

# ST. JOHN AMELITH NEWSLETTER

## JUNE 2026

Important Dates - see calendar for details

- 6/1 Quilting
- 6/5 Last Day of School K-3
- 6/8 Stewardship Meeting @11am
- 6/15-19 VBS
- 6/16 Salary Review Meeting @ 6pm
- 6/18 Fund Development Meeting @ 6pm
- 6/21 Happy Father's Day
- 6/23 Elders Meeting @ 6pm
- 6/25 Oktoberfest Meeting @ 6pm in the pavillion
- 6/28 Game night @ 6pm
- 6/29 Board of Ed Meeting @ 5:30pm



**ST JOHN AMELITH LUTHERAN SCHOOL**  
Open Enrollment!

Call for a tour anytime morning or evening we are available!

989-686-0176

[www.amelith.org](http://www.amelith.org) 1664 Amelith Rd Bay City, MI 989-686-0176

### Current and Upcoming Fundraising Efforts



- Meat Raffle
- Giving Tree
- Raiseright
- Oktoberfest

If you have an idea, come to the Fund Development Meeting on June 18<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm

Online giving through our Vanco app is available by scanning this QR code



## From The Pastor's Desk

Former professor Rev. Harold Senkbeil and founder of Doxology-The Lutheran Center For Spiritual Care and Council writes, *"By our Lord's own mandate, he has so arranged it in his church that we grow, are fed, nourished, guarded, and protected not out of the weakness and ineptitude of our ministers but rather by the tools Christ has entrusted into their hands. The gospel and the sacraments are not static entities—mere object lessons by which we advertise and promote the kingdom of God. Rather, the gospel and the sacraments throb with vitality. They are filled to the brim with the energy and life of God's own Spirit."* (*The Cure of Souls*, p.30).

Having recently celebrated Pentecost, we know it was not a convoluted free-for-all of the Spirit or a privatized religious outlook. It flowed out from the ascension of Jesus to glory and St. Paul says this included gifts to serve His Church. "...And he (Jesus) gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ..." (Ephesians 4:11-12). While pastors are public ministers of the Word, it does raise other questions of what this ministry means for the benefit of each baptized member. When can or should you call upon pastor? How does the pastor relate to my life apart from Sunday? Is pastoral care more a negative or positive to me?

Here is a list of a few items entrusted to pastors in Christ's Name and for your benefit.

- Fallen ill, hospitalized, or having surgery
- Communion for those distressed at home
- To ask about family/guest for communion
- Comfort of Private Confession/Absolution
- Having a new baby and questions on baptism
- Facing loss of a child in any time of life
- Prayer and council over family strife
- Struggles of marriage or with divorce
- Grief and question over death of a loved one
- Are leaving for college or military service
- Request to share for pastor's daily prayers
- Changes in life with a job, moving, or retirement
- Go over funeral preparations and church service
- The blessing of your home new or old
- Guidance on private and family devotional life
- Support on ethical matters (ex. infertility, end of life, vocational, etc....)
- Facing demonic affliction, Christian persecution, or addictions



The list is not exhausted, but shows pastors are servants of Christ for the benefit of His Church. We are charged and formed to rightly deliver the spirit-filled Word in full. St. Paul declares, "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." (1 Corinthians 4:1-2). Pastors are not C.E.O's, but caretakers for a time. The risen Jesus told Peter, "Feed my lambs" (John 21:15). Again, St. Paul says, "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers..." (Acts 20:28).

*Sola Deo Gloria,*

*Pastor Gauthier*



CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

## A word from President Erik Ankerberg, Ph.D.

Dear CUAA alumni and donors,

Yesterday, during a monthly update for faculty and staff members at Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor, I provided a financial update on our institution. Regrettably, it was difficult news to share. As alumni and cherished donors, it's important you, too, receive this information.

During the past year, I worked with university stakeholders on a new strategic plan. Some of the most important goals of the plan involve looking realistically at the costs of operating our university campuses, demonstrating data-informed fiscal discipline and accountability, and pursuing a strategic model that will ensure our financial stability in the years ahead. As part of that process, we conducted a financial health check of our institution. Based on the analysis we just completed, we must reduce our costs to operate sustainably within our existing revenues.

