



Volume 16

Concordia News

midwinter

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Number 1

A newsletter for members, family, and friends of Concordia Lutheran Church and Concordia Cemetery Association

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Fellow disciples of Jesus Christ,

I pass the following onto you from Bishop Bill Tesch, the intended audience is congregational leaders but in small church like ours most of you lead or have lead in very significant ways. Given the age of our membership, it would be good to err on the side of caution.

The wild card in the whole mix are the variants that spread much faster and in one case also more lethally.

Most importantly thanks for the on going hope and persevering faith that is keeping us together as a congregation/community as we are closing in on a year of social distancing.

If there are any concerns or prayer requests feel free to contact me.

Know that Kathy and I very much miss worshipping together with our beloved ones at Concordia. Sundays mornings used to be the highlight of our week now it typically is one of sadder days of the week. It is dispiriting for me to even type these words. I guess loving one's neighbor as one's self was never meant to be easy...

God bless,
Pastor Bruce



Northwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

January 25, 2021

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Eph 3:20-21)

Dear Congregational Leaders of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod,

During the season of Epiphany, the stories from the Gospel shed light on Jesus, the Son of God, who “is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.” This Epiphany, we also have the “light at the end of the tunnel,” the promise that we may finally emerge from this pandemic. During these past months, the power of Jesus Christ has been at work in you as you shared the Gospel and cared for neighbors. To Christ be the glory! I write to provide guidance for this time when, while it may still be a while, we seem to be closer to the end than we are to the beginning of this crisis. As I have said before, we are guided by “faith, facts and love.” We have faith in Jesus Christ, who promises to “be with us, even until the end of time.” Through centuries of both hardship and prosperity, our experience affirms: Jesus keeps his promises. We make use of the facts provided by public health officials. We base our decisions on love for our neighbor, with an eye toward those among us who are most vulnerable. In light of this grounding, here are some things to consider as you move forward.

1. Don't rush to return to in-person worship too quickly. Continue to monitor local case numbers and the pace of vaccinations. Be mindful of people in your congregation who may still be at greater risk due to age or health conditions of their own or of a family member - including your pastor, deacon or SAM.
2. If/When you do gather, continue to implement all of the safe practices with which we are all familiar – cloth face coverings, physical distancing from people outside your household, hand washing, etc. The day will come when public health officials will remove these recommendations, but until it does, our congregations should lead the way in loving our neighbor by keeping people safe. Be sure to have a “Smart Team,” and update your preparedness plan to reflect emerging circumstances.
3. Don't leave behind your virtual community. Most of you have made use of online media to deliver worship and other ministry services. You are now reaching new people, many of whom had been out of earshot of the Gospel for a long time! The adaptive challenge will be to continue to serve this new audience while also offering a quality in-person experience. Please do not solve this by just adding it to your rostered leader's to-do list! Their schedules were overloaded before the pandemic, and they cannot take on new work without dropping something else. This should be a partnership, with lay leaders stepping forward to offer their gifts of time and talent. It will require new ways of being the church – “new wineskins” to hold the “new wine.” (Mark 2:22-23). We will continue to partner with you through our monthly meetings and by providing other resources and training for exploring possibilities and sharing ideas.
4. Related to my appeal that you do not add more to your rostered minister's to-do list, please recognize the great stress under which your rostered ministers and other staff have worked these many months. In a recent study, the Barna Group, a leading research organization, found that 51% of pastors were *tired*. Two in five say they felt *exhausted* (41%), *sad* (41%) or *panicked* (39%) in the last week. Some have felt a sense of *powerlessness* (17%) or *anger* (16%). You can help by actively partnering with your rostered minister to address the constantly emerging challenges, and by finding ways to offer appreciation and respite. Do not hesitate to reach out to my staff and me for support, ideas, etc. Make it your goal to have your relationship with your pastor, deacon or SAM be stronger than ever before as we emerge from this crisis.

Finally, once again, thank you. Thanks for your devotion, your sacrifices, creative work and faithful ministry. Together we are a people freed by the Gospel to be wholly devoted to Jesus and our neighbor in love.

In Christ,

Pastor Bill Tesch, Bishop



CAMPFIRE WORSHIP and Communion

Sunday, February 14

Sunday, March 7

4:30 p.m.

Weather permitting

Bring your communion kits.

Bread and wine available onsite as well. Call Pastor Bruce if you prefer to have him bring the Eucharist to your home.



