

# Concordian

THE MAGAZINE OF CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY WISCONSIN

## THE BUSINESS OF WELLNESS

The most important thing we've  
built is what happens inside

FALL/WINTER 2019



## FEATURED STORIES

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**CONCORDIAN** is the official magazine of Concordia University Wisconsin. It shares the stories of the exciting advancements on campus; the notable accomplishments of our faculty, staff, students, and alumni; and the life-changing service Concordians undertake for Christ in the Church and world. The biannual publication is sent to tens of thousands of alumni, parents, and stakeholders each fall and spring.

The Office of Strategy and University Affairs is responsible for production of the *Concordian*. The magazine's editorial team welcomes your feedback. Please send comments or queries to [Concordian@cuw.edu](mailto:Concordian@cuw.edu).

#### Editorial Team

Kali Thiel, executive editor  
Lisa Liljegren  
Rachel Thoms  
Gretchen Jameson

#### Photography

Andrea Michel

#### Design

Lindsay Taylor

#### Special Contributors

Ashley Kilgas  
Angela Pirtle

#### Comments

[Concordian@cuw.edu](mailto:Concordian@cuw.edu)

#### Alumni Notes

[alumni@cuw.edu](mailto:alumni@cuw.edu)

#### Mail

Send address changes to:  
Concordian Circulation  
12800 North Lake Shore Drive  
Mequon, WI 53097

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**Go green!** If you would like to subscribe to our email edition instead of receiving a copy in the mail, please email [Concordian@cuw.edu](mailto:Concordian@cuw.edu).

#### ON THE COVER:

As a business major, **Olalekan George ('20)** is one of the many students who will benefit from the new Robert W. Plaster Free Enterprise Center.



President Ferry addresses the hundreds of parents and loved ones of Concordia's new freshman class on the evening of Move-In Day – Thursday, Aug. 22.  
*Photo by Madelyne Arrigoni ('22)*

Concordia recently celebrated an anniversary. On July 1, 2013, Concordia University Wisconsin and Concordia University Ann Arbor officially joined to become one university with two residential campuses sharing a wide array of post-traditional academic programs. These days we do not talk so much about our merger. The day-to-day reality of what it means for us to be Concordia University is our focus.

One measure of that reality was the recent comprehensive accreditation visit of the Higher Learning Commission. A particular aim of the visiting team was to assess and report on how well our new university model is working. The result of the visit, I am delighted to report, could not have been more positive. Our peers in higher education have endorsed our “one-university-two campuses” Concordia with high praise.

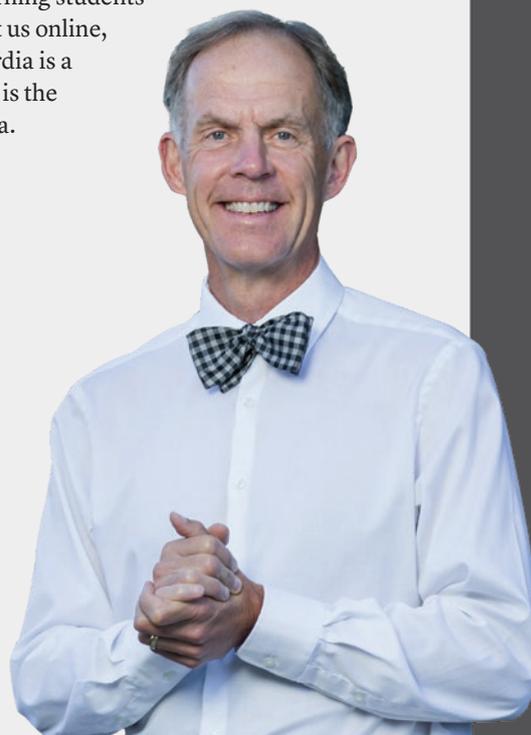
Obviously, we are quite pleased to have such positive affirmation, and we will always strive to offer a first-rate life and learning experience for all Concordians. In the pages that follow, you will see several sterling examples of Concordia in action.

Of course, there are many colleges and universities that do all kinds of commendable things. The Concordia distinction, I believe, is something that I draw from our two campus themes for this academic year. In Mequon, based on 2 Corinthians 12:9, the theme is “Sufficient Grace in God’s Perfect Plan.” In Ann Arbor, based on the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15, the theme is “Embrace(d).” In honor of our sixth anniversary, I marry these themes to underscore the foundation and frame for what we desire for every Concordian—the “Grace Embrace!” God’s “Grace Embrace” in Christ Jesus defines who we are. Ultimately, what sets Concordia apart is the prevalence of the promise of God’s grace given to us as a gift in the saving work of Jesus Christ.