**The situation is most acute at our Ann Arbor campus.** This may surprise you, since Ann Arbor has enjoyed impressive growth in enrollment over the past decade. Just this fall, we welcomed a record incoming class that helped take overall enrollment to more than 1350 students, the highest it has ever been.

Sadly, as many colleges and universities have discovered in these challenging times, growth alone is sometimes not enough. Although our tuition revenue has increased gradually at Ann Arbor, so too have our costs. The simple truth is this: the Ann Arbor campus faces a structural deficit large enough that it cannot be overcome without a significant change to the strategic model of how we operate. **The situation at our Wisconsin campus is slightly better but still needs attention.**

So, knowing these fiscal realities with the clarity we now possess, the question is, what do we do? Let me say first that as a relatively new president, I know that many of our university stakeholders, including alumni and donors, are still getting to know me, and even more importantly, you are still deciding whether to place your trust in my leadership. Trust will be especially important as we navigate the financial challenges ahead, so I want to make these promises as we chart a path forward:

- We will continue to live our mission with a Christ-centered focus and a deep sense of empathy for each member of our university community.
- Every member of our leadership team and I will speak truthfully throughout this process, and we will act with integrity, sharing our plans as they are finalized.
- We will do what's necessary to ensure our financial position is strong, allowing us to pursue excellence across the university with our resources.

So, in that spirit of honesty and transparency, let me tell you everything I can at this time about the process we will follow in the months ahead.

**We must move quickly to address the ongoing operational deficit at the Ann Arbor campus.** The campus must be reimagined, and we must significantly reduce operations by next fall to missional programs and those programs that we know can generate enough revenue to sustain its operations. It will likely involve both staff reductions and the disposition of property, facilities, and equipment.

We have a little more time to address the ongoing operational deficit at CUW. This will require a thorough analysis of our curricular and non-curricular programming to identify the kinds of efficiencies we will need to rebalance our costs with our projected revenues. This, too, will involve reductions in staff.

**We wish this kind of dramatic action was not necessary. But to secure our future together as an institution, it is.**

I do not have more specific information to share with you today. As I mentioned, we have just completed our financial analysis and are still coming to terms with what it means. I briefed our Board of Regents late last week on these fiscal issues. They asked for a tentative plan to address our ongoing operational deficit by the end of this month. I can share more with you after we meet again with the board to provide those details in early March.

As we embark on this process, I think it's important to remember *why* we decided during the past year of strategic planning to prioritize taking a more realistic, data-informed stance regarding our finances and to hold ourselves accountable for acting on what we learned. Too many colleges and universities are content to scrape by each year, moving from crisis to crisis, existing in unending austerity. That will not be our path. Instead, by creating a new, more sustainable business model for our university, we will unleash our potential to realize the vision and goals of our strategic plan.

- We will position ourselves to better live our mission for our students, the church, and the world.
- We will forge the kind of financial stability we need to create truly transformational student experiences.
- We will ensure that our campus facilities are well maintained, beautiful, and modernized and that we have the resources to invest in our faculty and staff members and the amazing programs they build.

All these good things, our very ability to serve our Lord and the students we are blessed to receive, rests on our first having the strength to create an enduring and sustainable fiscal foundation. Together, this is a challenge I know we can meet.

Grace and Peace,



Erik P. Ankerberg, Ph.D.

President, CUWAA (Concordia University Wisconsin-Ann Arbor)



Brothers and Sisters of the Michigan District:

This week the next steps regarding Concordia have been made public. Concordia Wisconsin is selling the main campus (4090 Geddes Road) to the University of Michigan for \$60 million dollars. Possession of the property will take place July 1. The 10 acres that the Michigan District and Church Extension Fund offices are on are not part of the sale. Concordia holds the lease on this property for approximately another 37 years. The North Campus off from Plymouth Road is also not part of the sale.

There is no firm indication of what exactly the University of Michigan plans to do with the property. There has been push back from the Ann Arbor City Council and now State Legislators about the purchase.

