



THE PITTSBURGH LUTHERAN

VOL 93, NO 1, February 2023

PALM News	1-5
PALM Mission	6
Campus Ministry	7-8
Church Focus Series	9-12
Congregation News	13-14
Concordia News	15-17

PALM Bids Farewell to the Reverend Brian Westgate, Former Board President and Secretary

The Reverend Dr. Douglas H. Spittel, PALM President

In November, Pastor Brian Westgate announced that he had received a divine call to serve as pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical-Lutheran Church UAC in Kouts, IN (south of Valparaiso). He announced his acceptance of this call on Advent Sunday. His last service at Redeemer, Oakmont was the First Sunday after Epiphany, January 8.

Pastor Westgate has served in the Pittsburgh area since graduation from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, in 2011. He served Faith Lutheran Church in Butler for his first five years in the area and has served Redeemer Oakmont ever since.

During his eleven and a half years, he has served the Church in many different capacities. He has served the English District as the Pittsburgh Circuit Visitor & LWML Zone Counsellor, as the English District Disaster Relief & Human Care Committee Chair, as a member of the English District Worship Committee, and as the organist at the recent English District convention at Concordia University Ann Arbor.

Pastor Westgate has worked tirelessly for the extension of Christ's Church in the Pittsburgh Region. He served on the Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries Board of Directors as both President and, more recently, Secretary. During his long tenure, he was instrumental in restoring PALM's 501c3 status with the government and RSO status with the synod. This enabled PALM to establish mission church plants across the region. He was instrumental in chartering St. John's Clarksburg as a parish of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod and has enjoyed watching from afar the mission work both there and at Holy Cross Hazelwood. He has served for several years as the Secretary of the LCMS Pittsburgh Pastoral Conference, helping to plan the conferences and invite speakers from across the Synod. He also serves as the organist for the annual St. Mark's Conference at The Church of Our Saviour in the City of Baltimore.

Pastor Westgate will greatly miss his Redeemer family and our Pittsburgh Lutheran family. He will be missed by the churches and LCMS organizations in Pittsburgh. He plans to take with him what he's learned from Hazelwood, Pittsburgh, and Baltimore to Kouts and put it to good use in that small mid-western town. We give thanks for his many years of service to the churches of Pittsburgh and pray that his ministry in Indiana is blessed and flourishes.



PALM DEVOTION

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

“Friends”

“No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.” John 15:15

Each week, we confess in the Creed that we believe in the “communion of saints.” This is a belief not only in the heavenly, mystical gathering of the saints in heaven, but also of the earthly, physical gathering of the saints around the Word and Sacraments at the altar. We can look around us and see that which we confess – that in which we believe. Jesus gathers us, teaches us, and feeds us, not as individuals, but as a communion, a household of the faithful. In so doing, He promises that He makes us His friends. We confess then, that our friendship (communion) with Jesus brings us into friendship (communion) with one another.

How wonderful it is that not only does the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus bring us into an eternal reconciled relationship with the Father, but it also brings us into an eternal reconciled relationship with one another. Simply put, in the Church, we have friends that we would have never known otherwise. The holy friendships that we find in Christ’s Church are built upon the forgiving relationship that Jesus has established. We have become friends with people with whom we otherwise have little or nothing in common.

Jesus calls us into an everlasting communion with all whom He calls “friend.” Even when we must part from one another due to school, work, other duties, or even our mortality, our friendships do not end. Our earthly friendships and our eternal friendships are one in Christ who has called us into His eternal communion of holy friendship.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

February

14. Valentine's Day

May

13. Save the Date: Concordia Spring Fashion Luncheon (formerly the Fashion Show) Time and place TBA



The Pittsburgh Lutheran

Published by

Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries (PALM)

Editors

Nancy Koester, Mary Lou Rilee, Megan Migyanko

The Pittsburgh Lutheran is published 10 times per year.

All inquiries, comments or suggestions should be addressed to the Editors at:

pittsburgh.lutheran.editor@gmail.com

Please mail PALM donations to:

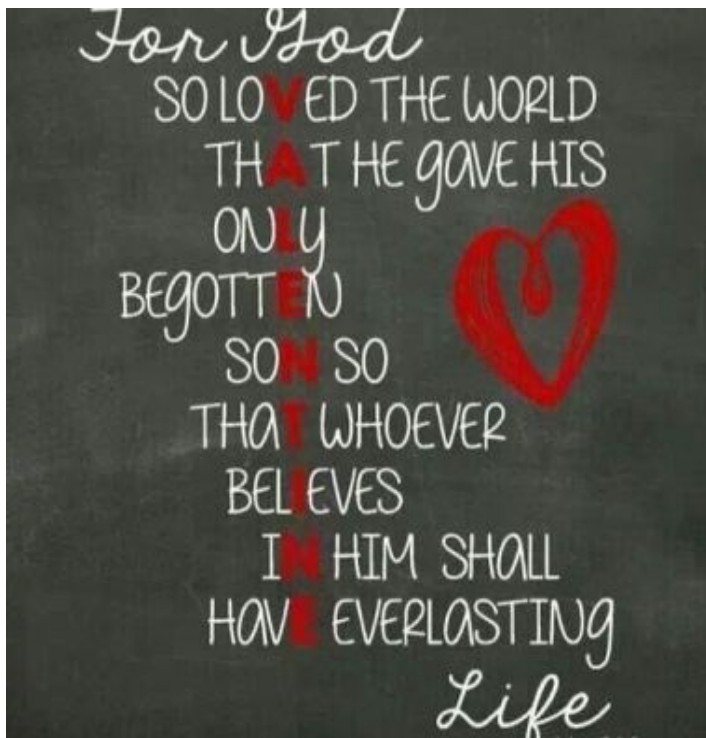
Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries
Attn: Treasurer
535 N. Neville Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

PALM Officers

Rev. Douglas Spittel, President
Justin Spittel, Treasurer
Rev. Brian Westgate, Secretary

PALM Website

<http://www.palmpa.org>



Pittsburgh Pastoral Conference News

by Pastor Brian Westgate

The Pittsburgh Pastoral Conference continues to meet. In January the pastors had a very important session. Presenting was Pastor Peter Burfeind, who serves parishes in Marshall and Union City, MI; he is also an army chaplain. He is the publisher of VBS and Sunday School programs through Pax Domini Press (<https://paxdominipress.com>), and the author of *Gnostic America: A Reading of Contemporary American Culture & Religion according to Christianity's Oldest Heresy*. You can purchase the book online at the Pax Domini Press website. The presentation focused on the topic of his book.

Pastor Burfeind proposes that all the issues we face in today's world are a species of the Gnostic heresy. At its very base and root, this heresy is an emptying out of meaning from the physical, the body, the substantial. The problem with this is obvious when we recognize that central to our theology as Christians and Lutherans is the Incarnation: Christ has come into our flesh. But the devil and original sin want us to reject this and think the flesh is of little importance.

We can see this heresy at work in many ways and places, in how we worship, in sexuality and trying to change one's gender, in politics and more. The role of choice and consumerism have determined the church growth movement. Choice is the initiation sacrament into finding your authentic self. People used to understand themselves by external things, but since the 1960s, culture is about projecting out who you are and saying the outside world is completely deceptive. That makes self the narrative and everybody else has to find their place in your narrative. This is related to the temptation, for Eve decided to create a world of evil. We cannot understand the world except through images, but Satan's deception has put up blinders. Only the Christian narrative is the true one, but sin wants to replace it. We Lutherans have an alternate narrative, the true narrative, objective truth which shows you things the way they truly are. The Liturgy itself reconfigures the way we look at the world. The world is so often catechized by its phone, but we are catechized by what God says to us. For the Holy Ghost is no feeling, as Gnosticism teaches (and modern-day Evangelicalism repeats virtually all the errors of Gnosticism), but "you hear His voice" in Sacred Scripture.

The heresy hates reproduction, because reproduction is what passes on human evil. Now it also wants everybody to be connected in just a disembodied way - this is why worship together in the church building is so important, for church draws together bodies and blood to the Body and Blood of Jesus! As it is, we are now seeing that online school has had disastrous results these past few years for both education and mental health. We need to interact with one another and give to one another; it's not an empowering, it's a gift-giving. For God separated and named and said it was good. Language arose from that, the divine gift that reflects the reality of created beings. This is the battle today, for Gnosticism today, which goes by names like progressivism and wokeism, wants to take words and destroy the meaning and give new meaning to them. Is this not Satan's temptation at the very beginning, to create your own world beyond this world? This language cannot be rational or logical, so it must be enthusiastic (you will find lots of vowels and no consonants) and deny that what God created is good. Adam named so he had authority over things, but man today wants to give up that authority. The Church returns us to the creating authority of Christ Who completed His creating work when He said, "It is finished."

Pittsburgh Pastoral Conference News (Continued)

God does not speak to us in feelings, even if 50% of Americans think so. Scripture is where He speaks to us, and the Liturgy shows us what is happening at the Father's right hand. This is our antidote. Children will reflect what is given them there. There you find Jesus. He is everywhere, but in His Word & Sacraments, that alone is where He is for you. But the Gnostics want to blur everything so all you see is self, and then all you have left is the devil. All will therefore cause us to find out how evil we really are. If deity becomes the project of our projection, that god will fail. There is no security in that, in self being god, and that is why depression and anxiety are so prevalent today, and found alongside the realms of sexual and gender dysphoria.

