



THE PITTSBURGH LUTHERAN

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PALM DEVOTION

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

"Endings and Beginnings"

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. St. Luke 2:25-26



February is known for being short, dark, and cold. It is the depths of Winter and a month best simply endured in the environs of Pittsburgh. Just the mention of the month's name evokes images of slush, freezing rain, and dinner after an early sunset. The world turns its attention to a large rodent from Punxsutawney with light-hearted fun and the superstitious hope that Winter will end early.

But the Church celebrates February differently. The second day of the month, having nothing to do with a creature named Phil, is rather, the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord and the Purification of Mary. This commemorates the Holy Family bringing the Blessed Virgin and her Son to the Temple in Jerusalem both for her ritual purification after childbirth and His presentation as a son of Israel. For the Church, this marks the end of the forty-day cycle of Christmas. Any decorations that have remained since Christmas (our mission church in Hazelwood remains fully decked until this day) are removed after this Feast Day. The church is stripped of its festive Christmas decorations in preparation for the more penitential season to come. It was on this day that the elderly Saint Simeon, who had waited his entire life to see the Christ, not only saw Him, but took Him in his arms and gave thanks, knowing that his time in this world was ending with the joy and privilege of holding Him who had and would continue to hold Simeon in His bosom.

The Feast of the Presentation is also called Candlemas because on this day, the Church blesses the candles that will be used to light the church and the homes of Christian families for the rest of the year. In the cold darkness of February, the Church confesses with Simeon that Jesus is *"a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel."* If a single candle can dispel the darkness, then the Church knows and proclaims that the light of Christ will cast away the darkness of sin and death.

Christmas is behind us, its cycle has ended. Before us lies the Lenten road to Jerusalem, an analog of our lives lived under the cross. But the eyes of faith are focused on the new light of Christ that shines forth from Easter and enlightens the world. Let us pause in February with old Simeon and behold the new life that Christ brings to us for eternity.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

February

2- Groundhog's Day

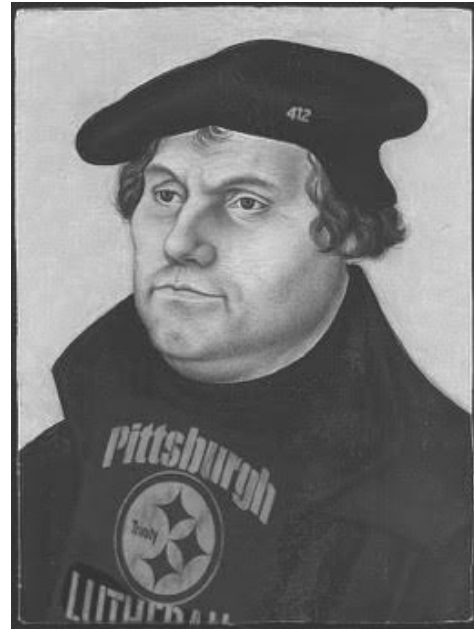
14- Valentine's Day

21- President's Day

March

2- Ash Wednesday

13- Daylight Savings



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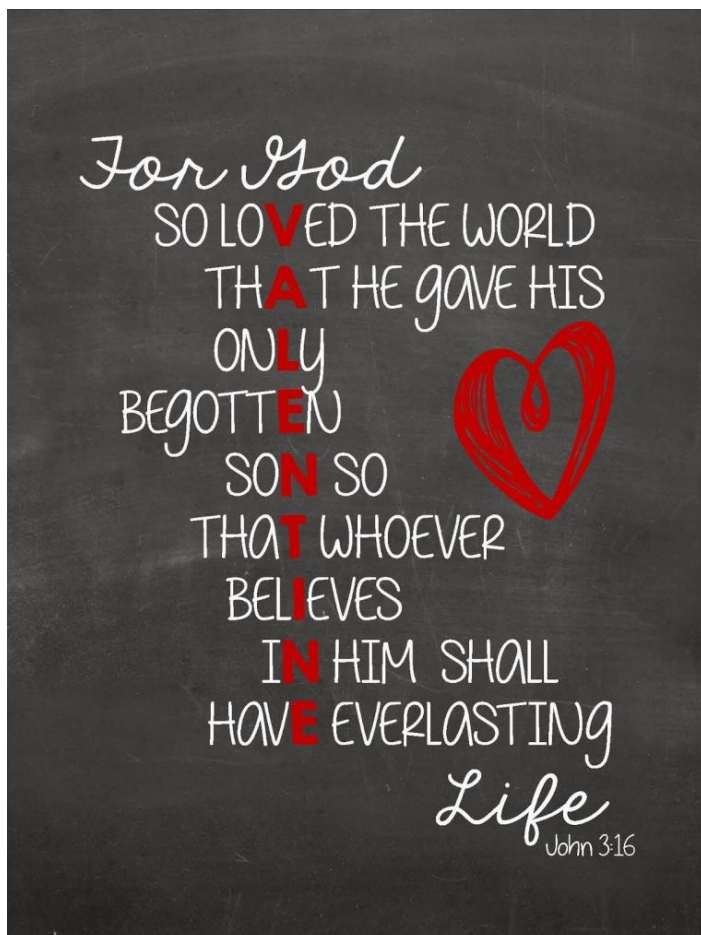
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CAMPUS MINISTRY