Concordia Wisconsin plans to maintain a presence in Ann Arbor at the North Campus providing health science education. At some point, they hope to reintroduce church work programs. There are also plans for a council or advisory board to be established by them that could include people from the Michigan District to explore the future use of that site.

There is no word about the future of the Chapel of the Holy Trinity. Concordia Wisconsin leaders plan to hold a decommissioning service.

Be assured that through it all our District leadership has advocated for Concordia Ann Arbor with leaders at Wisconsin and St. Louis explaining our point of view, our hopes, and our various suggestions about how to move forward in a way that would keep faith with the long-term interests of Concordia supporters.

Where do we go from here? Many of us disagree vehemently with the direction and actions that have dismantled what was viewed as a vibrant, Gospel-focused University on the brink of financial sustainability. Many are hurt. Many are angry. Many are upset with both Concordia leadership and Synod leadership.

Trust me, none of this has worked out as I had hoped. For that matter, I know that to be true of President Harrison and President Ankerberg.

And people are watching: people around the Synod, people across Michigan, our neighbors here in the Ann Arbor community, and literally my next-door neighbors. What are we to do as the Church, the people of God?

Forgive.

Once something is done, it cannot be undone. Once something is said, it cannot be unsaid. The only way to fix a wrong action or word is to forgive it.

What has happened at Concordia cannot be undone. The many things claimed, asserted, or said cannot be taken back. No one can undo it; forgiveness is the solution.

And it is what we are to do. Jesus' mission focused on forgiveness of what we have done and said. He absorbed our wrong and cleansed us. Jesus' power is exercised in forgiveness. Forgiveness is the restorative power. And in it God is glorified.

It is to the glory of God when his children live lives of forgiveness to others. Forgiveness stems from God's forgiveness to us, not the worthiness of the one to be forgiven. We know full well what Scripture says. *"While we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8). His forgiveness brings healing. We were taught to pray fervently to forgive others: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Paul wrote, *"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you"* (Colossians 3:13). A Church that has trouble being quick to forgive is in trouble at being the Church.

We need healing. We need healing in regard to Concordia Ann Arbor. We need healing in regard to our relationships across the Synod. Forgiveness is the only way. Many have felt and been powerless in this whole situation. The solution to powerlessness between humans is forgiveness. This is the Kingdom's "superpower."

And so as the situation regarding Concordia Ann Arbor comes to what many of us view as a very sad and unfortunate ending, let us take hold of that power and forgive. It changes things. It will change you.

Everything else we leave up to God to work together for good according to his promises. In the meantime, let's devote ourselves to love and good works, serve our local communities vigorously through our congregations, and stay engaged positively in the life of our larger Church body.

And through it all, we fix our...*eyes on Jesus...*

David A. Davis  
District President  
Michigan District, LCMS



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: CTSFW Communications, [communications@ctsfw.edu](mailto:communications@ctsfw.edu)

### **Päivi Räsänen Addresses Fight for Freedom of Speech and Faith**

FORT WAYNE, Ind., May 21, 2026—Dr. Päivi Räsänen, a Lutheran medical doctor and longtime member of the Finnish Parliament, has endured seven years of court proceedings over faith-based public statements that were deemed “hate speech.” On May 16, the day after she received an honorary doctorate from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), for her courageous Christian witness, Räsänen shared her story at the Seminary, emphasizing the importance of standing firm and speaking up, no matter the consequences.

“Dr. Martin Luther handled the issue of consequences of faith aptly,” said Räsänen. “If you believe, you speak. If you speak, you must suffer, for faith, confession, and cross belong together and are part of being a Christian.”



*Dr. Päivi Räsänen with CTSFW faculty member Dr. Samuli Siikavirta, who is also from Finland, after Räsänen received an honorary doctorate May 15.*

Räsänen’s legal troubles began in 2019, when she shared a tweet questioning the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland’s support of a Pride event, and a citizen filed a criminal complaint. More complaints followed, and she soon also came under fire for a church pamphlet she authored in 2004, *Male and Female He Created Them*, which addresses marriage and sexuality.

