

DECEMBER, 2023

THE MESSENGER

*Claimed by Christ, Gathered for Worship,
Sent to Serve*



The weary world rejoices!

As the calendar year closes out, perhaps the cumulative stress, angst, grief, and despair has crescendoed to an all-time high, not allowing you to enter into the hopeful waiting of Advent or the joyous reception of the birth of Jesus. This is understandable. It often seems like we are putting out so many fires and keeping other ones burning that by the time we sit down for Christmas dinner and exchange gifts, we are all burned out and unable to celebrate.

As we prepare during Advent and experience the Incarnation at Christmas, I certainly don't want to heap one more thing on your plate. You've got enough to do. Instead, I will gently encourage you to give yourself grace during this season and let yourself be. Find one way, even a small way, to defy the weariness with something that fills you with joy. That could mean giving up an activity or responsibility for just one day to find much needed rest. That could look like making space for exercise or a hobby that you find life-giving. That could mean delegating Christmas duties you find draining and opting for those you find more joyous. Find a way that you can just be. After all, Christmas, the Incarnation, is all about God coming to be with us and one of us.

The weary world rejoices that this One has come to heal us, to give us rest, and to share in all that burdens us. May this Christmas gift you with whatever healing, hope, and rest you need, that you might greet this holy time with joy.

Pastor Jeff

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Worship Schedule

Sunday, December 3 First Sunday of Advent

First Lesson: Isaiah 64:1-9
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Holy Gospel: Mark 13:24-37

Sunday, December 10 Second Sunday of Advent

First Lesson: Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
Second Lesson: 2 Peter 3:8-15a
Holy Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

Sunday, December 17 Third Sunday of Advent

First Lesson: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Psalm 126
Second Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
Holy Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

Sunday, December 24 Fourth Sunday of Advent

First Lesson: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:46b-55
Second Lesson: Romans 16:25-27
Holy Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

Sunday, December 24 Nativity of Our Lord Christmas Eve

First Lesson: Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Second Lesson: Titus 2:11-14
Holy Gospel: Luke 2:1-20

Sunday, December 31 First Sunday of Christmas

First Lesson: Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Psalm 148
Second Lesson: Galatians 4:4-7
Holy Gospel: Luke 2:22-40



Joyful Voices Rehearsals:
Tuesdays in December @ 6:15 p.m.



Worship Matters:
Advent: A Time of Waiting

On December 2, we begin a new “church year” or “liturgical year,” a cycle of festivals and seasons developed over centuries that we share with Christians around the world. This annual passage of the liturgical year – the texts, changing colors, songs, symbols – is one of the ways that we learn, remember, and celebrate our faith.

Advent is the first season of the year, and it includes the four Sundays before Christmas. In the midst of the ‘so much to do’ of our December living, Advent invites to pause and reflect, to wonder and hope, and to savor the beauty of God’s plan of salvation. Our scripture readings, prayers, and songs in this season prepare us spiritually for Christmas (the Lord’s first coming at Bethlehem) and for his eventual second coming, while we give thanks for his present and continual coming to us through Word and Sacrament.

Our worship and worship environment change to reflect the spirit of this season. The color for the season is blue, the color of hope. The absence of decorative elements in our worship space reminds us of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “A shoot will spring forth from the stump of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots.” The sole decorative item, except for the Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete – “Rejoice”), will be the Advent Wreath. The flicker of the four candles (hope, peace, joy, and love) reminds us of the light of God’s grace (Isaiah 42:6) and the light coming to the world. Our texts include Isaiah’s lament, “O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,” the voice of one crying in the wilderness, and words of comfort spoken to Mary, “do not be afraid.” Our hymns and songs give voice to the now-and-not yet tension inherent in the season. We celebrate this ‘active’ waiting and the hope filled anticipation of Christ’s coming with music that includes plainsong and chants, chorales, folk songs, and joyous proclamations of praise as we sing of the vision of the reign of God.