SRU CAMPUS MINISTRY

by Augusta R. Mennell, Campus Ministry Director

Campus Ministry Strategies

Sometimes campus ministry focuses on attracting entire groups, but other times we may target individuals. All Saints thought going to the shooting range would be a way to bring Jon out and we were right. Jon loves guns and welcomes time with people his own age. We felt that he would return to worship after spending time with students from Westminster College, Grove City College and Slippery Rock University.

When Jon (not his real name) came to worship the following Sunday we thought he would attend church regularly. When he did not return in the succeeding weeks, we wondered why. We sent photos of him with his girl, called to tell him the time of Sunday services had been changed to 1:00 p.m., and let him know we cared about him. At the range he had told us that he had to work every day all day. We had assured him we'd pray about his demanding schedule.



But Jon didn't reply to phone calls. Believing that we really had bonded with him at the shooting range, I called one more time. I wanted to apologize for anything that might have offended him. This time he answered the phone. He was glad to hear from us. He said he'd never be upset concerning our time together. He then described what had happened.

Jon explained that a family member had gotten very sick and needed someone to run the family business for him until he could recover. This is exactly what Jon has been doing. He is not indifferent to his experience with All Saints at the range, but has been consumed with his workload. He added that he has been praying, sharing his faith with peers, and reading the Bible.

We are glad we had the time at the shooting range. It made a difference to everyone, but especially to Jon. He is going to be at worship. He knows he can always talk with Rev. Jacob Deal. He knows that he wants to be in Christian fellowship.

Was it worth the effort to help a young man return to church? Because we believe it was, All Saints campus ministry will continue to sponsor monthly Korean meals. We also look forward to kayaking and/or another time to go to the range. And this time we will feature shooting competitions between the men and the women to create even more interest.

Will it be worth the effort to reach out for perhaps just one student? Yes it will, because we remember Kenzaburo from Japan when he first came to a student meal. He was just one person, but he asked a huge question. He asked if someone would teach him the Bible. We did, and he became a baptized Christian. It is worth the effort, even for just one person.

Mileposters News

The Christmas in the Dark? 2021 campaign to raise support for LCMS ministry in Puerto Rico concluded after 3,100 miles by twenty riders, and appeal letters were mailed out. Contributions will help to fulfil the commitment by LCMS Disaster Response to supply \$1.3 million in aid to the island by 2022.

November 19 was the thirteenth community early Thanksgiving dinner on Troy Hill. It has been held every year since 2008 except for 2020, when it was canceled because of the pandemic.

In 2008, Mileposters with their families (mostly former St. Matthew people) outnumbered everyone else and have done so other years as well. This year there were twenty-eight total--12 Mileposters with families (except for two, all unchurched) and sixteen others. The first picture is of the larger family--the mom and the girl are riders. The second is of the dad (his first time to come) of the other family, and his boy; the boy is a rider, as is his sister, and their mom is a captain.

While the pandemic certainly created problems for the Mileposters in 2020, and continuing throughout 2021, there is now a core group of vaccinated kids who will be able to enjoy indoor activities together during the winter. Movies and games, particularly chess, have been popular in the past; the group is looking forward to the first use of the big-screen TV which was donated late last year. There is also the possibility of snow hikes on pedestrian-only branch trails off the Youghiogheny River Trail at Dead Man's Hollow, Milepost 18; and the Cedar Creek Gorge, Milepost 36; both hikes have been done in the past.