The world wants utopia. It does not believe that Christians manifest the kingdom of God on earth. Gnosticism wants Holy Spirit to work directly on us, and us working together can bring about that pure utopian world. "Sanctified" people can then work together to make a perfect government, and those that don't go along with it need to be cancelled. The hope of Gnosticism is that each person will become "woke" and have higher consciousness of what the world can be, and then work together to make the society that needs to be. This is the ideal of every dictator, well-meaning and sincere, but evil.

Dear reader, Gnosticism is everywhere around us. Reject it. God has made us male and female, and called us to listen to Him as sheep listen to their shepherd. Listen to Him. Reality is found where Christ Crucified for the life of the world is proclaimed and given to us, for the forgiveness of sins. We strive not for a perfect life here, but for life eternal with Him once He raises us from the dead. So this flesh is important. He took on this flesh that He might redeem it.



HOLY CROSS CHAPEL

Hazelwood

February: A Bright Month

Vicar David L. Wenndt

February: as with all months, February carries many connotations for different people. It is the shortest month of the year, having only 28, or in the case of leap years, 29 days. It is also the second full month of winter; gone are the nostalgic winter memories where we walked in a winter wonderland, or dreamt of a white Christmas, and instead are just left with the cold realities of winter, making it a difficult month for many.

However, February is a month that has positive celebrations! February starts with the celebration of the Presentation of our Lord and the Purification of Mary. So while it tends to be a cold and dreary month, we are continuing with Epiphany. The Lord has been revealed to us. The song of early February can truly be the Song of Simeon sung at the presentation. We're ready to go in peace because we've seen the Lord!

February is also the month that has Valentine's day. As the story goes St. Valentine secretly married couples during a period of Roman persecution in the third century. Modern days see many people honor that day with a celebration of love; and while husbands best not forget to do something special for their wives (Tuesday, February 14 guys), we remember true love: that Christ became flesh for His bride, the church. And while I don't recommend you forgo a Valentine's date to go to church, it is wise to spend part of that day in prayer remembering what true love is and looks like. This bright joy comes from our true and only light, Jesus.

February this year also has Ash Wednesday. As we start the Lenten journey with repentance and ashes, it can sometimes make it feel colder and bleaker for people. We don't want to be reminded of our sins and failings. Yet, this mourning, fasting, and focusing on our sins isn't what wins us repentance. Jesus' blood on the cross has already won salvation for us. Lent isn't about darkness; it's about the light of Christ.

So as we traverse through this month of February, don't think of it as dark and dreary, even if the weather outside is. Focus on the brightness, and the light of God's love for you!

“
**So now faith,
hope, and love
abide, these three;
but the greatest of
these is love.**

1 CORINTHIANS 13:13

CAMPUS MINISTRY

SRU CAMPUS MINISTRY

by Augusta R. Mennell, Campus Ministry Director

Friendship Evangelism

Pictured Right: Rosemary Rigney, member of All Saints, alters gown for SRU Student Amaria.

Maryam came into our lives at the Slippery Rock annual Village Festival three years ago. All Saints Lutheran Church and Student Center rented a table to be part of the festival. We handed out bottles of cold water and invited everyone to feel welcome to All Saints. The college students seemed especially pleased to be invited to our monthly student meals.



Maryam came to the village festival with her infant daughter. She had recently arrived in town with her husband, who had just begun teaching at the university. They had come from the Midwest where he had just received his PhD. They had developed many friendships, Christian and Muslim. Being an outgoing, friendly person she had made many friends there. Now she was looking to see if she could find more friends. She is from Bangladesh, but had not let this stop her from coming to the festival to make new friends.

As she walked past All Saints' table, church member Jim Mennell introduced himself. He told her that our friendly church was just a block away and that members really enjoyed meeting people from all over the world. He welcomed her to attend our free student meals, to come in any time to visit; or to ask for help with transportation. He let her know that All Saints would gladly be a friend.

This was the beginning of a growing friendship with this young mother who now comes for frequent visits and brings her two daughters with her. You can tell that the children have come with her because the floor of my office is covered with items from the top of my desk as well as empty plastic Easter eggs which serve as great toys. The girls love to come in. They feel at home. The little toddler is no longer shy. She just beams big smiles now. To my delight the older daughter asked her mother to visit us at a time when she could come, too.

Maryam has a happy family. She values her traditions, her family back home, and life with her husband. They are practicing Muslims and seem quite content with their religion. She's not that much interested in the Christian faith, but she is not hostile.

