at this writing. Redeemer's HS girls' volleyball team has been in a battle for first place in the league; we are excitedly anticipating playoffs for this team, as well as our middle school girl's volleyball and middle school soccer teams! We have also been thrilled to field a high school soccer team this year again for club play. Several high school boys will be heading to cross country championships later in October as well. We look forward to sharing these results in the next issue.

High School Robotics is also in high gear at this time, preparing for competition the weekend of October 20th and 21st; results to follow!



Redeemer celebrated its 40th anniversary in style at LeMont on October 13th. It was a wonderful evening of honoring the Lord's providence and seeking His guidance in the years to come with the kickoff to Redeemer's capital campaign for expansion. Thank you to all those who attended, and to all those who have supported and continue to support RLS with their time, talents, and treasures.



## SCHOOL NEWS

### RLS (Continued)

#### **Teacher spotlight: Elaine MacMahon, 5th grade.**

**Hometown:** Born in Pittsburgh and raised in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in Education from Pennsylvania State University

**Interesting work:** I've worked in public and private schools, teaching students from 1st grade to 8th grade! I have taught in Virginia, Colorado, Pennsylvania, and Illinois.

**Family:** I am married to my husband, Mike. We have twin sons, Cameron, and Connor, who are both graduating from college this year.

**Hobbies:** I love to read, cook, watch college sports, and go on fun trips with my family!

**Curious Fact:** I am related to Lucille Ball! She was my grandfather's cousin.

"I decided to become a teacher in order to follow my passion for history and the social sciences. I taught middle school social studies for many years, but I then discovered that I loved teaching elementary, and I've been teaching K-5 ever since! I feel blessed to have been given the opportunity to serve the RLS community as the 5th grade teacher! It is such a faith-filled school, and it is my honor to serve the Lord and our students at this special place."



#### **Looking ahead: Veterans Day event**

Friday, November 10th, 9:30 AM, Redeemer Lutheran High School

The community is welcome to attend as we honor all who have served our country. Veterans are asked to RSVP in order to help us prepare accurately for attendees.



## *Evening of Praise™*

Saturday, November 18

4pm Cocktail Hour

5pm Concert

6:45pm Dinner

**CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
400 Barclay Avenue, Forest Hills

*A free event featuring*  
Strings, Organ recital and  
Christ Lutheran Vocal and Handbell Choirs

**Call 412-271-7173 for reservations by November 14.**



## NEWS FROM AREA CONGREGATIONS

### Bethel (*Glenshaw*) and Zion (*Lawrenceville*)

*“For it stands in Scripture: ‘Behold, I am laying in **Zion** a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.’” - 1 Peter 2:6-7*

It is with thankful hearts that we announce a celebration in honor of Zion’s 155th Anniversary on **Sunday, November 5, 2023**. God has provided an ongoing ministry in Lawrenceville since early 1868 through our beloved Zion, currently the oldest existing church in this section of Pittsburgh and one of only two denominational churches still standing.

We have been blessed that Rev. C. Ronald Rafferty, who served Zion and Immanuel in Braddock in a dual pastorate from 2005 - 2011, will be our guest preacher for the **3:30 p.m.** Divine Service. A catered dinner will follow in the church undercroft.



Zion- Lawrenceville and Bethel hosted the LWML Fall Rally Pittsburgh Zone on Saturday, October 14 at Zion and welcomed ladies from Calvary (Murrysville) Christ (Forest Hills), Good Shepherd (Whitehall), Mt. Olive (Beaver Falls), Prince of Peace (Freedom), St. Luke (Cabot), St. John’s (Millvale), and Zion (Bridgeville). Rev. Donn Woolweber, pastor at Bethel and Zion, conducted a brief devotion with a compelling message about the gift of servanthood. Speaker Dee Grzyb, LWML Eastern District Zone President led discussion of avenues of membership recruitment and the changes over the decades of women who serve. The ingathering of classroom supplies, underwear/socks/diapers was designated to Heritage Community Initiatives located in Braddock. Marking its 40th year of service, Heritage serves hundreds of at-risk children, preparing education programs; operates a fixed-route transportation service in 17 communities in Eastern Allegheny County (the only human services nonprofit in the Commonwealth designated by PennDOT as a provider of public transportation) and designing, preparing and delivering meals to students as well as other organizations serving at-risk youth and seniors living in poverty.