As another academic year launches, and new and returning students arrive on campus, or come to one of our Centers, or meet us online, “the Grace Embrace” of Jesus reminds them that Concordia is a very special place to be. Indeed, God’s “Grace Embrace” is the day-to-day reality of what it means for us to be Concordia.

To God be the Glory,

  
**REV. PATRICK T. FERRY, PHD**  
*President*



# social scene

## CONNECT WITH US

-  /CUWisconsin
-  @CUWisconsin
-  @CUWisconsin
-  /ConcordiaWisconsin1
-  cuw.edu/news



### BLUFF IN BLOOM

Concordians all over the world post about CUW. Check out this snap of the bluff wildflowers by [@dodogolfer](#)! Do you have a photo of your campus experiences? Post it using #CUW!



### SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE

Thanks to this summer's inaugural English Language Institute (which welcomed 35 international learners), 17 students were able to reach a level of English proficiency that allowed them to continue on in CUW classes.

### HOME SWEET HOME

Life after graduation can be daunting, but these three friends (two graduates of Bethesda College at CUW and one graduate of CUW) are taking on life after college together. Read the full story at [blog.cuw.edu/home-sweet-home](http://blog.cuw.edu/home-sweet-home).



### TUNNEL VISION

One of the iconic features of CUW's architecture is its tunnels, allowing students to travel from building to building in shorts and flip-flops year-round! On Milwaukee's Bobby Tanzilo stopped by campus to take a look for himself. Discover his findings here: [blog.cuw.edu/urban-spelunking](http://blog.cuw.edu/urban-spelunking).

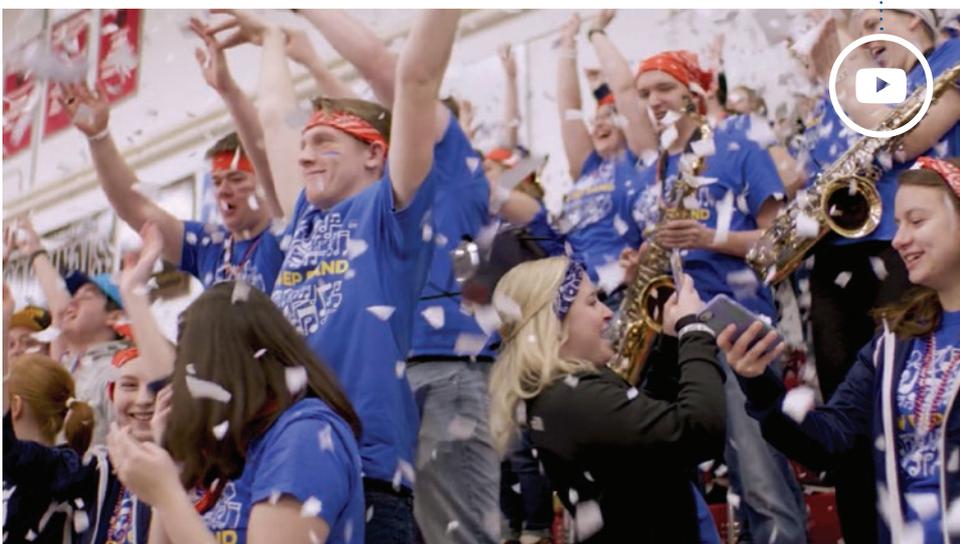
**HAPPY BIRTHDAY, PACKERS!**

Happy 100th birthday to the Green Bay Packers! We couldn't be more proud to be your preferred MBA program!



**Two campuses,  
one uncommon thread**

Two are better as one! Six years ago CUW and CUAA officially joined to become one university with two campuses. We love you, CUAA! See the full video at [youtube.com/ConcordiaWisconsin1](https://youtube.com/ConcordiaWisconsin1).



**This is to those who champion Concordia through social media.**

Every tweet, every post, every “like,” every comment, and every share—we notice you, and we appreciate you!



**TOP FAN**

**GRACE PETERSEN**

Grace has taken a very active part in the life of our page. Because of her continual engagement, Facebook has named her our current Top Fan! Thanks for the support, Grace!

**SOCIAL HOUR**

Are you a morning person or a night owl? We took a moment to see what time our Instagram followers are active online. (We see you, 2 AM-ers!)