This is Advent. The coming is promised, but it is not yet here; so we wait and hope . . . together . . . for peace and healing to a world waiting to be reborn.

Advent is a time of waiting. Our whole life, however, is Advent – that is, a time of waiting for the ultimate, for the time when there will be a new heaven and a new earth, when all people are brothers and sisters and one rejoices in the words of the angels: “On earth peace to those on whom God’s favor rests.” Learn to wait, because he has promised to come.

The Coming of Jesus in Our Midst, Dietrich Bonhoeffer



For unto us
a child is born!




Concordia

24 December

**Christmas
Eve**

5pm



Renewal Grant

Book Group

***Exploring Immigration and
Migration!***

That grant we received provides an opportunity to gather as a book group. If you would like to be a part of it, contact Pastor Jeff!



Dear Concordia,

A lot has changed since I graduated in May, so I wanted to give you an update on what I am currently doing.

I spent the summer guiding canoe trips in the BWCAW for Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry (VLM). While at VLM, I was alarmed by the campers (and some of my co-workers) lack of coping skills when they had to navigate difficult situations. This was something that I encountered at Emmaus Campus Ministry on my internship, but not to the same extent as this summer.

At the beginning of June, my request to stay in Montana for first call was denied by the bishops in Region 3 (MN,ND,SD). The many reasons that I was given for this decision can be summarized as "I have no reason to ask to stay in Montana and that as a single, young person, I need to go where I am told to go." This was disheartening because I did not feel that the initial contexts offered to me in W. North Dakota faithfully engaged my paperwork, vocation, or what I had shared as being my sense of call.

My second time through the first call placement process reinforced that my sense of call was not being taken seriously because all my concerns were dismissed by the region 3 bishops. Due to the reasons mentioned above, I decided to pause my first call process in September.

In October, I applied to be a counselor at Northwood Children's Services in Duluth. I heard back from them almost immediately asking to set-up an interview. I applied for a counselor position, but about 15 minutes into the interview, the Northwoods interviewer identified some of the gifts that I possess that would be applicable to a different position. He asked if I would consider interviewing to be a Program Coordinator, which is a higher position within this organization. He called in a supervisor for program coordinators to finish the interview. I was offered a program coordinator position on the spot. It has been a great fit so far. I use chaplaincy, outdoor ministry, and accompaniment skills daily in this job. These are all areas that I identified as being core parts of my identity as a faith leader throughout candidacy and the first call process.

I have been impressed by Northwood's view of itself as a whole body that supports and collaborates with each other to be supportive of one another and most importantly the children that we work with. This part of my experience has been a refreshing experience compared to the bureaucratic pitfalls of the First Call Process. My time at Northwood has been extremely lifegiving so far.

I have a five-year window to still pursue a first call within the ELCA if I choose to do so. However, I believe that I am where I am supposed to be right now, and I feel honored to be able to walk alongside the kids that I am working with as they navigate their mental health and behavioral struggles.

Thank you again for your continued support of me. Although, where I am currently at is not what any of us had imagined, I am happy to be using the skills that I learned in seminary in my current position. I am also excited to see where the Spirit continues to lead me.

Peace,
Lars Anderson

CONCORDIA FINANCIALS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OCTOBER, 2023 FINANCIAL REPORT

<u>OCTOBER, 2023</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>BUDGETED</u>	<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>
INCOME	\$11,141.00	\$12,141.67	\$133,234.39
EXPENSES	\$9,589.31	\$13,595.27	\$127,813.25
NET	\$1,551.69	(\$1,453.61)	\$5,421.14

Bridges To Christ will be meeting on Monday, December 4th at 6:45 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Bring winter donation items (hats, mitts, etc.) for CHUM or Center for Changing Lives.

Winter Donation Drive for CHUM & Center for Changing Lives, Dec 3-17. Collecting new or gently used hats, mittens, gloves, & scarves. Drop off items in the church narthex donation bin. Money donations are welcome and will be used to purchase items. Drop off monetary donations to Bridges To Christ member or in their mailbox. The drive is sponsored by Bridges To Christ.