Bethel has been hosting a game night on the third Friday of each month beginning at 6:30 p.m. as a fundraiser for the Bethel/Zion LWML chapter.

Zion-Lawrenceville premiered the movie “Storm and Luther’s Forbidden Letter” Sunday, Oct. 22, following lunch. The movie is described as follows: “When his father is arrested for printing a forbidden letter written by controversial reformer Martin Luther, 12-year-old Storm escapes with the original. On the run from the authorities, Storm finds unexpected help from Maria, a young girl who lives in the city’s underground tunnels. In a race against time, Storm tries to save his father from execution and get the letter into safe hands. But who can he trust? What starts out as a fearful flight becomes a bold fight for freedom.” Originally in German dubbed to English. The free will offering for the event will be donated to Maui Disaster Relief for an LCMS church and school that were damaged.



## NEWS FROM AREA CONGREGATIONS

### GRACE

*Penn Hills*

#### ***Yellow Jacket Sunday at Grace Lutheran Church in Penn Hills!***

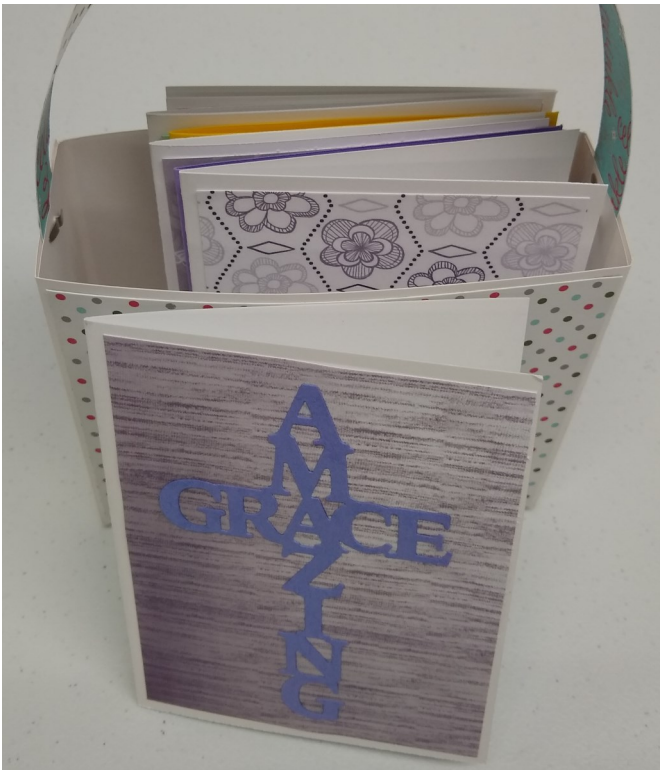
The Divine Service on October 1 was a unique one. This yellow jacket Sunday was not some new liturgical festival, but a service born out of necessity. Having been forced out of church due to an infestation of yellow jackets, Grace made the best of the situation by celebrating the Divine Service in the parking lot.

Attendance was light, but the Lord provided one of the best weather days of the year. As one member put it, "It was a 'Bee-utiful morning!'"



### MT. CALVARY

*West View, PA*



Mt. Calvary's Outreach Group is working on making Christmas gifts for the folks on Meals on Wheels, and as promised last month, here is a photo of the finished product. The group's project this year was making little carrying bags out of card stock and recycled cards, and filling them with an assortment of greeting cards, many of them also homemade.

Mt. Calvary was happy to help take part in the 100th anniversary celebration of St. Mark Lutheran Church in Steubenville, Ohio, on September 24. Pastor Kuntz already leads the church, traveling each Sunday for a 1:00 p.m. service after fulfilling his duties at Mt. Calvary. On this day, other members also made the trip to be part of the special celebration. We wish continued blessings on our sister congregation!