AVERAGE NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS ONLINE

- 2 AM **239**
- 6 AM **693**
- 10 AM **1,312**
- 2 PM **1,385**
- 6 PM **1,491**
- 10 PM **1,523**

# The latest in new programs

- **Accelerated Master of Science in Applied Exercise Science**  
*Offered at Concordia University Wisconsin*
- **Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies**  
*Offered at Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor*
- **Bachelor of Arts in Technical and Professional Communication**  
*Offered at Concordia University Wisconsin*
- **Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry**  
*Offered at Concordia University Wisconsin*
- **Bachelor of Science in Data Science and Applied Analytics**  
*Offered at Concordia University Wisconsin*
- **Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Administration**  
*Offered at Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor*
- **Certificate in Interprofessional Informatics**  
*Offered online*
- **Certificate in Spanish for Healthcare**  
*Offered at Concordia University Wisconsin*
- **Master of Product Development—Food and Beverage**  
*Offered at Concordia University Wisconsin, online, and at the Mequon Center*
- **Paralegal Studies Certificate**  
*Offered at Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor*

Classes for some of the programs listed are already underway, while others are scheduled to start as late as spring 2020. Learn more about these programs, including how to register, by visiting [blog.cuw.edu/fall-2019-programs](http://blog.cuw.edu/fall-2019-programs).



Elizabeth Polzin, EdD, AVP of academics for student success, and Rachel Pickett, PhD, social science program director, are two of the Concordia leaders behind the new Christian Citizen class.

## Preparing Christian citizens

There is a palpable common bond among Concordians. Threads of shared experiences, insider phrases, and campus events embed into the hearts and minds of students, and help shape them into distinctly Concordia alumni leaders and servants. Annual traditions like CIT, Christmas at Concordia, and commencement reinforce the experience. Daily offerings like morning chapel and “In Our Prayers” emails help seal the Concordia deal for life.

For the past two years, faculty have worked together to incorporate a shared curriculum into the Concordia experience so that wherever they are in the world CUW alumni are engaged and informed citizens who are recognized for their compassion, preparedness, and Christian worldview.

“Our aim was to create a common Concordia intellectual experience that lays the foundation for a shared identity among Concordians,” says Dr. Rachel Pickett, PhD, associate professor of psychology and director of first-year experience.

All students are required to take six Liberal Arts core classes that have been identified as essential to a Concordia education. Beyond these, students are offered distributive courses that will sharpen their reasoning and critical thinking skills, and make them better problem solvers.

The required six classes are:

- The Bible
- Christian Faith
- Western Culture and Worldview
- Western Thought and Worldview
- Christian Citizen
- Science and Humanity

In its second year, the Christian Citizen course serves as a freshman seminar and

engages students in important questions, discussions, and activities on responsible social action, civic engagement, and moral authority. The four tenets to the freshman seminar course are Mission, Service, Vocation, and Citizenship. It defines citizenship broadly as encouraging students to be good neighbors as well as good citizens.

According to Pickett, “We are all citizens of two kingdoms. The Christian Citizen course dissects what that entails and how our students can hold sacred their morals and values, and participate in the world as engaged, active citizens.”

The two-kingdom perspective is the tension that Christians face as subjects to both a spiritual kingdom and an earthly kingdom. Throughout the course, students have opportunities to dissect their own level of civic engagement and gain the tools they need to become confident voices in the public square.

One of the readings, “Render Unto Caesar... and Unto God: A Lutheran View of Church and State,” the 92-page manuscript published by The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, provides solid Christian context for how to balance both kingdoms effectively.

Another reading, “Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City,” the Pulitzer Prize-winning book by Matthew Desmond, provides solid research and cultural context to important issues like poverty and race. The author followed eight Milwaukee families as they struggled to keep a roof over their heads.

Through guided discussions and personal reflections, students will learn about critical issues, and will learn how to help solve them as engaged Christians, good neighbors, and informed Concordians.

## A fresh face for the Falcons

Last May, Concordia University Wisconsin unveiled a new athletic brand in order to provide consistency across its 32 varsity-level sports programs, distinguishing CUW from the eight other Concordia campuses in the system and tether it to “Live Uncommon,” the comprehensive university rebranding effort that was launched in 2018.

Following an extensive research effort, Concordia’s athletic department revealed the new spirit mark to the campus community at the end of this past academic year. New uniforms were rolled out starting over the summer.