“In the autumn of 2019, I found myself sitting in a small interrogation room at the police station three times, for a total of thirteen hours. The situation was unreal, like watching myself in a movie,” Räsänen said. “Just a few years before, I was in charge of the police as Minister of the Interior. I visited this very same police station as Minister, and now I was interrogated about my Christian convictions. The Bible lay on the table, and a ponytailed police officer sat behind the desk.”

The interrogation, she said, focused on interpretation of the Bible, and she was prepared with ready answers. “On social media, there was a joke at that time that Päivi Räsänen is once again going to have a Bible study at the police station.” The police asked if she would destroy the booklet, but she refused, stating, “I will stand behind these teachings of the Bible, whatever the consequences.”

In 2021, she was tried in the Helsinki District Court on charges of agitation against a minority group, along with Bishop Juhana Pohjola of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland, who was responsible for publishing the church booklet. The court unanimously acquitted them of all charges in 2022. The prosecutor general appealed to the Helsinki Court of Appeal, which in 2023 dismissed the charges. The case then advanced to the Supreme Court of Finland. On March 26, 2026, the Court found Räsänen and Pohjola guilty of the charge involving the booklet by a 3-2 decision.

“I was expecting the third victory,” said Räsänen. “My goal has been to fight for freedom of speech and faith so that no one else would find themselves in the same situation in Finland. Now, many people must fear for their writings, even decades old.”

While the trials have produced some “dark moments” for Räsänen, she says there have been positive outcomes, too. “I have been so encouraged by the thousands and thousands of messages I have received all over the world in which people have told me how God has, through this case, encouraged them to pray and trust His word. And some of them say that they have even found Christ, including some people with an LGBT background.”

Räsänen is appealing the Supreme Court decision in the European Court of Human Rights and will thus continue the fight for freedom of speech and faith. She encouraged those in the audience to exercise their own right to express their convictions peacefully in the public square.

“The more that Christians keep silent about the teachings of the Bible on the painful issues of our time, the more forceful and complete is the reaction. That is what we have learned in Europe. The early Christians, they didn't renounce their faith in lion's caves. Why should we then do it in the challenges of our times?”

This email was sent by: **Concordia Theological Seminary**  
6600 N Clinton Street Fort Wayne, IN, 46825-4996, USA.

You don't have to be still to pray, to meditate, or to be transformed by God's Word. Prayer and meditation are important spiritual habits that can be enhanced by physical movement, particularly walking.

Humans are created as both *body and spirit*. To care for the one aspect of our being and yet to neglect the other is to misunderstand what it is to be fully human.

"Prayer walking" certainly isn't a mandate of our Lord, it is just one of many faithful ways to care for both body and soul. And yet, it remains a great opportunity to exercise both physical and spiritual muscles.

There are very few rules for prayer walking other than to simply combine a walking route with the simultaneous practice of prayer and meditation. Walking amongst God's created world involves the five senses with prayer and meditation in a beautifully harmonious way. Plus, your physical and emotional well-being both benefit!

So pick a walking route, get on the appropriate outdoor gear, head out for your walk, and **pray a psalm, listen to a devotional podcast, meditate on a passage of Scripture, or download a phone app that does audible Bible readings.** Pray to the rhythm of your walking or recite psalms to the pattern of your breathing (known as "breath prayer"). There are countless ways to do it — the hardest part is simply to begin!

"*Oratio, meditatio, tentatio*" is a Latin phrase that Luther used to describe the pattern of the Christian life. The cycle of prayer (*oratio*), meditation on God's Word (*meditatio*), and temptation and struggle (*tentatio*) is the gait of the Christian's spiritual life. "No one can understand Holy Scripture without practice and temptations," as Luther said. *Oratio, meditatio, tentatio* is the path we all must take if we want to be true students of theology.



## LCMS Podcasts for Meditation

[kfuo.org](http://kfuo.org)



### LITANY

O LORD,

You walk with me  
(2 Cor. 6:16).

You search out my path

and are acquainted with all my ways  
(Psalm 139).

Direct my steps in Your Word

(Psalm 119:133),

test my heart and mind by Your Spirit  
(Psalm 26:2),

and let this time of prayer and meditation be  
acceptable in Your presence

(Psalm 19:14).