Christmas Sale - Fair Trade Coffee, Chocolate Bars, Tea and Olive Oil: (November 19-December 10). Bridges to Christ is hosting a Christmas fundraiser. We will be selling limited numbers of gift baskets, Equal Exchange coffee, chocolate bars, tea and olive oil from November 19 through December 10 on Sundays after worship. Please join us in this holiday season to purchase fair trade products as gifts for your family and friends.

WARM UP TINY TOES!

Lake Superior Zoo School serves a variety of demographics. Playing 5+ hours a day outside in all weather means warm gear gets worn and wanders home. The Zoo School prides itself in providing gear for families that have barriers, and cannot keep up with the demand of warm socks! Please consider donating preschool sized socks by Dec 18th to help keep children's toes warm. Wool is preferable. We are also looking for bigger sizes in boots or snowpants, if you want to donate some gear that your child has outgrown. Thank you for helping keep your community safe!

The Quilters will meet at the home of Pat Tessier on Thursday, December 14, at noon, for their Holiday luncheon. Each person is to bring an appetizer for the table and a \$10 gift for the game. More information to follow.

Concordia Giving Tree

As we approach the end of the year it is time to start thinking about the upcoming charitable season. Concordia members have generously supported Stowe Elementary Families for many years. The Stowe Staff is so appreciative. Watch for the Giving Tree and Gift Tags to be available starting November 19th (in time for Black Friday). If you have any questions, please contact Lynn or Bill Carlson @ 341-7190. As always, if you do not like to shop, we will do it for you. Cash/check donations are accepted. Thank you for your ongoing support! The following is a thank you note we received last January:

Dear Concordia Lutheran Church Friends,

Your kindness and generous donation to the Giving Tree Project at Stowe School has helped 95 kids, who come from 53 families. Everyone at Stowe is thrilled by the hopeful feelings that this wonderful effort creates.

Our days are short, dark, and cold. This time of the year can be difficult for everyone. Parents are working harder than ever to provide for their children's basic needs. Everything costs more than it did last year. The challenges of raising a family is harder than ever. Knowing that wonderful people like you care, creates hope.

Your thoughtfully chosen gifts have provided an opportunity for struggling parents to create happy memories. These memories are the foundation of everyone's holiday traditions. You have helped these very stressed parents hold on to the belief that their children will be better off than they were, as children. Your contribution to this amazing program is an essential piece of the magic that allows all children at Stowe School to experience a happy holiday.

Our thank you is not enough! Jessica Cook-Principal, Morgan Taus-Giving Tree Coordinator, and the entire Stowe Staff.



Poinsettia Order Form

Each year at Christmas time, our worship services are highlighted by our beautiful Poinsettia Garden. If you would like to have a poinsettia in honor or in memory of someone, please fill out the form below and send it by mail, drop it off at the office or place it in the offering plate with a check made out to Concordia Lutheran Church.

The cost of the poinsettia is \$15. We must have your order no later than Tuesday, December 12.

