



# 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.

## June Worship Services

**Tentative reopen worship service date:  
Sunday, June 28 at 9:00 am**

**Please watch the website at [concordia-ssp.org](http://concordia-ssp.org) for further announcements about resuming church services and activities.**

## Pastor's Messages Musing Along the Highway

Well, I am still on that highway. Some are happy. Some are sad. Hopefully, not too many are irritated.

That train of thought came to me because last week was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my graduation from Seminary. My class reunion was held over the internet by way of a Zoom meeting and that took place while I was preparing for the weekly video of our worship service.

Seminary days were not always good days. Because I came from outside the, "system." I always found it hard to relate to fellow pastors. They, like so many student groups, often told stories about what went on at the "fort" and shared a common sense of

humor that often passed me by. They had already accepted one another and their place in the human pecking order so characteristic on social gatherings.

I came from Catholicism and was married and worked diligently at a part time job selling shoes to support my family. Very often my seminary-time friends were from outside Christianity and were often crooks, scoundrels and morally indifferent at best. My seminary friends were few. Most of my graduating classmates were strangers to me. Strangely, they still are.

My life in the parish ministry on the other hand, featured many people who were more blessings. I can name so many of them as I review the past. I will not bother with giving you a list, but the people have made my life and service both an honor and a joy. That is especially true of you all.

My last experience in parish ministry has been at Concordia. You all are dear to me. My time in service among you has been brief, but in that time, I feel a calming of spirits and attitude that will be an asset for your future. The Lord loves each one of you. You have been through a lot in the recent years' past. Troubling times and disappointments have, more often than not, been weathered by faith

in the Lord and a group cohesiveness that has become truly evident to me. You are South St. Paul! I like what I have seen of you and apologize that our time together has been interrupted so rudely by an international pandemic which inhibited my last days of service.

So the highway has an exit here in South St. Paul. I have gotten off for a time and experienced the loving acceptance you freely offered. I will count this as one of my better stops to serve. The highway will continue toward my final departure into the place Jesus has prepared. Before that, I may pass by on occasion and say hello. I am looking forward to that potential.

Peace and Christ be with you,

Pastor W.

### **Let's Meet Pastor Peter Preus**

I graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana in May of 1982. After serving congregations in Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan, I served The Lutheran Church of the Triune God in Brooklyn Center from August of 1999 until August of 2017, when I retired. My first wife, Jean, committed suicide in September of 1994. Since then, I have presented at congregations and conferences on the topic of suicide among Christians. There is Gospel comfort following the suicide of a believer. In May of 1997 I was married to Julie Lams. Julie, in addition to serving as a loving wife and mother, taught fourth grade at St. John's, Corcoran MN, from the fall of 2001 through spring of 2018. She is also now retired. I have six children from my first marriage: Peter II, Elizabeth (Tony Wendland), Sarah (Chris Lee), Philip, Ruth and Miriam. Four of the children live in the area (Peter, Elizabeth, Ruth, and Miriam). Ruth will be married on June 13<sup>th</sup>, and Miriam on November 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Going One-on-One with Pastor**

Do you know what your pastor does? You've heard people joke or you've said it once or twice yourself. "Yeah, Pastor. But everyone knows you work only one day a week!" Most pastors will smile, saying little in response other than the possible

comeback: "Sure. And did you know that *last* Sunday I worked 60 hours?" Other times your pastor may clarify, indicating what responsibilities he undertakes during a given week. Maybe he senses that some parishioners really don't know everything he does. A common perception among some, who see their pastor from a distance, is that, "he's the man in the pulpit! He's the one who shakes a sermon out of his sleeve for Sunday morning and prepares a Bible study or two each week. And that's the extent of it!"

In case you haven't given it any thought, you may regard as extremely beneficial *another* part of the pastor's ministry. Call it "going one-on-one." On the one hand, a pastor is a *public servant*. By the command of Christ, he has been called both to proclaim and to deliver the forgiveness Christ earned for sinners by his suffering and death on the cross. This is done publicly in Christ's behalf and in behalf of the congregation during the service. On the other hand, a pastor has also been called to serve *individuals* and meet with them privately when there is the need.

