



# OUR MISSION

Creating a Christ-Centered community gathered together...To joyfully worship our God... To grow in faith and knowledge...To love one another...And to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**APRIL WORSHIP SERVICES**  
**THURSDAY, APRIL 1 – 4:00 PM**  
**FRIDAY, APRIL 2 – 4:00 PM**  
**SUNDAY, APRIL 4 – 9:00 AM**  
**SUNDAY, APRIL 11 – 9:00 AM**  
**with Communion**  
**SUNDAY, APRIL 18 – 9:00 AM**  
**SUNDAY, APRIL 25 – 9:00 AM**  
**with Communion**

**Online Services will continue on Facebook and  
YouTube**

## **Pastor's Message**

### **Easter's Surprise Witnesses**

Whereas the right witness can be damaging, a surprise witness can be devastating. This was just as true when Jesus was on trial, as it is in modern trials of today. No wonder the Chief Priests and Pharisees were afraid of Christ's disciples and their witness. What would they say after Christ was out of the picture? Maybe they would steal his body and claim he had risen as he predicted! No wonder they made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and placing a guard on watch. No one would tell *their* community Christ had risen from the dead! But the truth got out. And the case for the prosecution was proven false.

You might say these so-called religious leaders had underestimated the truth. What's more, the last thing they expected were some surprise witnesses to come forward with their testimony. Isn't it interesting what Scripture records concerning the first witnesses of the risen Savior?! It wasn't the disciples. The first ones to visit the empty tomb were women! It was a surprise no one saw coming!

Even so, for some reason the story lacks credibility from the beginning. Who would believe a *woman's* testimony, after all? Consider how women in first-century Jewish society were perceived on the social ladder. Females were not *allowed* to serve as legal witnesses. Their testimony was held with such little regard that they could not even testify in a court of law.

So why would the Holy Spirit make sure this event was included in the Gospels? But we needn't be surprised. Evidently, the Holy Spirit desired to provide some ammunition against today's modern critics. Like their predecessors, a number of today's so-called religious leaders reject the resurrection account. Liberal Bible scholars suggest that Bible history consists largely of stories which were related from one community to another and from one generation to another. In time, these sceptics maintain, the true details of a given incident were lost to a large extent. That the believing community

would have accepted a rumor coming from women witnesses, however, is extremely unlikely! The women would never have been believed. Therefore, such a rumor could never have gotten off the ground . . . unless, of course, the rumor was no rumor!

That's why centuries later, the Church's resurrection account stands. It would have to with discipleship under Christ. Serving as a true disciple, you see, was not reserved for the twelve. And neither is discipleship today the job strictly of the pastor and professional church workers. True, it may have been viewed as scandalous, but Jesus invited women to accompany him on their journeys and serve as his disciples (Luke 8:1-3). We also note how he spoke with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well and brought her to faith (John 4). And, of course, there's Mary who assumed the role of a disciple, sitting at his feet and listening to his Word. Jesus did not consider that strange. In fact, he suggested to Martha that she do the same (Luke 10:38-42). Also recall the words of St. Paul that: *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Galatians 3:28).

Jesus' surprise witnesses have something in common with his disciples of today. They consisted of believers. It is why we know our faith is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:17). Through the risen Christ, rather, we are guaranteed forgiveness and eternal life! It is also why we rejoice in our celebration of Easter. Inasmuch as the women were the Lord's *surprise* witnesses, they were *the right* witnesses. And that's why we take pleasure in confessing the same faith before others –whether we're Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, pastor or parishioner.

Pastor Peter Preus

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## The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Newsletter article – April 2021

Our Father in heaven sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. His atoning sacrifice is the first fruits of all the dead, a pleasing aroma to His Father, so that His perfect life and death count for all who believe in Him. He claimed us as His own children in Holy Baptism. He sustains and strengthens our faith with His Holy Word and His Body and Blood.

As new creatures, who have put on Christ, we bear good fruit. We do the good works prepared for us, which He makes known to us in His Word. By faith then, trusting in the Word of God, we do what he says because He does not lie and always keeps His promises. For "without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

And so the Lord promises: "Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine" (Prov. 3:9-10). How do we honor the Lord with the wealth that God has given us in His generosity? By giving generously to those whom the Lord has called us to love and support your family, your society, and your church. And His promise is that, in so doing, you will never lack.

A common counterpoint is: "But that's from the Old Testament!" Our Lord Jesus Himself gives us similar promises in the New Testament. He says, at the conclusion of the parable of the talents: "For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance" (Matt. 25:29).

And then at the end of the parable of the dishonest manager, he says: "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And

if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money" (Luke 16:10–13).

And in His sermon on the mount, he says: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:19–21).

We have become conditioned against these promises because of their misuse by the peddlers of the prosperity gospel – the guys on TV who say you get rich by putting God in your debt. And thus, we miss out on the fact that God does reward temporal faithfulness in temporal matters with temporal blessings. It's no quid pro quo. It's all from God's grace and His fatherly divine goodness and mercy. But those Bible passages do in fact say what they say! It's not the Old Testament's problem. It's ours. It is almost as if we have become so jaded against this that we think it a virtue to be stingy with our offerings.

But our Father in heaven still loves to bless those who bless others. He loves to give to those who give freely and generously. In fact, he challenges us to challenge Him: "Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need" (Mal. 3:10).

And so, while we don't give so that we would get, we do receive from the Lord in order to give, and He will bless your giving with more receiving. As St. Paul wrote in Rom. 8:32: "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"

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## Holy Week Services

Maundy Thursday is April 1<sup>st</sup> and Good Friday is April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Worship time for both services is 4:00 pm.