The poinsettias will decorate the church for our Christmas Eve service. You may pick up your plant after the 5 p.m. service or when the church is open after Christmas.

~~~~~

Number of plants: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_



Let the Prayer Chain members join with you in your prayers and supplications. They are just a phone call away. All prayers are confidential and names or details are not needed. God is aware of all circumstances and waits to hear from you.

Please contact Reba Almquist at 525-6968.

For hospital or other visitations, please contact the office at 728-4229.

### Remember in Your Prayers

Please remember the following people who have been hospitalized, under a doctor's care, those recuperating, struggling, or those grieving since our last newsletter: Wayne Kari, the family of John Almquist, the people of Ukraine and the Holy Land, Roger Erickson, Tim Bell, Gary Williams, migrant families, Phillip Hedges, Katie Roper, Carrie Birdseye-Erickson, Jamie Desemone, Anne Holecek, the families of victims, survivors, and communities where mass shootings have occurred, Patti Pearson, and Those persecuted for their sexual or gender identity.

### Matters of Record

† *John William Almquist*

November 13, 1951-November 5, 2023

### Prayer and Visitation Ministry

Please remember those in our congregation who are in nursing homes or are homebound. Please pray for them and consider stopping by for a visit. Prayer and visitation is an important ministry of the congregation.

**Barross Cottage II, Two Harbors:** Irja Pedersen

**Heritage Haven:** Warren Roberts

A reminder that, on account of privacy, hospitals and nursing homes will NOT contact the Church to share that you have been admitted unless you or a family member tell them or the hospital chaplains to do so. Protecting privacy is also a way we care for our friends who may or may not wish for others to know of their illness or condition. If you hear that someone is sick or hospitalized, do not tell others unless you have been given permission by them to do so. **If you wish to be visited by the Pastor or placed on the prayer list, contact the Church office.** If you have a conversation with someone who is ill, hospitalized, or has come to be in a short or long term care facility, ask them if they want the congregation and Pastor to know what is happening before you pass the word along. Do not assume that because you know, that the individual wants everyone else to, as well. Honoring the privacy of our neighbors, as well as expressing our own desire for the church or pastor to know of our condition, helps to prevent troublesome situations and helps us support one another!



*Faith  
is the bird  
that feels the light  
And sings  
when the dawn  
is still dark.*

- Rabindranath Tagore

## December Birthdays

- 1 Evelyn Christensen
- 2 Aaron Edwards
- 6 Anne Thomas
- 13 Allie Bergman  
Carol Kari
- 16 Eliana Katoch  
Patrick Melby
- 19 Lynne Erickson
- 20 Lorena Holmstrom
- 21 John Hoppe

If your birthday isn't listed or has the wrong date, please let the office know.



## Flower and Sanctuary Candle Sign-up

A nice way to remember a loved one or celebrate a special occasion is to have altar flowers or the sanctuary candle on Sunday morning. The sign-up sheet is in the Narthex for both. Cost for flowers is \$22 and the candle is \$8. Contact the office with any questions.

Please note that when you have altar flowers for worship, you may take them home following worship. The glass vases must stay at church, however.