To be more specific, you may come to me and receive Christ's assurance by God's grace that you are God's child. This is my job, to declare to you in the name of your Savior that you are forgiven of every sin. Regardless of the burden you bear, it is my obligation to speak the Gospel and provide you with relief.

This is extremely comforting since we have been conceived in sin and will therefore remain sinners throughout our lives. What is more, our entire life has been disrupted, not simply our physical and emotional health, but our spiritual health. The result is that we experience not only guilt on account of our sinfulness but also shame. We get old and weak, or suffer depression, or are required to apply for unemployment, and it occurs to us that we can no longer function as we once did. We suffer a stroke, incur cancer or heart disease, and we see the handwriting on the wall. We will never again interact with others in the same manner or to the same extent as we did before. We feel overwhelmed on account of Covid 19, frightened because of the recent rioting and destruction of

personal property. For whatever reason, we are unable to attend church for weeks and months.

It is for this reason that I invite you to see me one-on-one. Whether you are troubled in a particular way, or you wish to receive the Sacrament, I am happy to visit with you and offer the Lord's encouragement and comfort!

I will not promise to work 60 hours a week. As I am retired and have been asked to serve you part-time, my time serving Concordia will be closer to 30 hours. In addition to preparing for Sunday worship and Bible study, some of my time will be spent visiting shut-ins and making hospital calls. **My office hours at church will be from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays.** That having been said, please know that if you would like to meet with me, **I am able and willing to see you any day of the week.** You may call me at the church office during my designated office hours, or you may call me on my cell phone: 612-308-5394.

It has been a great delight meeting a few of you during private Communion visits. In the days ahead, I look forward to meeting the rest of you and getting acquainted.

God's peace,  
Pastor Preus

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## **The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod LCMS Stewardship Ministry**

### **Newsletter Article – June 2020**

The sin of the world is paid for. God's Law has been kept perfectly on our behalf. The prophecies have all been fulfilled. Jesus Christ has finished it all! And that, dear Christians, should fill us with complete confidence in our salvation. Since Jesus has finished all these things in His self-sacrifice, we can be fully certain our sins are forgiven, and we have everlasting life!

St. Paul wrote: "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a

living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." (Rom. 12:1)

We hear the same teaching in 1 Peter. "As you come to him, a living stone, rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:4-5)

It's the very thing Malachi foretold of the Lord, that He would come and purify His priestly people, that they may offer to Him an offering in righteousness. (Mal. 3:3)

So, what does this mean? In view of God's mercies – that is, because Jesus sacrificed Himself to make us pure, giving His entire self into death – Paul said that we are to sacrifice ourselves entirely to God, offering Him our whole lives. For our Savior did not give Himself for us in part. So, we do not give back to Him in part.

We don't offer ourselves to God just on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings, for example. Rather, we give Him our whole selves, all the time. We understand that offering ourselves to God as living sacrifices involves the giving of our time. It requires us to be faithful stewards of the time He has given us. Yes, it means we devote to our Savior all our time. Otherwise we are not sacrificing our whole lives.

You see, God both teaches us, and has graciously qualified us, to present ourselves to Him as living sacrifices – to live as His holy priests, who offer Him acceptable sacrifices through Jesus Christ, all day, every day, in our various callings.

In the passages from Romans and 1 Peter, we hear several examples of Christian self-sacrifice: serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, showing mercy, living peaceably with others, submitting to governing authorities and those over us in the workplace, wives submitting to husbands, husbands

honoring wives, showing compassion, and suffering patiently in doing good.

In all these things, and in all our other everyday activities, we sacrifice ourselves by using our time, not just for our own benefit, but also and especially for the well-being of others. Work time, school time, exercise time, study time, mealtime, chore time, recreation and relaxation time, even sleep time – it's all God's gift to us to use for purposes that please and honor Him.