A wonderful opportunity to share our Christian faith came a few weeks ago. Maryam stayed to listen one day when a student named Donovan came into All Saints and asked if I'd tell him what Lutherans believe. This was a God-given opportunity. I explained, in Maryam's hearing, that we believe in Jesus as God's only Son who died on the cross to atone for our sins. Maryam listened, but she did not comment when I finished. Actually she knows what Christians believe. When she was in the Midwest while her husband studied for his graduate degree, she was included by Christians in their ladies Bible class. She did not want to study, but she did want to babysit for them during the Bible class. From her times with these Christian ladies she came to realize that, as she put it to us at the Slippery Rock Festival, "Christians are kind." She still feels that way.

You might wonder why a Christian should be a friend when there is no guarantee that someone like Maryam, who has become a dear friend, will become a Christian. The answer is that God commands us to in Matthew 28:19 to "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." This seems to include friendship evangelism.

A one-time graduate student that I know very well had become an atheist based upon the theory of evolution. But he came back to Christianity because God worked through a close Lutheran friend of his who practiced friendship evangelism through unconditional friendship. This graduate student became very impressed with his friend's Christianity; it was so alive that he couldn't help but notice it. In time, the graduate student became filled with a desire to have just such a relationship with Jesus, too. Even if Maryam never believes in Jesus through All Saints' friendship evangelism, we will continue to love her unconditionally. We believe seeds are planted. The rest is up to the Holy Spirit.

CAMPUS MINISTRY

PSU REVIVE CAMPUS MINISTRY

by Matt Slaybaugh, Director of Revive Campus Ministry

Revive Campus Ministry Fall 2022

We had another great fall semester over here at Revive Campus Ministry at Penn State! We have been pleased with a wonderful group of students. We have had a full weekly calendar that includes: church, lunch after, small group, our weekly gathering, HUB student union hang out, and weekend get togethers or fun Revive activities. In the small group this semester the students went through the parables of Jesus. At our weekly gathering we went through a series on forgiveness, and closed out the semester with the Christmas/Advent message. Our theme nights consisted of: halloween party, friendsgiving, and a Christmas party. Revive also went on a day trip to the Little League World Series and Hershey Park early on in the semester. We closed out the semester having a great time! Activities included: Christmas decorations party, watching USMNT world cup game, Christmas party, and more! We also sent out and celebrate two of our seniors who graduated.

We are excited for next semester and all the activities we have planned! We have plans for spring outreach to meet students ready to go. We have also planned to go to a Hershey Bears hockey game. Our big event of the spring semester will be our spring break service trip. We are set to go serve down in Fort Myers, FL doing hurricane relief work! We are excited to have 14 total people going.

Thank you for your continued support ministering to young people!



Houses of Worship
By Shirley Freyer

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church

1001 Knollwood Road, New Kensington, PA 15068

724/339-2829

Rev. Jack Hartman, Vacancy Pastor

Worship Sunday morning at 11:30 a.m.

By Shirley Freyer



“Make a joyful noise until the Lord, all ye lands...” -Psalm 100:1

The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of St. Paul’s Congregation in New Kensington began in the home of Rev. Paul Succop following a meeting on Dec. 20, 1908 when members of Trinity German Ev. Lutheran Church on Walnut Street voted 16-13 to “open the gate and door to the Lodge and adopted a resolution that the Pastor would no longer be allowed to testify against the Lodge publicly or privately.”

According to the recorded history by Marydi Kreitzer whose family were founding members, “Pastor Paul Succop ... could no longer exercise his office in the congregation, but rather was forced to depart from it as from a group which no longer would allow itself to be disciplined by the Word of God, and he called upon those, who still wanted to do according to the Word of God, to leave with him. A small group of true confessors followed the Pastor ... to continue the true Lutheran Congregation of this place and temporarily to conduct divine worship in the home of the Pastor.”

A church school with 12 children was added and the Mission Board of the Eastern District assisted the small congregation with a subsidy of \$25 per month. Six months later the church was chartered and a group of six were elected to office. According to the son of the first treasurer, Gottlieb Reisch (whose wife kept the books in German), the G.C. Ruppel family purchased three lots on Stanton Avenue (now Constitution Boulevard) for \$1500 and held for the congregation. A Building Committee was formed, and a church was dedicated Oct. 24, 1909, at a cost of \$3000. The first confirmation class consisted of four girls, including Ann Ruppel, sister of Otto, who authored the church history.

In 1917, Pastor and Teacher Succop (he taught all grades throughout his tenure) accepted a call to York, Pa., and installed his successor, Rev. Daniel Goerss. By 1920, Rev. Theodore Andree and his family from nearby Cabot settled into the first parsonage and taught all grades at the school until 1928, when the school was closed for lack of attendance. A personal account by Ed Reisch credits his education in this parochial school. “When I entered eighth grade, I was up to or ahead of my class in all subjects except music and art.”