## Equal Exchange Coffee Donations

Equal Exchange coffee donations needed for church coffee supply. Coffee funds are running low. Donation envelopes are available in the narthex information rack. Place an envelope with any donation amount in the offering plate with note "Equal Exchange coffee fund."







**O Holy Night Concert** with the College of St. Scholastica, Dec. 1st & 2nd, 7:30-9 PM at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Rosary. For more information and tickets: <https://www.trumba.com/calendars/CSSmaster?eventid=167742004&view=event&media=print>



**Chum’s Great Cookie Bake-off** 2nd Saturday Volunteer Event at Gloria Dei Lutheran on the morning of December 9th. Sign up here! <https://www.trumba.com/calendars/CSSmaster?eventid=167742004&view=event&media=print>

**Homeless Community Vigil** December 19th, march begins at 5 PM at the Chum Food Shelf and continues on to the Vigil service on the steps of Duluth City Hall at 5:30.

**Help Wanted!**

Contact Pat Benson – 218.206.5349 or [pbenson@chumduluth.org](mailto:pbenson@chumduluth.org).

**Hot Cocoa and Cookies** for those participating in the Homeless Memorial Vigil on Dec. 19th – bring a couple of igloo coolers with hot cocoa and some treats to share!

**Holiday drivers to transport Chum staff when DTA buses run a holiday schedule.** Shelter staff dependent on the bus service arrive several hours early and stay several hours after their shift to catch a bus. Anyone with a car and home on the holidays willing to help?

**FAST SERVICE!!**

We have never seen the demand we are seeing now: It used to take us up to 2 hours to get rid of 72 boxes of food at the Downtown Food Shelf—now we are doing it in as little as 45 minutes! And it is even busier and quicker out west, and at our pop-up locations!

We usually see an increase in need during the summer months due to kids being out of school, and while in years past we have tried to build a stockpile of food to keep us moving forward, it has proven most difficult to do that this year.

We are hoping that donations of food keep coming so we are able to keep up with the demand we are seeing. Any food will help us, but right now we are in most need of:

- Rice (1lbs)
- Dry Pasta
- Pasta Sauce
- Canned Soups (non-cream)
- Canned Pasta
- Peanut butter
- Macaroni and Cheese
- Gloves

**Homeless Memorial Vigil**

Every year we take time to remember people who passed away who experienced homelessness, formerly experienced homelessness, or were advocates for those persons.

We feel it is important to do this because these were sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, and even grandparents. They may have had a harder life than any of us could imagine. They deserve to be honored and remembered.

**At 4:45 PM**, people will be meeting at the Chum Food Shelf (120 N 1st Ave W) to drop off donations for Street Outreach.

**At 5:00 PM**, Marchers will gather and get ready for the march. Each person will be given a sign with someone's name who has passed away. Then head to Duluth City Hall

**At 5:20 PM**, Marchers will arrive at city hall, where they will be greeted by Cedar Creek with a welcoming song.

**At 5:30 PM**, the vigil will begin.

We hope many people in our community join us to stand with those who have passed away.



**Laura Raedeke's Green Tips from Lutheran Church of the Cross, Nisswa  
Conserving and Restoring Healthy Forests: Using Nature Itself to Address the Climate  
Crisis While Protecting People and Wildlife**