If you know of someone in the hospital or in need of a home visit, or if you'd just like to talk through some concerns, contact Pastor Bruce at his **new number: 218-431-0995**.

Upcoming Birthdays



February 15	Nancy Ruud
February 17	Becky Jegtvig
March 1	Peggy Kragnes
March 13	Wescott Tommerdahl
March 20	Karolynn Decker
March 30	David Kragnes

Upcoming Anniversaries



March 22	Jim & Linda Koester
March 23	Ralph & Barb Grover
March 31	David & Peggy Kragnes

Belated Birthday Wishes

December 2	Clinton Babolian
	Gordon Kassenborg
December 16	Paul Decker
December 17	Delores Hagene
December 28	Bev Edenberg
January 6	Germaine Gress
January 11	Polly Hanson
January 30	Irene Olson

Concordia Council News

The Concordia Council met in December and here are a few key items that were discussed:

- ★ It was agreed that weekly worship services would be suspended until our membership had had the opportunity to receive the Covid vaccines.
- ★ It was reported that there were issues with the well which might cost approximately \$3000.
- ★ We are close to meeting our budget. The budget from last year was adopted. Thanks to Raymond's grant writing, Concordia received a \$5000 grant for which we are grateful.
- ★ It was decided that the annual meeting would be postponed until it was safe for the congregation to meet. All council members agreed that they would serve until that time.
- ★ A special thanks to Clinton, who checks on the church on a regular basis (it is he who discovered the well issue and who has kept the church in pristine condition since Holy Week) and who decorated the church for Christmas.



Thanks to all who have contributed to the well project and especially to Clinton for spending many, many hours replacing plumbing that was beginning to fail because of build up of sediment from well repair and age.

Donations

Concordia Cemetery Fund

In Memory of Harold & Lucilla Anderson:

Harold Anderson Family

In Memory of Robert Burke:

Alvina Burke

In Memory of Glenn Kassenborg:

Kirby & Candace Kassenborg

In memory of Gorder Family:

Gloria Tomas

In memory of Walter Engesetter:

Lois Jensen

We Need Your Support

With worship services and other activities suspended for almost a year, your donation to the general fund of any amount can help fill that gap. Donations to the cemetery



fund and newsletter are always greatly appreciated as well.

General Fund:

Make checks out to Concordia Lutheran Church and mail to:

Ray Johnson
7333 70 St N
Glyndon MN 56547

Concordia Newsletter

Make checks out to Concordia News and mail to:

Walter Teigen
915 4th Avenue South
Moorhead MN 56560

Concordia Cemetery Association:

Make checks out to the association and mail to:

Ray Johnson
7333 70 St N
Glyndon MN 56547

COVID JOKE (too soon?)

Sometimes I wonder if all this is happening because I didn't forward that email to 10 friends last year



To all Cemetery Association Members for time volunteered and monetary donations throughout 2020.

Thanks to the following for their special efforts:

- ★ Laura Von Bank for mowing the Concordia Cemetery.
 - ★ Jeff Winter for mowing the Leif Erickson Cemetery.
 - ★ Alene Grover Sladky for maintaining the website.
 - ★ Karolynn Decker & Walter Teigen for printing the Cemetery news in the newsletter.
 - ★ Gordon and Sue Kassenborg for providing mower gas for the Concordia Cemetery.
-

Christmas Thank yous



Thanks to Orpha, Lorna and Kathy for making Christmas cookies and Lorna flatbrod and added a bag of peanuts, candy, an apple and a cutie orange for everyone.

Thanks to all who donated hats, mittens and gifts for the shelter at Christmas. Thanks also to the Thrivent Action Team for donations to make this happen!

Thanks to Clinton and Germaine for decorating the church. Just knowing Christmas was alive and well at Concordia made the season bright!

Thank you to Pastor Bruce and Kathy for faithfully serving our church community each month with Communion visits!

2020 Clay County Farm Family of the Year – KOESTER FARMS



We're a little late in sending out our congratulations, but Jim and Linda Koester and their son Kory were honored by the University of Minnesota as their 2020 Clay County Farm Family of the Year. Because of COVID, there was no ceremony to honor the 87 Minnesota families so recognized (one for each of Minnesota's 87 counties). Here's the story (and photo above) from Nancy Edmonds Hanson at <https://www.thefmextra.com/deep-roots/>

Jim Koester was barely 4 years old when his father, Kenneth John – who had been a tenant farmer – put together the funds to purchase a quarter of Clay County land to establish his own farm. The year was 1947. The location: just west of the Buffalo River, where his wife's pioneer Thortvedt clan had become one of Clay County's very first settlers. Jim, who shares his father's first name but neighbors know as "Jimmy," has spent his entire life on that land. It's where he and his wife Linda raised their two sons. They welcomed the younger, Kory, into

the family operation nearly two decades ago. And now, 73 years after those first fields planted the seed of Koester Farms, the three Koesters have been named Clay County's Farm Family of the Year.