The history is marked with accounts of additions, the work done by the hands of the members, including a tennis court. The pastor painted the altar, pulpit, and baptismal font, and varnished the pews. The altar and pulpit in the new church were handmade. The kneeling benches at the altar were upholstered by G.C. Ruppel and are still used in today’s church. A pipe organ was dedicated in 1928, and by 1931, an English constitution was adopted. Throughout the 1920s and ‘30s, at least four people were confirmed each year, with the largest class of 14 in 1924. In fact, in 1940, a reunion service of former confirmands was held. Of the 117, 83 continued their membership at St. Paul. Pastor Andree served until his death in 1942. His daughter still belonged to St. Paul in 2009.

Eldest current member Helena Baird has been part of St. Paul’s “all my life. My grandparents were charter members on Constitution Boulevard when worship services were in German and English,” she said. “There was a school where they taught in German,” Helena explained. She taught pre-school in the ‘90s and Sunday School after she was confirmed until it no longer was needed.

Now she is one of four members “holding up the church,” taking care of payroll and paying the bills. Her youngest sister, Pat Gardone, would come every day to take care of the church needs until her passing last July. Both she and Helena were close friends to another of the “faithful few.”

HOUSES OF WORSHIP SERIES

Rosanne Olbeter is the backbone of the congregation and has been church secretary since 2009. “I agreed to try to learn the job,” she recalled thinking, “I’m here to help out at the church.” Baptized, confirmed, and married, she and her three sisters and a brother were brought to church faithfully by her mother.

She admits that she was a quiet person who worked at Bell Telephone Company before her marriage to widower Herb, another lifelong member who had four children. All, too, were baptized and confirmed at St. Paul’s. She and Herb hosted an adult Bible study every Tuesday in their home during the “glory days of the early turn of the century. Her daughter, coached by Rev. Roger Nuerge during his tenure at St. Paul’s, became a deaconess.

Rosanne’s dedication to her house of worship is evident. “It’s my church; it’s my home,” she explained. “It keeps me busy and around people. All my years I wanted to come to church and plenty of times I walked,” she admitted. “I can’t see why people don’t.”

Music played an important role in the annals of this church. The Ladies Aid sponsored a concert of sacred and classical music in 1950 with members playing the organ, piano, flute, violin, trombone, and saxophone. Six years later a church choir was organized, along with the Walther League and the Mary of Bethany Altar Guild.

Current accompanist Barb Glozik was raised in the sister congregation, John Huss in Arnold. “I remember joint services for Good Friday at a local movie theatre with a giant Bible on stage,” said Barb. “There was youth group interaction and work on the Strawberry Festival.” Barb took piano lessons in grade school and by the eighth grade she and a bunch of teenage girls had learned to play the organ and rotated Sundays. She especially enjoyed playing for the Slovak service. “I always wanted Pastor (Emil) Lavcek to teach Slovak,” she remarked.

After graduation from the last class of New Kensington High School, she went off to Concordia River Forest to pursue a teaching career, but the Methods of Teaching Math course sent her right back home. She worked for Springdale Pipe and Tubing until she decided to enter the University of Pittsburgh and major in psychology, with a minor in Russian.

With her background, she spent the next 30 years working for the National Security Agency in Washington, D.C., where she joined a Lutheran church in Maryland. Barb retired six weeks after the 9/11 terrorist attacks but returned to work for the government on campaigns for about eight months. She has since made her home in Murrysville. She and Pastor Hartman teamed up to provide what she refers to as a “package deal” for St. Paul’s in Braddock as well as St. Paul’s in New Kensington.

Rev. Elmer I. Miller, with charter members Charles Ruppel, Ida Siegert, and Caroline Reisch on board, celebrated groundbreaking for a new church location on Freeport Road in 1962. A new pipe organ was dedicated with an organ recital by organist and Pittsburgh Lutheran Chorus director Carl Schmidt. At this time, three organists were willing to serve – Selma Karsten, who later became church chairperson; Frank Siegert, largest donor; and Evie Redlich, whose family were charter members. The name of St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church was granted in 1901 to a congregation in New Kensington that remained in existence for only a few years, but whose charter was still on file.

Dave Robinson remembered helping out with the construction of the new church. His parents, Jack, and Olga, and all of his seven aunts were members. Dubbed the first acolyte, he was an usher for as long as he can remember and served as vice president for a time. Despite his current health issues, he attends weekly and pledges to continue as long as he is able. “It is just part of my life from growing up. It is a good habit,” he claimed.