1. As climate-driven disasters have become daily news, we are also learning that mature forests provide unique, vital ecological services that may help us to slow the climate and biodiversity crises. But 80% of America's old-growth forests are already gone, and we are losing three wild acres a minute to development, logging, and climate change. Only old-growth forests can 1) remove and store large amounts of the carbon that heats the atmosphere; 2) improve air and water quality by filtering pollutants; 3) prevent rain and river erosion as well as soil loss. Be an advocate for policies that protect priceless, old-growth forests, nature's best solution to the twin crises of climate change and loss of living species.

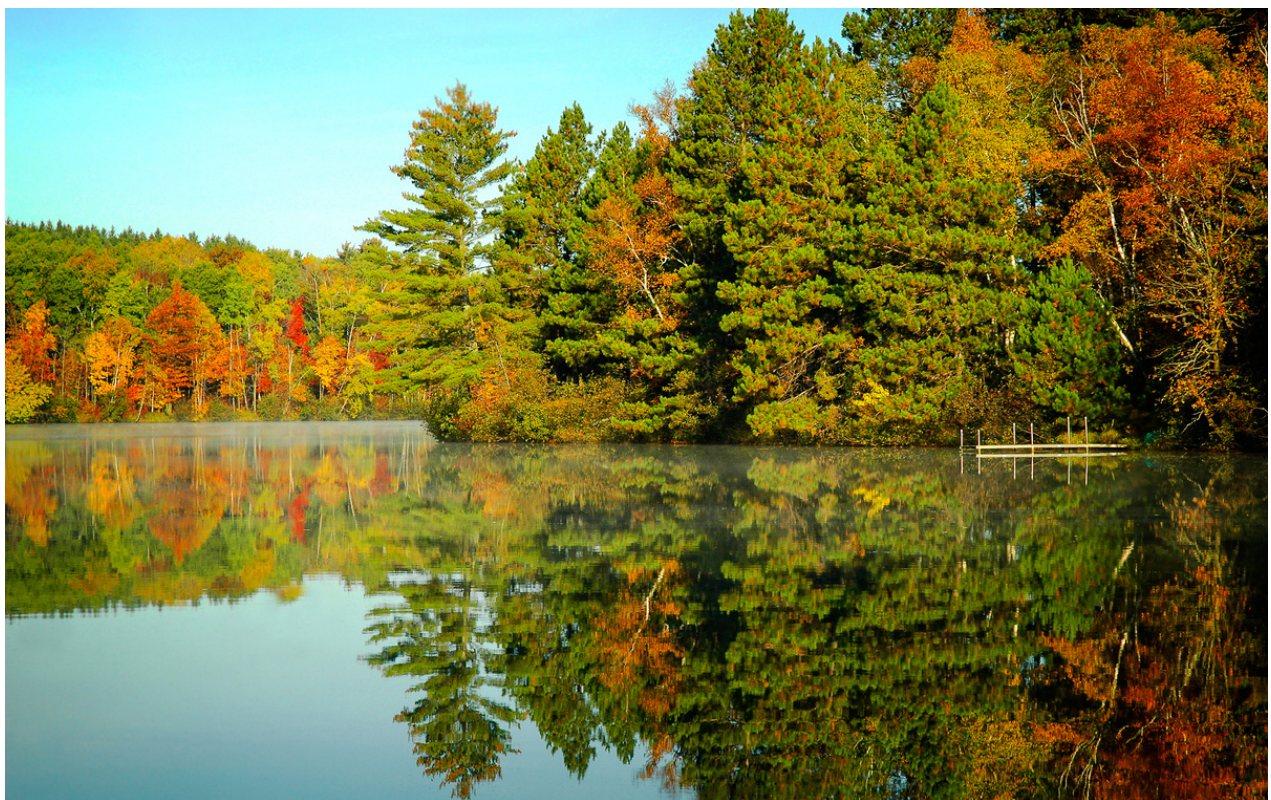
2. America's mature forests will need us to do all we can to save them and stabilize the climate that has supported, for many thousands of years, life as we know it. Trees grow by trapping and converting atmospheric carbon into biomass, and since hardwoods can grow for centuries, carbon is stored in their trunks and branches rather than reentering and heating the atmosphere. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) states that just 100 trees can remove 53 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> and 430 pounds of other air pollutants every year. Forests also help keep soil moist and temperature down, and prevent pounding rain from washing the soil away, while the stabilizing effect of their underground roots prevents ground loss, erosion, and potential mudslides. Over half of U.S. drinking water originates in forests that filter pollutants so effectively that a measurable increase in water quality is found when a dense surface forest grows above an underground water source.

3. Joint conservation efforts by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of the Interior (DOI) are aimed at enhancing forest resilience to the climate crisis by fostering long-term forest health. Large-scale preservation and expansion of the healthy forests that remain on federal lands, managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), will involve 1) a thorough inventory of America's remaining mature and old-growth forests (already more than 80% depleted); 2) setting aggressive reforestation goals on federally managed land; and 3) analyzing reforestation opportunities on state, Tribal, and private lands. The Tongass National Forest in Alaska, more than 17 million acres in size, is America's largest forest to constantly absorb and trap carbon on a huge scale, followed by Chugach National Forest in Alaska, home to the Glacier Ranger District that is fast melting, and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada and California, composed of 23 separate wilderness areas.



4. According to the U.S. Forest Service, up to 40% of Minnesota's forested acres contained old-growth trees prior to European settlement, while today it's only about 2%. Forests clean air, trap carbon, cool rivers and lakes, regulate the water cycle, control erosion, and provide habitat for hundreds of animal and insect species while supporting human health, according to the Minnesota Land Trust. But Minnesota's forests are in danger, with over 70% of Minnesota's northern forest tree species receding north into Canada due to climate change. The primary threats include warming temperatures, land use change, invasive species, and long periods of fire suppression that amplify the effects of climate change and the resulting wildfires, floods, and pest outbreaks. The Minnesota Land Trust's forest restoration projects include 480 acres of northern forest in which long-lived trees (lifespans of 200 to 800 years) like white pine, white cedar, and red pine are being established after disturbances such as clear-cutting, infestation, or fire.