Houses of Worship By Shirley Freyer

John Huss Evangelical Lutheran Church

1539 Kenneth Avenue at McCandless,
Arnold, PA 15068
724/334-2272
Rev. Jerome Panzigrau, Pastor

On the Festival of St. Michael and All Angels, Sept. 25, 2016, John Huss Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrated 100 years of “proclaiming the Word of God to the world and the community.” One of only two known churches in the United States named for John Huss, the 15th century Slovak reformer and martyr, this congregation began with 53 families who belonged to the Slovak Lutheran Church of St. John the Evangelist across the river in Tarentum.

The group worshipped once a month at St. Paul’s Church, a German Lutheran church in New Kensington until 1919 when the present church building was dedicated for a cost of \$9,816.03 and the “Slovak School” was founded.

It wasn’t until 1926 that they installed the first resident pastor, Rev. Paul Faska and purchased a parsonage. Until then, visiting pastors from Johnstown, Charleroi, Irwin, and Allentown directed worship in the Slovak language.

Another milestone occurred in October of 1941 when Rev. John Kurcharik introduced services in English as well as a young people’s society, Sunday School and Bible classes. The Ladies Aid Society purchased a pipe organ a year later. Membership growth caused the need for expansion and the property adjoining the church was bought to house Sunday school and meeting rooms.

The longest tenured pastor serving John Huss was called in 1951. Rev. Emil Lavcek served the congregation until his retirement 33 years later. Known throughout the district, Rev. Lavcek served as chairman for the Concordia Lutheran Ministries Board for several terms. It was during the late 1950s that membership swelled to about 400 members. A total renovation of the church property occurred in 1957 at the cost of \$27,476.60 and a new parsonage in New Kensington was acquired to accommodate Rev. Lavcek, his wife, Ilan and their three daughters, Rebecca, Ruth, and Lydia.

While no longer members, those three daughters recall the impact on their lives of this “unique and blessed church with its Slovak traditions and amazingly kind members.” In a letter of congratulations for the 100th anniversary, they wrote, “The foundation of faith that we received at John Huss has blessed us in many ways and has provided us with so very many good memories. “We will never forget vacation bible school, picnics at Memorial Park, children’s Christmas programs with the excitement of a box of chocolate candy at the end! Even though we did not understand Slovak, our memories of Good Friday Paschia service proved that music can truly inspire emotions to actually feel the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins and the gift of salvation He has given us. The delicious Slovak pastries were a memorable and pleasant treat as well! “Most of all, we remember the privilege of our dad, Rev. Emil Lavcek, serving this unique congregation for so many years; in this church we were baptized, received Christian education, were married, and had our children baptized.”



Several current congregants reminisce with great fondness his ministry and the finale of Slovak services with the exception of Svaté Pašie (Slovak Good Friday) which brought more attendance than all of the Easter season according to present pastor, Rev. Jerome Panzigrau.

One of them is lifelong member Larry Dananay. "I was taken to church every Sunday for as long as I can remember, probably from the time I was born," he said. "It's just what you do on Sunday." Four generations of Dananays have belonged to John Huss. "We did not miss church. Eight inches of snow, my father would jack the car up and put the chains on. As long as the church was open, I was there." It was only for less than a year following his graduation from Penn State University in engineering, that he moved to California and Pastor Lavcek helped him find a church there. However, Larry returned home and stepped in and took his father's place. He has served in every office and committee, he said. As current treasurer, Larry began his church career path as an usher when he was in confirmation classes. When his son and daughter were young, he taught Sunday School. Now, retired for four years from heavy highway construction, he and his wife moved to Butler but still continues his active membership even though it is now a 50-minute drive. Larry feels blessed to have Pastor Panzigrau shepherd the small flock of worshippers. "He fits us perfectly," Larry acknowledged.