AMEN.

(Now make the sign of the cross and go in cheer.)



THE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
MISSOURI SYNOD  
Health Ministry

[lcms.org/health](http://lcms.org/health) | [health@lcms.org](http://health@lcms.org)

ELLEN



# ALONG THE WAY:

## A GUIDE TO PRAYER WALKING

"AND THESE WORDS THAT I  
COMMAND YOU TODAY

SHALL BE ON YOUR HEART. YOU  
SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY

TO YOUR CHILDREN, AND SHALL  
TALK OF THEM WHEN YOU SIT IN

YOUR HOUSE ...

AND WHEN YOU LIE DOWN, AND  
WHEN YOU RISE, YOU SHALL BI

ND THEM AS A SIGN ON YOUR  
HAND, AND THEY SHALL BE AS

FRONTLETS BETWEEN YOUR'E  
YES."

DEUTERONOMY 6:6-8



# PSALM 63

O God, You are my God; earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh faints for You, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon You in the sanctuary, beholding Your power and glory.

Because Your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise You.

So I will bless You as long as I live; in Your name I will lift up my hands.

My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise You with joyful lips, when I remember You upon my bed,

and meditate on You in the watches of the night; for You have been my help,

and in the shadow of Your wings I will sing for joy. My soul clings to You;

Your right hand upholds me.

But those who seek to destroy my life shall go down into the depths of the earth; they shall be given over to the power of the sword; they shall be a portion for jackals.

But the king shall rejoice in God; all who swear by him shall exult, for the mouths of liars will be stopped.

## Additional Psalms:

- Psalms 119
- Psalms 148
- Psalms 71
- Psalms 16
- Psalms 34
- Psalms 136



# JUNE 2026 NEWSLETTER



Chapel Day!

## NEW THINGS FOR 26/27

- Jupiter Ed replaces Fastdirect. Watch for emails as we transition to the new communication system for school.
- First Day of School K-4 is August 25th
- First Day of School PS 3 & 4 is August 31st

ST. John Amelith  
office@amelith.org  
989-686-0176

### MESSAGE FROM MRS. MOLLY

Dear Students and Families,  
Thank you for a wonderful year! I have loved getting to know all of the students and all of you.. Have a great summer! God's Blessings,

Molly



Field Day was so much fun!

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- ✓ Blessing of the backpacks will happen in August
- ✓ Orientation will take place in August. Watch for more info!
- ✓ It's Summer, have fun!



# June Prayer Calendar

"The Unsung Hero" doesn't represent a position or a particular person here at Amelith but is someone that just does what needs to be done. It could be someone who is or isn't on a committee, someone who does whatever is asked or takes it upon themselves to just do it, and probably someone who prefers not to have the recognition. The unsung heroes at Amelith are aplenty, and regardless of recognition, they need our prayers all the same.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>1</b> Quilting	<b>2</b> June Anniversaries	<b>3</b> June Birthdays	<b>4</b> SJA Teachers	<b>5</b> School Principal	<b>6</b> June Altar Guild Servers
<b>7</b> Bible Study	<b>8</b> SJA Teachers	<b>9</b> Shared Time Teachers	<b>10</b> Finance Team	<b>11</b> Church Mice	<b>12</b> Auditorium Committee	<b>13</b> Youth Group
<b>14</b> Salary Review	<b>15</b> Stewardship Committee	<b>16</b> Lawn Mowing	<b>17</b> Amelith Children	<b>18</b> Youth Group Chairperson	<b>19</b> Head Trustee	<b>20</b> Outreach Committee
<b>21</b> Fathers	<b>22</b> Congregational Vice Chairperson	<b>23</b> Head Elder	<b>24</b> Elders	<b>25</b> Pastor	<b>26</b> Treasurer	<b>27</b> Fund Development Team
<b>28</b> Congregational volunteers/officers	<b>29</b> Board of Ed	<b>30</b> Trustees	<b>31</b> Organists			

Every day, let us include the person/position/event mentioned in our prayers. You can pray for them, the job they do, those who receive or in whatever way you are led.