“When we recognize the reach that our athletics program gives the university, it was easy to prioritize this effort,” said Gretchen Jameson, senior vice president of the Office of University Affairs. “Our athletic teams are truly national in scope, both in terms of where we compete and where we recruit. Our goal in this project was to present a sharp, vibrant, memorable, and coherent visual to support the entire athletics portfolio at CUW.”

With more than 600 CUW student-athletes currently bearing the Falcons brand during competitions, team uniforms were a natural place to start. Though the university’s colors



The new athletics logo is on prominent display at the front entrance of the Field House.

have traditionally been blue and white, secondary colors have crept into the pallet of the various teams throughout the years. Over time, the color creep has diminished the recognition and reputation of Concordia. The new athletic brand will promote continuity among color, font, and mark choices.

The falcon symbol has had several iterations throughout history. So, too, has the Freddy the Falcon mascot. An updated Freddy was also unveiled as part of the updated branding effort.

Concordia University has long had a strong tradition of excellence and innovation in athletics. Numerous examples show that Concordia has been a pace-setter

in piloting athletic programs ahead of peer institutions. Since Athletic Director Dr. Robert Barnhill’s arrival in 2001, Concordia alone has added 11 programs to its roster, which has helped to more than double the university’s student-athlete count. Now with a strong, unifying brand to mark Concordia’s vibrant and impressive collection of athletic programs, Barnhill anticipates it will be a boon to the university’s ongoing recruitment efforts.

“We were doing ourselves a disservice to dilute our program and name even more by not being consistent in uniforms,” said Barnhill. “With this effort, we have begun to present a bold, unified program that will clearly reflect who we are as athletes, as a university, and as a community.”

This entire effort was led by the Office of University Affairs and BVK, a Milwaukee-based marketing agency, the same partnership that developed the Live Uncommon brand. The group is now focusing on Concordia University Ann Arbor’s athletic portfolio.

Follow CUW athletics or learn more about our 32 competitive programs at [cuwfalcons.com](http://cuwfalcons.com).

A handful of Concordia’s athletes – (from left) Gabby Flocco, Henry Jensen, Madison Schultz, Taylor Chisolm, and Warner Marquez – sport the new athletics logo.





CCES Director Mark Schmitz measures walleye in Concordia's new aquaculture system.

## Aquaponics system begins to take shape

Concordia is in the process of building a sustainable growing system that will allow fish and vegetation to flourish even throughout Wisconsin's harsh winters.

In May, the university took a major step forward in the setup of a state-of-the-art aquaculture and aquaponics system on campus when 5,000 newly hatched walleye were transported to campus from the hatchery where they were bred.

The newly hatched walleye (or fry, as they're called) were released into holding tanks in the university's Concordia Center for Environmental Stewardship (CCES), where they were feed-trained throughout the summer to accept a dry diet. The walleye will eventually be transferred into a brand-new self-sustaining growing system—otherwise known as aquaponics—in the front lobby of the CCES. The walleye's waste will supply the nutrients that the plants need to grow, and the plants, in turn, will filter the water to sustain the fish and promote maximum growth.

While other colleges in Wisconsin utilize off-campus aquaponics systems, Concordia is unique in that its system is directly on its main campus. The setup is made possible thanks to a generous donation from Jay Christopher, the founder of Thatcher Corporation (an incubator for small start-up businesses) and co-founder with his wife, Doris, of The Pampered Chef, a direct sales company for fine kitchen tools.

With its focus on ethical solutions to environmental problems, the CCES and its latest endeavor further support the mission of Concordia University and complement a wide variety of studies within the university, including art, business, or justice and public policy studies.

"Because Concordia offers such a variety of disciplines, we're able to apply the concepts of sustainability and Christian stewardship from a variety of perspectives," said CCES Director Mark Schmitz, PhD. "It's rewarding to me to be able to teach students about things like being good stewards of the resources we've been given."

Read the full story at [blog.cuw.edu/walleye-fry](http://blog.cuw.edu/walleye-fry). Learn more about Concordia's CCES at [cuw.edu/CCES](http://cuw.edu/CCES).



Harald Tomesch with his QikVin bottle at his winery in Cedarburg.

## The Renaissance man

If one were to build a case for the benefits of a broad knowledge base, Rev. Dr. Harald Tomesch would be the perfect poster child.

The Jack-of-all-trades theology professor has a lifetime of patents, entrepreneurial pursuits, and hobbies to his name, and he's one of the most frequent cross-departmental collaborators within the university.