Pastor Panzigrau's journey to Arnold, PA is a unique story in itself. Born in Wisconsin of parents who met during WWII, they moved to Louisiana, the home of his mother. He graduated with a degree in electrical engineering from Louisiana Tech. *(Pastor was a student there at the same time as former Steelers quarterback Terry Bradshaw was playing college football.)* He entered the Navy and won a scholarship to MIT where he earned a masters in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering. It was at that time he met Melanie Ludwig, a teacher who was in the same young professionals' group at an LCMS congregation. In 1992, having served 22 years in the military, he was eligible for retirement as a commander. He had traveled to duty stations in Greece, Boston, Annapolis, Philadelphia, and Japan. "I had always been involved in church work, singing in the choir and serving in various offices and felt called to the ministry," Pastor said. "We were used to larger cities and were home-schooling our son Tim," he continued. "Concordia Seminary in St. Louis seemed to be our best option." His first call was to John Huss in 2000 and he claimed, "God has kept us here." According to his wife and son, the stories of his experiences in the Navy provide food for thought in his sermons! In 2007, he was instrumental in establishing a renewed dual-parish relationship with St. John's in Brackenridge enabling that congregation to remain open until 2015.



"There are some of Slovak heritage who grew up in the church and even after they became adults and moved away, always consider John Huss their home church," Pastor notes. "Just this past month we received a letter and donation from an elderly man who lives in Apollo expressing his many great memories of the congregation." Ninety-four-year-old Gerry Petor is one of its oldest members. She began coming to John Huss in 1949 with her husband John whose parents Andrew and Anna were charter members. In her testimonial, read by one of her three children at the centennial anniversary, Gerry proclaimed the effect this church has had on her life. "I went to Ladies Aid one time and all the ladies were happily talking about their children so I waited until I would have a baby to actually join. It wasn't a long wait."



The Senior Ladies Aid Society had been established in 1926. Both the Senior Ladies Aid and the Junior Ladies Aid, organized in 1946 existed side-by-side until 1965 when they merged. Gerry's daughter, Mimi Wielobob claims the Ladies Aid kept things going. Now living in North Huntingdon, she was among the first to be baptized by Rev. Lavcek. She recalls corn roasts and rummage sales as well as crafts for VBS, making quilts for missions in Africa and assembling health and school kits, and the parties with the ladies of sister congregations, St. Paul's in New Kensington, and St. John's in Brackenridge. But the most popular of the long-lasting projects are the noodle-making and bake sales. Those who attend the annual Oktoberfest at Concordia Haven in Cabot are familiar with the famous noodles and delicious ethnic pastries. Last year, the Ladies Aid Society celebrated a 75th Anniversary continuing their work caring for the needs of the altar and sponsoring two other fundraisers – Palm Sunday Bake Sale and Christmas Cookie Plate Sale.

Ray Parobek, age 83 of Lower Burrell has been going to the Arnold church all of his life. So did his parents and grandparents. "It's the people and my religious beliefs that keep me coming," he said. He and his wife, Susan who joined when they got married, were active members until COVID changed their daily life. Now, he goes up to the family farm at Crooked Creek almost daily and is blessed that Pastor comes to his home to administer Holy Communion. His daughter, Patricia keeps him up to date as she attends services regularly. While the pandemic stopped services for a brief period of time, and some older members left to shelter in place, Pastor Panzigrau began taping a sermon each Sunday and with the help of his son, uploaded it to Youtube.

In addition to assisting with the technical duties at church, Tim Panzigrau, a civil engineer with PENNDOT, holds the office of church secretary and historian. He and his wife Elizabeth are parents of the youngest members of John Huss - Amelia age 2 ½ and one-year old Laurie. "As with any of these small congregations, sheer will and determination of its members helps to keep the doors open at John Huss," he believes. "We have always done a good job of caring for the people and for each other," he said.

President John Logsdon agreed that "It's a strong family-committed church." He joined John Huss during Rev. Robert Holsten's (*pastor at St. Pauls' in Closter, NJ since 1990*) pastorship and accepted leadership roles under the eight-year ministry of Rev. Doug Spittel (*pastor at First Trinity in Oakland since 1998*). "What drew me was the friendliness," he said. Even during this time of social distancing, people stay and talk to find out how people are doing." A native of the North Versailles/McKeesport area, John graduated from Slippery Rock as a special education teacher and is retired after 36 years. He and his wife, Cindy have three married children and seven grandchildren. Cindy, a lifelong member of John Huss is a psychiatric nurse and the church organist.

This year of 2022 John Huss will mark its 106th Anniversary. Its 30th Anniversary booklet still provides sage advice - "The Bishop and Shepherd of our souls was always with us, guiding and controlling all things. May He, the Lord and Head of His Church keep us and our children in His grace unto our end."