5. As a natural climate solution, forests have the potential to offset around one-third of global emissions, according to Haley Golz, Minnesota Land Trust Restoration Program Manager. Yet Minnesota's conifer forests, which covered much of the northern half of the state in 1900, now occupy only the Arrowhead region. With no emissions change, by 2070 there will be no conifer forests left in Minnesota, with a significant impact on Minnesota's wildlife, recreation, the health of lakes and rivers, and a way of life. Researchers and volunteers at Crosby Farm Regional Park, overseen by the nonprofit Mississippi Park Connection (MPC) in partnership with local, state and federal agencies, have planted more than 1,000 trees across 24 plots to study which trees are able to remain healthy as Minnesota's State Tree, the Norway Pine, recedes north to Canada. The goal is to maintain forested ecosystems with adaptable trees such as disease-resistant American elm, swamp white oak, river birch, bitternut hickory, and bur oak. If you want to volunteer for this project, sign up with the Crosby Crew at park [connection.org/volunteer](https://parkconnection.org/volunteer).



# INDOOR FARMER'S MARKET

DECEMBER 13TH

3PM - 6PM

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HARRISON  
COMMUNITY  
CENTER

3002 W 3RD ST  
DULUTH, MN

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FREE COMMUNITY MEAL

LOCAL VENDORS



The Lincoln Park Farmers Market team will host an indoor farmers market featuring vendors selling produce, eggs, meat, canned goods, baked goods, gluten free and vegan items, and crafts.

A free community meal is open to all and will be a vegan soup served with local bread. SNAP participants can swipe their EBT card at the market and receive additional matching market bucks. Kids 18 and under and elders 60 and over can receive \$4 in tokens to spend on produce at the market through the Power of Produce (PoP) program.



**Pastor:** Rev. Jeffery Davis  
**Organist:** Unfilled at this time  
**Cantor:** Jennifer Dums  
**Joyful Voices Pianist:** Patti Martenson  
**Sunday School Teachers:** Rachelle Anderson, Bryan Anderson, Bridget Bohn, and Marcia DeMeo-Morse.  
**Office Duties:** Carmen Norlien  
**Custodial Duties:** David Haavik  
**Treasurer:** Mark Morse  
**Church Council Members:**  
Rachelle Anderson  
Bridget Bohn, President  
Trevor Christensen, Vice-President  
Kalina Groothuis, Secretary  
Mark Morse, Treasurer  
Dan Norlien

**Committees:**

**Building & Grounds:** Trevor Christensen  
**Social Justice:** Pastor Jeff

**Stewardship:** Pastor Jeff  
**Worship & Music:** Bryan Anderson, Lynne Erickson, and Patti Martenson

**Ministries:**

**Altar Guild:** Reba Almquist  
**Bridges To Christ:** Ann Edwards  
**Caring Ministry:** Jane Wedin  
**Quilters:** Karin Cummings

**Contact information:**

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**Website:** [www.duluthconcordia.org](http://www.duluthconcordia.org)  
**Facebook:** Concordia Lutheran Church of Duluth  
**Address:** 2501 Woodland Avenue  
Duluth, MN 55803

**Office Hours:** Please call first, as circumstances vary from week to week.

**CHUM**

Julie Larson-Williams  
Carmen Norlien

**Conference and Synod Assemblies**

Open

**Lutheran Campus Ministry Duluth Board**

Patti Martenson

**NE Minnesota Synod Youth Board**

Margaret Roeser

**Union Gospel Mission**

Lois Witchall

**Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry**

Bridget Bohn



The Messenger is a monthly publication of Concordia Lutheran Church. Items for the January newsletter are due by Tuesday, December 19. Please email your items, corrections, questions, or comments to [duluthconcordia@gmail.com](mailto:duluthconcordia@gmail.com)

We reserve the right to edit your items.  
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