## Concordia's Physical Contents

With the fast-approaching Woodbury merger deadline of June 1<sup>st</sup>, we will be downsizing the church's physical contents, such as wall artwork, books, hymnals, and furniture among other things. In an effort to be sensitive to everyone's feelings, we ask you to please call the church office at 651-451-0309 or e-mail the church office at [concordiachurch@qwestoffice.net](mailto:concordiachurch@qwestoffice.net) to let Miriam know if you have donated an item to Concordia in the past and would like it back. Arrangements will then be made for you to pick it up. Certain specific church-related items will be donated to other churches/organizations in need. Otherwise, all other items will be offered to the congregation when they are organized and ready. Items will be displayed in the Narthex in the coming weeks. Please see Sue Ogorek, Kimberly Olson or Cindy Stoltenow with any questions.

## Concordia's Celebration

We will be having a joyful celebration recognizing Concordia's 69 years of God's grace on **Sunday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>**. The worship service will be at **10:30 a.m.** followed by a catered luncheon in our Fellowship room.

Due to the current pandemic situation and state protocols, and in order to provide the caterer with an accurate count, we kindly ask that you sign up on the sheet posted on the table in the Narthex for **either the worship service, the luncheon or both**. You can also call the church office at 651-451-0309 or e-mail the church office at [concordiachurch@qwestoffice.net](mailto:concordiachurch@qwestoffice.net) to RSVP. All RSVPs must be received no later than **Friday, April 30th**.

Do you have a memory you would like to share? We are asking that you write down a favorite memory you have of Concordia and give them to Sue Ogorek or e-mail them to her at [keogorek@comcast.net](mailto:keogorek@comcast.net) by **Friday, April 30th**. A collection of the memories will be included in the bulletin at the last service. Please see Sue Ogorek,

Kimberly Olson or Cindy Stoltenow with any questions.

### **Online Worship Service Still Available**

You can watch our Concordia services and listen to beautiful organ music just by going to our Facebook page at [concordiassp](https://www.facebook.com/concordiassp) and choosing Concordia Lutheran, on the left hand side of the page click on videos and choose the one you want to watch or watch it on YouTube by searching Concordia Lutheran Church SSP, be sure to hit the subscribe button. Thank you to everyone involved in making this available to the congregation!

### **Personal Daily Devotions**

The April - June Portals of Prayer have arrived and are now available. We would like to get them into the hands of all who would like them as soon as possible. As we go forward day by day, Portals of Prayer continues to provide us all with readings, messages, and prayers in our walk with God.

We would like to offer to make that happen in a couple of ways:

1. The office is open for pick-up of Portals of Prayer on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 am – 2:00 pm. They are located in the narthex for convenient pick-up. No need to arrange a pick-up, just come by.
2. Wednesday or Thursday doesn't work for you? If you would like to go for a drive and pick one up at the church, we can meet you in the parking lot and bring one to your window.
3. We can deliver one and drop it off outside your home.

To work out details with you of either option , please contact Mark at:  
651-457-3819 (please leave message if we miss your call) or [cstoltenow@gmail.com](mailto:cstoltenow@gmail.com)  
Mark Stoltenow.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Bruce Avenson  
Paul Helgerson  
Neil Olson  
Kris Westad

### **BOARD CHAIRPERSON**

Board of Community Activities – Sue Ogorek  
Board of Elders – Mark Stoltenow 651-283-9541

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL INSTRUCTORS**

Bruce & Gail Avenson and Cathy Johnston

### **Announcement And Servant Article Deadline**

The deadline for turning in bulletin announcement articles is Wednesday each week by 9 am. The deadline for turning in Servant articles is the third Thursday of each month by 9 am. Email is the preferred method for delivering your article(s). [concordiachurch@qwestoffice.net](mailto:concordiachurch@qwestoffice.net)

| April 2021  |        |         |                            |   |   |          |
|---|--------|---------|----------------------------|---|---|----------|
| SUNDAY  | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY                  | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY  | SATURDAY |
| <b>Concordia Lutheran Church</b><br>255 W. Douglas St.<br>South St. Paul, MN 55075<br>651-451-0309<br><b>Worship Service each Sunday 9:00 am</b><br>Sunday School & Sunday Adult Bible Study 10:15 am<br>Wednesday Adult Bible Study 10:00 am |        |         |                            | <b>Maundy Thursday</b><br>9:00 am Hannah's Quilters<br>4:00 pm Worship<br> | <b>Good Friday</b><br>9:00 am Church Cleaners<br>4:00 pm Worship<br> |          |
| <b>Easter Sunday</b><br>9:00 am Worship<br>  |        |         | 10:00 am Adult Bible Study |   | 9:00 am Church Cleaners   |          |
| 9:00 am Worship w/communion<br>10:15 am Sunday School<br>& Bible Study  |        |         | 10:00 am Adult Bible Study | 9:00 am Hannah's Quilters   | 9:00 am Church Cleaners   |          |
| 9:00 am Worship<br>10:15 am Sunday School<br>& Bible Study  |        |         | 10:00 am Adult Bible Study |   | 9:00 am Church Cleaners   |          |
| 9:00 am Worship w/communion<br>10:15 am Sunday School<br>& Bible Study  |        |         | 10:00 am Adult Bible Study |   | 9:00 am Church Cleaners   |          |



**CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
255 WEST DOUGLAS STREET  
SOUTH SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55075



But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.”

**Matthew 28:5-6**