"And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." – Psalm 90:17

REDEEMER LUTHERAN SCHOOL *Oakmont / Penn Hills*

RLS has always been thankful for opportunities to serve the Lord during the holiday season, even despite any challenges that may come. 2021 has brought its share of difficulties, but the share of blessings has been even greater!

After a year off in 2020, Redeemer prek-6th students were able to once again worship Jesus through the sharing of Christmas carols at Oakmont's Hometown Christmas celebration on November 20. It's always been a wonderful privilege to participate in Oakmont's holiday festivities, and we were glad to return to this tradition and spread the news of the Gospel through song.



The entire Redeemer student body participated in a fundraiser and serve-a-thon from November 20 to December 17, encouraging students to seek out ways to serve the Lord in their families and communities. The classes with the highest participation rates will be awarded with special classroom parties. Raised funds will go toward improvements for the classrooms. Thank you to the Redeemer church family for supporting students in this fundraiser!



Our high school students had the opportunity to minister to residents at Highpointe through Christmas caroling just before Christmas break. It is always a blessing to share the joy of Christmas at one of the Concordia facilities!

The junior and high school National Honor Society students sponsored a Toys for Tots drive at Redeemer for the month of December, bringing in nearly 900 toys to share with children and families around the Pittsburgh area. Many church and school families supported this cause; NHS is grateful for everyone's participation.

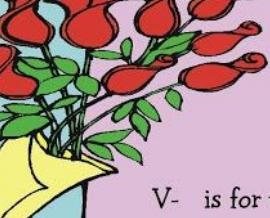
Finally, RLS presented a walk-through Live Nativity on Saturday, December 11. Faculty, staff, and students from all grades portrayed different scenes from the life of Jesus in this special event that was offered at no cost to those that attended. It was a wonderful opportunity to share the beautiful truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ with our community. Heartfelt thanks to the hard work of all involved; their selfless and diligent labors made it possible to offer this ministry to those in our area.

Throughout all of the unexpected twists and turns of this calendar year, we at RLS have been thankful to the Lord Jesus for every chance to serve Him and share His Word. We look with joyful anticipation to the path He has laid for us in the New Year.



I hope that you all had a wonderful Christmas. The Preschool finished out the year with a ban. Christmas parties, gift exchanges, three Christmas programs and of course Chapel lessons on the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As we look to the new year, we will continue to focus of the life of Jesus as a boy, and then as a man, the man who was crucified, died and rose to save us from our sins. We will also start our registration process for the 2022/2023 school year. We currently have 12 classes this year serving ages 2-5, and will offer the same 12 classes for the next school year, but with some exciting new “twists”. More details to follow ... stay tuned!



V- is for the victory in Jesus.
A- is for amazing grace how sweet the sound.
L- is for His love that lifted me.
and E - is for eternal life, when found.
N- is nothing but the blood of Jesus.
T- is for thanksgiving praise we give.
I - is for, Jesus IS the answer
N- Is for - We need His love to live.
and E- is - The love, He ever gives.

Susan Nikitenko December 27th, 2012



CHRIST LUTHERAN

Forest Hills

Christ Lutheran's Women's Service Guild packed cookies for shut ins and for the Sunshine Kitchen to celebrate Christmas. Most of the cookies were homemade. Thanks to members and friends, the church and the fellowship hall were beautifully decorated for the season.



GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN

South Hills

Good Shepherd collected more than two hundred place settings of dishes and flatware over the years, but it has been a long time since they have been used for a church event. In early January, a group of women gathered to pack the collection, including many serving dishes, for donation to one of our mission partners, Light of Life Ministries. Our hearts are full knowing that items we used for many wonderful times of fellowship over the years will soon be used to serve meals elsewhere in the Pittsburgh area, whether at the Mission or in homes served by Light of Life.