HOUSES OF WORSHIP SERIES

The '80s was an active outreach decade launching a Food-Share Program and opening a pre-school "Where God's Children Grow." Rev. Roger Nuerge celebrated the 75th anniversary in 1984, and some believe this may have been the most vigorous and dynamic era. By 2005 the evangelism committee formed a search and rescue team to reach out to inactive members; the missions group took a team of eight to Camp Pioneer to work with the developmentally challenged, a healing service called Anointed Hands, and Promise Keepers boasted eight men.

"When I think about my four-and-a-half years of ministry at St. Paul from 1983 to 1987, it seems very small and insignificant compared to St. Paul's ministry of over 100-plus years as a congregation," said Pastor Nuerge, chaplain at Concordia Lutheran Ministries since 2009.

"However, when I think about all that those years meant to me and my family, they were very significant and meaningful. Within our first year at St. Paul our family of Mary and Roger and daughters Sarah, Lara and Tara grew with the birth of our twin boys Justin and Joel. Suddenly we had five children under the age of 7, yet the help and support we needed to be in church as a family was always there with the people at St. Paul. We did not feel we had to ask for it - it was just there because that is the way the people of St. Paul were. That meant so much to us," he explained.

"Those years were also significant for me personally as a parish pastor. I had a lot to learn about ministry. I had to learn how to be prepared for leading worship. I needed to learn how better to be a sinner pastor among sinner people. I learned how good God's Word of Law and Gospel is for pastor and people to celebrate together in worship and live together in everyday life. What God helped me learn at St. Paul helped me have a foundation to continue in ministry for the years ahead," he concluded.

Another former member whose family choir perpetuated the significance of music is Sandy Wilson Demento. Although she now belongs to St. Luke in Cabot and was confirmed at the former St. John's in Brackenridge, she has fond memories of the spirit and energy at St. Paul as a teenager and then as a wife and mother. Her parents, Bob and Marianne Wilson, and her sister, Sue Lehosky, were instrumental in creating the reenactment of the Last Supper "Is It I Lord?" every Maundy Thursday. They packed the sanctuary when the band "Lost & Found" performed. And they led the youth group to attend popular musicals like "Godspell" and "Jesus Christ, Superstar." Russ Brown, the youth leader directed the young people of the congregation in several plays.

Sandy loves to tell the story of how she guessed that Mary Nuerge was expecting twins before the boys were born. And the spur-of-the-moment trip to New York City the week between Christmas and New Year she and her late husband Ed took to "check out Rev. William Fischer before the congregation extended a call to him. It snowed 18 inches in Manhattan and there were only three other people at the service," she related. "He never knew why we were there until he came to serve us."

The most extraordinary events, according to Sandy, were the Youth Gatherings in San Antonio, Atlanta, and New Orleans. It was during this era also that the Siegerts bequeathed a substantial gift that afforded the largest construction project.

The last full-time pastor, Rev. Corey Eckstrom, was called in 2007, but within a year the church ascertained that it simply could not afford to pay a full-time pastor. The pre-school was closed in 2009 and a day care center was opened. The 100th anniversary program noted, "St. Paul's attendance is still down, with low contributions coming in. The fate of the church is now in God's hands. The workers in the field are few."

HOUSES OF WORSHIP SERIES

Now, nearly 13 years later, the doors are still open. Yes, just about a year ago the group made a decision to sell the property to the day care center with the agreement that they would be able to continue to worship and have office hours three mornings a week. The pews are gone, and the classrooms have been remodeled. The organ is unreachable. "When we made the move here in the '60s there were those who said we wouldn't survive up on the hill," said Rosanne. "I hate to leave it. Someday I know I will have to."

Rev. Jack Hartman, Director of Chaplaincy Services at Concordia Lutheran Ministries who has conducted divine worship there for more than 20 years, praises this quality group of individuals for their resilience. "I love these people," he said. "They are a living statement of faith. They love the Lord, and it is a beautiful thing to see," noted Pastor Hartman. Proud of their history, they are determined to keep going. "I made myself a promise when St. Paul's in Braddock was forced to close that I was willing to ride the future with them for as long as they wished."

Organist Barb shares his sentiment. "They are there every week, very devoted to keep their identity."

In the words of former pastor Roger Nuerge, "May God bless the people of St. Paul always!"



GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN

South Hills



On January 15, Good Shepherd celebrated the installation of its new pastor, Joshua Makey. Eastern District, LCMS President Pingel conducted the installation and many area pastors participated.

Pastor Josh is a 2010 graduate of Concordia College, New York where he received a bachelor's degree in middle Childhood Education and a Lutheran teacher's diploma. Pastor Josh met his wife, Sarah, while teaching on Long Island, New York. They were married in May 2015. Pastor Josh attended Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and graduated in December 2022. Following the installation service, a catered dinner was enjoyed by all. We are excited and blessed to have Pastor Josh and Sarah join the family and ministry of Good Shepherd.