This challenges us to think about the way we spend our time, how we utilize our talents, and the way we spend our treasures. Whatever it is I'm doing, am I doing it "for the Lord"? (Col. 3:23) Am I presenting God a living sacrifice? Am I conducting myself as a holy priest, whose sacrifice is acceptable to God?

Because our Lord sacrificed Himself wholly for us, we offer ourselves wholly to Him as living sacrifices. This is following Jesus in self-sacrifice. By His saving mercy, yes, our sacrifice is acceptable to God. For the sake of Jesus' finished work, God is pleased with us.

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### Watch A Service Anytime

Now you can watch a Concordia service 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!

### Private Communion By Appointment

Furthermore, we will offer private communion to those capable of traveling to church during the **coming weeks**. This must be by appointment and not in large groups to preserve our distances. You can choose this option by calling the church office starting on Wednesdays the 15<sup>th</sup> of April and make an appointment for the Sunday, Wednesday, or

Thursday of the following week. Sunday appointments start at 10:15 am with the last appointment at 11:45 am. Wednesdays and Thursdays will start at 10:00 am and continue through the noon hour. We will serve communion in individually wrapped containers.

### Church Calendar

Regarding the posted church calendar in this newsletter, it is subject to change as we navigate our new normal. As soon as we have any change in opening to a more public worship service, we will be notifying you by letter to inform you of our plans to keep social distancing during services. At the time of this printing, we have no new information to share with you. Please take advantage of the private communion appointments, watching the services online, and social distance. Idea for today: reach out by making 2-3 phone calls to let people know you are thinking of them.

### Personal Daily Devotions

The July-Sept Portals of Prayer have arrived and are now available. We would like to get them into the hands of all who would like their copy 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. 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.
2. 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

## Letter Of Thanks

Dear Concordia Lutheran Church,

This is a challenging time for all people; especially for our neighbors who are struggling. We are so grateful for the MN FoodShare gifts from your members and your church during this time of increased need for services.

Last month, we saw a 21% increase in food shelf support from the previous months, and we anticipate the same growth going forward. The people who are coming here for food are so appreciative and each day we see fear and hope in their eyes as we face this pandemic together.

Please know you helped us exceed our MN FoodShare goal, as we received over 520,000 pounds/dollars! Because you gave more, we are able to do more. Your donation will help us provide stability to families and seniors through access to healthy food during this difficult time and in the future.

Thank you for being part of the Neighbors family!

With Gratitude,

Beth Skwira – Director of Mission Advancement

### **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)

# June 2020

| SUNDAY   | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY   | THURSDAY                               | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|--------|---------|---|--|--------|----------|
|  | 1      | 2       | 3   | 4                                      | 5      | 6        |
|  |        |         | Private Communion<br>10:00 am-12:45 pm  | Private Communion<br>10:00 am-12:45 pm |        |          |
| Online Worship Service<br>Private Communion<br>10:15 am - 11:45 am   | 8      | 9       | Private Communion<br>10:00 am-12:45 pm  | Private Communion<br>10:00 am-12:45 pm | 12     | 13       |
|  |        |         |   |  |        |          |
| Online Worship Service<br>Private Communion<br>10:15 am - 11:45 am   | 15     | 16      | Private Communion<br>10:00 am-12:45 pm  | Private Communion<br>10:00 am-12:45 pm | 19     | 20       |
|  |        |         |   |  |        |          |
| <b>FATHER'S DAY</b><br>Online Worship Service<br>Private Communion<br>10:15 am - 11:45 am<br> | 22     | 23      |   |  | 26     | 27       |
|  |        |         | Private Communion<br>10:00 am-12:45 pm  | Private Communion<br>10:00 am-12:45 pm |        |          |
|  | 29     | 30      | <b>Concordia Lutheran Church</b><br>255 W. Douglas St<br>South St. Paul, MN 55075<br><br><b>Worship Services available on Facebook and You Tube</b> |  |        |          |
| <b>Tentative reopen</b><br>9:00 am Worship w/ comm   | 28     |         |   |  |        |          |



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



**“ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. “ Matthew 11:29**