MT. CALVARY LUTHERAN

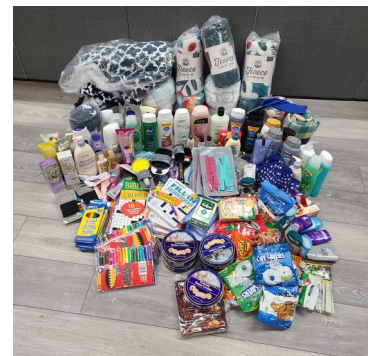
West View

The headline news from Mt. Calvary is that PALM approached Pastor Scott Kuntz and asked him to take on the additional duties of serving the congregation at St. Mark's Church in Steubenville, Ohio. Following the Sunday morning services at Mt. Calvary, he travels to St. Mark's and oversees the 1:00 p.m. service. Will serving two congregations be a challenge for Pastor Kuntz? He assured us it won't be, as he once handled four churches early in his career in North Dakota!

In other news, the weeks leading up to the holidays were quite busy at the church. As part of the Christmas Blessings projects, the Outreach Group collected toys for the North Hills Community Outreach toy drive; monetary donations for the NHCO utility fund; and gifts for residents of Kane Community Living Center.

All gifts were due December 5, the day of the annual church Christmas party, and as usual, the response was overwhelming. The party itself brought out a large crowd to enjoy a catered lunch, games, and a grab bag.

The Christmas program, held during the December 26 church service and directed by organist/music director Sharon Pritchard, was titled "Symbols of Salvation." The symbols included the Tree, the Manger, the Angels, and the Star, and the story was told in songs by the congregation and voice choir, narration, and Scripture readings. Upon leaving the service, each attendee received a take-home gift bag that contained reminders of the symbols in the program.



GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN

Penn Hills

On November 27, the eve of the first Sunday in Advent, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Penn Hills, rededicated their steeple to the glory of God. In recent years, it was discovered that the steeple held within it lights, lights that were designed to cause the steeple to shine. If the steeple ever functioned this way, it did not for long. Rain and snow had caused significant leaks inside, and over time the steeple design was adjusted and the lights no longer used.

The Steeple, along with a newer organ, became our 90th anniversary project, and in terms of the steeple itself, the 60th anniversary. After much work, professional and volunteer, and after various funding sources to get the work done, including a gracious \$3,000 grant given to us by Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries, the steeple was rededicated on November 27, 2021 to the glory of God. The Lights within the steeple will reflect the seasons of the Church year.

The pictures show the color of violet that signals the season of Advent. To God be the glory.



Concordia's Live Nativity

Concordia at Cabot campus welcomed community members, friends and families on Sunday, Dec. 12 to enjoy the eighth annual Concordia Live Nativity! Home-made luminaries shined bright and guided our guests to baby Jesus's humble beginning. The beautiful and eye-catching display of lights were made possible with the help of the St. Luke Lutheran Church Youth Group, Rev. Brian Bocian and Jason, Tammy, and Aleah Young. Three outdoor performances portrayed the birth of Jesus and between each show our guests were treated to Christmas cookies, hot chocolate and singing thanks to St. Luke Lutheran School 3rd and 4th graders (pictured bottom left) and the Tri-Parish Holiday Choir, composed of members from Bethel, St. John's, and Zion, directed by Rev. Donn Woolweber, pastor of Bethel and Zion and accompanied by Ruth Miller, organist at Zion (pictured bottom right).



Pictured above are Mary played by Robin Peters, who works in the Human Resources Department at Cabot and Chaplain Adam Salinas, newest clergy at Concordia who took on the role of Joseph.



CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Do you have a desire to bring compassion and support into the lives of those who need it most? If so, Concordia Hospice of Washington invites you to become a hospice volunteer. Whether you gift five hours a month assisting with clerical work or 10 hours a week providing companionship, every interest and special talent can be used when you are a hospice volunteer.

Because hospice patients have diverse needs, Concordia Hospice of Washington welcomes individuals with varied skills. Our volunteers have been gardeners, hairstylists, artists, musicians, carpenters, quilters, housekeepers, and writers. Visit www.ConcordiaHW.org to learn more about our hospice volunteer program or call Mena Louies at 724-250-4500.






Concordia
Lutheran Ministries

We Are Hiring

For the following positions:

- **Food Service Aides**
- **Cook**
- **Housekeeping / Laundry**
- **Registered Nurses**
- **Licensed Practical Nurses**
- **Nurse Aides**
- **Certified Nurse Aides**
- **Payroll Specialist**
- **Activities Director**
- **Child Care**
- **Event Coordinator**



Apply online at www.concordiacareers.org or email us with your resume and any questions at Jobs@Concordialm.org