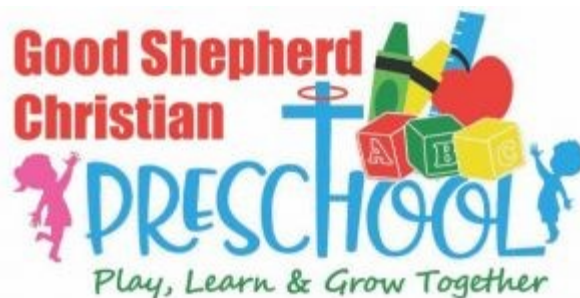
Good Shepherd would like to thank *all* the Pittsburgh area pastors who served as Sunday morning preachers and Bible Study teachers, and who allowed us to utilize online sermon videos as needed since Fall 2020. Beginning in 2021, Good Shepherd was blessed to have Pastor Barry Keurulainen as our Vacancy Pastor. Pastor David Weeks and several additional Pittsburgh area pastors have served us since our vacancy began in Fall 2020. The Good Shepherd family would like to thank *all* of the Pittsburgh area pastors who served us in some capacity since Fall 2020. With the support of Good Shepherd's lay leadership and area pastors, we are in a strong position to begin this new chapter with Pastor Josh and Sarah that we are all so much looking forward to.



Good Shepherd Christian Preschool

<https://goodshepherdpittsburgh.org/preschool-main-page/>

We are already looking forward to the 2023-2024 school year! Registration for next year's classes have begun. Classes are available for two to five years old. If you are interested in learning more about our Preschool or completing a registration, please contact the Director, Ashley Miller at preschool@goodshepherdpittsburgh.org or 412-884-5960.



NEWS FROM AREA CONGREGATIONS

MT. CALVARY LUTHERAN

West View

The Outreach Group at Mt. Calvary planned its most ambitious project ever when the members put together a Free Market the weekend of December 9 - 11. With help from friends and other members of the congregation, the group collected hundreds and hundreds of new and gently used items for all ages, then spent weeks sorting, separating, and displaying the articles in the church hall.

The purpose of the market was to allow members of the community who were having financial difficulties to come and "shop" for free - choosing items as Christmas presents for family members. Complimentary hot dogs, chips, and water were also offered.

The doors opened at 3:00 p.m. Friday, and shopping was available Saturday, and after the church service on Sunday. During the weekend, hundreds of people came, selecting everything from toys and books and jewelry and clothing, to Christmas decorations and tools and electronics and housewares. Everyone who came was also entered into a drawing for a \$100 Visa gift card, and two \$25 Target gift cards. Members of the Outreach Group were on hand to wrap gifts, and Jennifer Skinner's Girl Scout Brownie Troop 52841 decorated gift bags for shoppers to use for their items.

Both WII Channel 11 and WTAE Channel 4 featured the market on their news programs, with council Vice President Jim Heinrichs consenting to be interviewed. The market was a lot of work, but as Jim pointed out, seeing the joy in the faces of the shoppers made it all worthwhile, and we were thankful God gave us the grace to be able to share.



Books that remained after the market closed were given to the library, while all other items were donated to the Repurposed store on McKnight Road, where the proceeds go to help fight human trafficking.

The Free Market involved a lot of time and energy, but it wasn't the only thing that took place in December. The Outreach Group also made little gift bags for the folks at Meals on Wheels, and 3D ornaments for members of the congregation.

After the service on December 4, the church enjoyed its annual Christmas party, which included a catered luncheon, desserts provided by the congregation, and a grab bag exchange. In addition to Mt. Calvary, Pastor Kuntz serves St. Mark in Ohio on Sundays following Mt. Calvary's service. That congregation was gracious in allowing pastor to forego its service so he could stay in West View and enjoy the party. In return, Mt. Calvary invited St. Mark's members to join us for both, and Jim Heinrichs rented a van and brought five members to the festivities. Everyone enjoyed the food and fun, and especially the fellowship.

Finally, organist and music director Sharon Pritchard put together a family Christmas program for the December 18 service. It featured readings by children and adults alike, and performances by the voice and bell choirs.

Overall, December was a busy month at Mt. Calvary, filled with blessings and fun for everyone.



Live Nativity

More than 400 people attended the Ninth Annual Live Nativity on Sunday, Dec. 11, at Concordia at Cabot! Thanks to the cast which consisted of staff members including Chaplain Adam Salinas who played Joseph, family members, and resident Carol Schick who was the narrator, musical accompanists, Santa resident Bud Sears and his elves. Entertainment between performances consisted of St. Luke 3rd and 4th Grade, Redeemer High School students and the Pittsburgh Lutheran Chorus.