Walking across their neat-as-a-pin farmstead just north of Highway 10 on County 11, Jim and Kory note that the annual honor came as a complete surprise to them. "Linda got a call, and we filled out some paperwork," Jim recounts. "We were in the middle of spring planting when we got the call."

In the 30-plus years that the University of Minnesota Extension Service has awarded the title, 2020 stands out as an anomaly. There was no Minnesota Farmfest in August to honor 87 county winners in this pandemic year. Instead, their plaque arrived in the mail one day – prized just the same despite the lack of fanfare.

Though reduced to a virtual event by the pandemic, the award marks a high point in the family's long Clay County story. Today Jim and

Kory farm about 1,400 acres, half owned and half leased from neighboring farmers. The population of multi-generation farming families whom Jim grew up with is being thinned by retirements and a younger generation that's moved on to other pursuits. Yet the Koesters are looking forward to many more years ahead.

"Do I miss the old days? No," Jim says firmly. "The only good thing was that everybody had their gardens and their cows, pigs and chickens. You didn't need to go to town to shop. It was hard work, but we were all self-sufficient. Now, without a bumper crop, it seems like you can't survive."

The Koester operation has evolved dramatically over the years. "My father used to have potatoes, along with soybeans and wheat," Jim reports. "A few years after he died in 1976, I got out of potatoes and into sugar beets." That era ended 20 years ago – "it was just getting too hard to find help." He notes that he moved out of beets only a year or two before Roundup-ready varieties were introduced, reducing the necessary labor considerably.

He moved on to dry edible beans. But making the three-hour round trip to Casselton to sell his pintos and navies proved to be a problem, along with the issues surrounding grading the beans.

He and Kory, who joined him after graduating from college, decided to raise corn in 2012. "We always had some, but the prices were going up with the ethanol markets," Kory points out. "There were better varieties available with more yield potential." Rising soybean prices, too, have drawn them into raising food-grade beans. Then prices tanked. "You can never tell what's going to happen next," he observes wryly.

And that's just as true about the weather. In 2019, heavy precipitation dogged them. "We finished our food beans Nov. 8 and the corn Nov. 23.

We couldn't get the fields worked like we should," he points out. While that doubled the work for farmers this spring, the year has brought a "decent harvest." "We had two fields that averaged more than 200 bushels."

Jim says he never wanted to be anything but a farmer. "I hated school," he says with a laugh. "I always knew I'd be a farmer, and I couldn't see how farmers needed to know any of that."

Kory, on the other hand, had different thoughts. "It was the last thing I wanted to do. I wanted to play baseball or do something else that was sports-related." After graduating from Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton High School in 1999, he attended Concordia for a year. He planned to move to Florida, where sports-related opportunities flourished. "Then Dad got prostate cancer," he recounts. "I helped out more and more, and ended up going to Aker's Business College in Fargo for business management with an emphasis on sales and marketing." Living at home, he also raised 80 acres of edible beans.

"Dad was getting up in age," he reminisces. "He and Mom built a new house here, and he was thinking of retiring. I figured that I'd have one chance to carry it on. If I didn't give it a shot, I might regret it later." So he did. Today he lives in his parents' original house with his dog Satchel and shares the work with his dad.

Jim is still deeply involved in their rural community. He has served more than 50 years as the treasurer of the Moland Township board as well as Concordia Lutheran Church four miles to the north of their farm. "I was baptized in the church. I've been there since Day One," he points out.

As for retirement, that thought seems to have fled from Jim's mind. "It's gotten so easy with the new equipment and all," he says. "What's not to like? If I weren't farming, I'd go nuts."



CONGRATULATIONS for the Koesters' well deserved recognition as Clay County's 2020 Farm Family of the Year!

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Because of COVID-19, this issue of Concordia News is only being distributed digitally. Regular mail delivery will resume after this crisis has passed.



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Concordia News

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**To submit articles, recipes, announcements,
etc.**

Email: news@concordianews.org

Mail: Alene Sladky
6938 State Highway 200 NW
Laporte, Minnesota 56461

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