Voice and bell choir practice began in October, with the first performances on Reformation Sunday. Mt. Calvary also provided cookies for Meals on Wheels during the five weeks in October, and boxes and packages were piled high each Sunday as soon as you entered the church's front doors.

## UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

### Concordia Lutheran Ministries

The Concordia Lutheran Ministries **Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, Nov. 12** at 3:00 p.m. in the Haven I Dining Room at the Cabot campus. Registration will begin at 2:30 p.m. and dinner will be served following the meeting at 5:00 p.m. The main agenda item is the election of five members to the Board of Directors. Each member congregation is entitled to three votes – one pastor plus two delegates. For more information, please contact Director of Church Relations Shirley Freyer at 412/480-9933.



### Caregiver Support Group

The Caregiver Support Group on the Cabot campus meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 2 p.m. Call Stefanie Dietrich for more information at 724-352-1571, ext. 8271.



### TOPS - Take Off Pounds Sensibly

Meetings every Thursday at the Cabot campus. Weigh-ins at 4:30, meeting at 5 p.m. Open to all staff, residents and community. Call or email Sara Beth Swain for details at 724-352-1571, ext. 8045 or [sswain@concordiavn.org](mailto:sswain@concordiavn.org)



## Concordia Lutheran Ministries will host its 10th Annual Live Nativity on Sunday, Dec. 10



## **Nominees for Board of Directors at Concordia Lutheran Ministries Announced**

Delegates have been notified that Concordia Lutheran Ministries Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, November 12, 2023 at 3 p.m. in the Haven I Dining Room, 112 Marwood Road, Cabot. Registration begins at 2:30 p.m. Dinner will be served following the meeting at approximately 4:45 p.m.

The main order of business for the day is the election of five members to the Board of Directors. Nominees are incumbents Rev. Ronald Bright - Christ, Forest Hills; Frederick W. Heintz Jr - Bethel and Gail Holzer - Redeemer. Other nominees are Kelly Carney - St. Luke; Rande Casaday - Peace; and Cynthia Cwynar - Mt. Olive. Of those nominated. Delegates will elect five people to three-year terms. By-laws dictate that all voting must be done in person.

Each member congregation is entitled to three votes - the called pastor plus two delegates. Concordia leadership looks forward to hosting our constituents each year at this time. Please contact Director of Church Relations Shirley Freyer at 412-585-0603 with any questions.



Adopt a Concordia Resident at Christmas



A fun way for a church group to remember residents is the “Adopt-A-Resident” approach. As we approach the Christmas season, we ask that you also do what you can to support the residents at our Concordia communities. In these uncertain times, please consider helping our Activities Directors with gifts for our residents. If you prefer to send a general gift, we can suggest the following newly purchased items that our residents can typically use heated shawls or scarves. (battery operated, large or extra-large sweat suits; adjustable ball caps, socks, large or extra-large undershirts, Hair clips/combs/ barrettes, Stationery/stamps, Puzzle books, Word Search, Sugar free candy, Books on tape, large or extra-large size Dusters/loungers, Snack shop gift certificates, Door decorations, Puffs or Kleenex brand tissue, Watches with large numbers, Lotions and cologne, Tape players/ radios for rooms, Music CDs and cassette tapes, a gift box of chocolates, Digital clocks with large numbers, Seasonal sun catchers with suction cups, Large print books (no magazines), Large or extra-large cardigan sweaters or sweatshirts, Washable slippers with backs or slipper socks, Jewelry (not pierced), Gift certificates for beauty/barber shop, Decorative small pillows, Devotional books, Decorative throws/ blankets, Magnifying glasses, Picture albums/small frames, Lipstick, rouge, liquid makeup, loose powder, toiletries, Sports memorabilia, and Snow globes. Donated general items should not be wrapped and may be dropped off to the Lund Care Center, Building #4. If it is after hours or on the weekend and the administration area is closed, please leave items at a nurse’s station. Finally, monetary contributions are always appreciated and need to be sent to CLM Foundation, 134 Marwood Road, Cabot, PA 16023. If your congregation or individual members are interested in “adopting a resident,” please call:

CABOT- Jaime White (personal care): 724-352-1571 ext. 8302 (Donations are needed by Dec. 3)

ORCHARD- Jodi Macko (personal care): 724-285-4490 (Donations are needed by Dec. 3)

FOX CHAPEL - Kelly Ellena or Sharon Scott (Memory care): 412-767-5808 Please call for assistance with what to donate. (Donations are needed by Dec. 10)

MONROEVILLE/HARMONY -Janice Stavros (personal care): 412-373-3900-(3413). Diana McDade (skilled): 412-373-3900-(3463). (Donations are needed by Dec. 8)

CRANBERRY – Beth Schulz or Amber Kemper: 724-779-4300. Resident Wish Lists will be available after Thanksgiving. (Donations are needed by Dec. 12)

**Special thanks to:**

Ascension has adopted Concordia of Franklin Park and Concordia of Wexford again this year. Bethel, St. John’s and Zion, Lawrenceville will provide gifts for the residents of Concordia at Rebecca Residence and Grace helps with residents Concordia at Ridgewood Place.



## Concordia's "Power of the Purse" Raises Close to \$50,000

The Second "Power of the Purse" affair to benefit Concordia's Good Samaritan Hospice Youth Bereavement Care attracted 225 participants to Butler County's historic landmark, The Mansion on Friday, September 29.

Ten winners took home high-end bags but the highlight of the evening was the Spotlight Bag, a Burberry valued at more the \$1900, donated by the Concordia Visiting Nurses division.

Other prizes included an Italian Bag package, the Michael Kors Jet Set Package, three wallets with gift cards, the 100-purse room, plus two pop-up events - a "Nesting Doll package" with several small wallets/wristlets and gift cards and an iPad with Airpods.

Thanks to all donors and kudos to the event committee chaired by Charla Oesterling, Assistant to the President





Concordia Oktoberfest 2023

A perfect autumn day brought more than 1000 guests to Concordia's annual Oktoberfest at Cabot! Those who came enjoyed delicious German dishes, prepared in-house by our talented food service team, including spätzle, sauerbraten, Bavarian style pork roast, kielbasa, sauerkraut, bratwurst and more. The Mikey Dee Polka Band brought the crowd to the dance floor with polka favorites and John Huss Evangelical Lutheran Church hosted a successful bake sale in the Haven I Lobby. Kids enjoyed crafts, pumpkin decorating, face stenciling, temporary tattoos, bouncy house fun, creating giant bubbles and learning to sign their names courtesy of Debra Terhune, a member of First Trinity and Director of the Pittsburgh Lutheran Deaf Ministry. The event concluded with a spectacular fireworks display by Pyrotecnico.

Deb Terhune teaches signing at the Kids tent area.



Melanie Panzigrau and her team from John Huss congregation in Arnold have become a tradition at Concordia's Oktoberfest



Concordia Board member and Director of Redeemer Lutheran High School Gail Holzer and husband Bob tended the Beer Tent with Nick Delano



Servers in the Bistro included board member Fred Heintz along with Concordia's COO Brian Hortert and Food Service staff



# A FESTIVAL OF LESSON & CAROLS



ALL LESSONS ARE BASED ON SCRIPTURALLY RECORDED INCIDENTS.  
PRESENTED BY THE PITTSBURGH LUTHERAN CHORUS

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1:30 & 3:30 PM**

Concordia at Cabot, Lund Care Center Chapel ~ 134 Marwood Road 16023  
Oertel Care Center Chapel ~ 613 North Pike Road 16023

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2 PM**

Concordia of the South Hills Harmony Room ~ 1300 Bower Hill Road 15243

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 6, 2 PM**

Concordia of Monroeville ~ 4363 Northern Pike 15146

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2:30 & 4 PM**

Concordia at Rebecca Residence ~ 3746 Cedar Ridge Road 15101  
HighPointe at Rebecca ~ 1871 HighPointe Lane 15101