Right: Redeemer



Below: St. Luke



Concordia Announces New Chaplain

President and CEO Keith E. Frndak announced that Rev. Joel Dieterichs was installed as a full-time chaplain on Thursday, January 12, at a special worship service in the Haven II Chapel on our Cabot campus.

Rev. John Pingel, President, Eastern District, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod conducted the installation. Pastors from our member churches who participated included First Vice President, Eastern District and Concordia Board member Rev. Dr. Daniel Hahn; Second Vice President, English District Rev. Dr. Douglas Spittel (First Trinity/Oakland), Rev'ds. Jared Townley (St. Luke, Cabot), Brian Westgate (Redeemer/Oakmont), Bert Greenway (Grace, Penn Hills) and Donn Woolweber (Bethel, Glenshaw/Zion, Lawrenceville) as well as Concordia's chaplains, Revds. Jack Hartman, Lee Genter, Roger Nuerge, Adam Salinas, and Duane Voorman.

Rev. Dieterichs began his duties as a part-time chaplain at Concordia of Sumner in Ohio last July. Previously, he was sole pastor at Calvary Lutheran Church in Parma, Ohio from 2019 to 2022. The Dieterichs moved to Ohio after serving in Colorado at pastorates in Denver, Commerce City and Colorado Springs. Rev. Dieterichs began his ministry as an Associate Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Auburn, Illinois after graduating from the St. Louis Seminary in 2004.

He and his wife Yanti have three children: Abigail, age 18; Paul, age 16 and Nathan who is seven years old.

"Concordia is really an incredible and compassionate company. I am excited to continue elder-care ministry with such talented and caring coworkers," Pastor said.

Rev. Dieterichs joins six full-time chaplains and two full-time deaconesses who cover the spiritual needs of 14 Concordia locations in western PA, President and CEO Keith E. Frndak said, "We are particularly blessed to welcome this servant of our Lord and hope you will keep him in your prayers."



Pictured Left to right:

Back row: Revds. Brian Westgate, Roger Nuerge, Duane Voorman, Donn Woolweber, Douglas Spittel, Dan Hahn, Jared Townley

Front row: Revds. Adam Salinas, Jack Hartman, District president John Pingel, Joel Dieterichs, Bert Greenway and Lee Genter.

Concordia Adds Its 10th Senior Facility Since 2009

The Boards of Directors for Concordia Lutheran Ministries and Bethlen Communities, based in historic Ligonier, PA, recently signed a non-binding letter of intent for Bethlen to join the Concordia family of locations and services. Both organizations will work through the due diligence process over the next several months toward an expected affiliation date in the spring. This process and potential affiliation will have no impact on Concordia residents/patients or on day-to-day responsibilities of most team members.

Bethlen Communities is a faith-based non-profit organization that has been serving the needs of older individuals. To provide for the many children left without means of support following the Smithton, Pennsylvania, Darr Coal Mine explosion, the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America (HRFA) opened an orphanage on July 4, 1921. Exactly three years later, to provide housing and care for the elderly who were previously caregivers for the orphans, the Bethlen Home for the elderly was established and dedicated. Bethlen offers skilled nursing, personal care, memory care, home health and hospice, in-home companion caregiving services, respite care, independent retirement living, adult day services, and the Graceful Aging Wellness Center.

For many years now, Concordia has worked to become a “Christian consolidator” in the industry, to protect and preserve organizations with Christian roots and to aid in the long-term support of Christian health care ministries. Bethlen’s Christian ministry perfectly aligns with Concordia’s, and the Board of Directors at both organizations are excited for the opportunity to extend their healing mission together. Among many other correlations, both organizations began in response to humanitarian need to care for widows and orphans.

Due to the ongoing reviews of legal and regulatory matters, no additional information is available at this time.



Pittsburgh Lutheran Chorus Resumes Rehearsal for Spring Ministry

If you love to sing and serve seniors, join us as we begin to prepare for our Spring Stations of the Resurrection presentations to our Concordia Campuses. The Pittsburgh Lutheran Chorus just completed the Lessons and Carols service with two concerts for personal care residents at Concordia at Cabot. We were honored to visit the Monroeville, Rebecca, Highpointe and South Hills campuses beginning the first Sunday in Advent.

Rehearsals begin on Thursday, Jan. 19 at 6:30 p.m. at Zion, 237-37th Street in Lawrenceville (15201). The Stations of the Resurrection focus on the various appearances of Jesus during the forty-day period between His resurrection from the dead and His ascension into heaven. “He presented Himself alive to [His disciples] after His suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3 ESV). Unlike the Stations of the Cross, all the Stations of the Resurrection are based on Scripturally recorded incidents contained in the four Gospels and the book of Acts.