Ordained in 1981, Tomesch served as president of Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary in Ontario, Canada, before he accepted a position within CUW's theology department again in 2008. At different points in time, he also took up refurbishing boats; proved his acumen for wine-making; and served as a consultant for the motion picture industry, having contributed to films and television productions with notables such as actress Sigourney Weaver and Jeff Stewart from the BBC's "Dr. Who."

The latest endeavor to excite Tomesch's entrepreneurial talent: QikVin, a reusable bottle with a one-way valve and piston that preserves wines and vinegars by allowing air to escape while simultaneously creating a vacuum for freshness.

Tomesch came up with the idea for QikVin one day while sitting in a Cedarburg, Wisconsin, winery he had owned for years until he sold it this fall.

"I was looking at 45 bottles that I had open, and I remember thinking, 'There has to be a better way,'" Tomesch recalled. "Before QikVin, it wasn't uncommon for me to throw away upwards of \$800 a month due to oxidization."

Ingenuity combined with the fruits of years of exploration and

## Upcoming events

For more events and full information, visit [cuw.edu/events](http://cuw.edu/events).

### October

- 04—Fall Sampler Concert
- 05—Undergraduate Visit Day
- 09—Industry Leader Seminar: Austin Ramirez
- 11—All Concordia Alumni & Friends Reception at LEA St. Louis
- 12—Concordia Bible Institute Fall Seminar
- 12—CIA Fall Festival
- 18—Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony
- 18—Pops Concert
- 18—Undergraduate Visit Day
- 19—Homecoming/Freddy Fest/Alumni Social
- 25—Leadership Series : Culvers CEO Joe Koss
- 28—Sport & Hospitality Roundtable

### November

- 02—Undergraduate Visit Day
- 07-10—Concordia Players: “Meet Me in St. Louis”
- 09—Industry Leaders Seminar: Joanne Anton
- 13—Industry Leaders Seminar: Michael Barber
- 17—Christ the King Concert

### December

- 06-07—Christmas at Concordia
- 13—“Hats Off to You” Alumni Social

### January

- 13-21—Symphonic Wind Ensemble Florida Tour
- 20—Health Professions Conference
- 24-25—CIT at Concordia Chicago

### February

- 02—Alumni Bucks Game and Social
- 14—Athlete Visit Day
- 14-16—Concordia Players: “Junie B. Jones”

### March

- 06—Lutheran High School Visit Day
- 27—Junior Visit Day



inquisitiveness kicked in, and within two years, in June 2018, Tomesch went to market with QikVin.

Tomesch and his product made it through a preliminary audition round for both the hit ABC show “Shark Tank,” as well as a Canadian version of the same show called “Dragons’ Den.”

Tomesch maintains that his wide array of interests and business pursuits directly benefits his ability to effectively teach his theology students. He is a frequent guest lecturer for Concordia’s business, pharmacy, marketing, and communications programs.

“You bring the knowledge and the experiences you have, and you encourage students to write their own stories,” Tomesch said.

Tomesch is proud that he helps students write their own stories outside of the classroom, as well. By intentionally hiring CUW and LCMS church-work students each season at his winery and manufacturing plant, Tomesch finds fulfillment in the fact that he’s helped over two dozen students support themselves through college while giving them the chance to practice the soft skills that are essential for ministry and life.

“I want to teach students how to interact with people so that they have interests and personality beyond a strict focus of theology,” Tomesch said. “If your passion is wine or travel, or something beyond just Biblical studies, then you have something to talk about with the everyday person. And that’s the start of a meaningful connection and evangelism.”

Want to preserve your wine? Learn more at [qikvin.com](http://qikvin.com).



# ON THE FAST (AND FLEXIBLE) TRACK

By **Kali Thiel**, *Strategic Communications*

While there are plenty of reasons to not rush through one's collegiate experience, the benefits of an early walk across the commencement stage also cannot be denied.

As a Lutheran higher education community, Concordia's commitment to developing "students in mind, body, and spirit for service to Christ in the Church and the world" also extends to helping students be good stewards of their time and financial resources. Spurred by the desire to offer learners more flexibility, greater cost savings, or early graduation, Concordia has launched multiple programs over the past several years strategically designed to respond to learners' needs, without sacrificing the educational caliber the job market demands.

For those motivated students who know early on what they're called to do, and are ambitious enough to make it happen in as few years as possible, Concordia offers a few attractive options.

LEARN MORE:  
[CUW.EDU/BUSINESS-SCHOLARS](http://CUW.EDU/BUSINESS-SCHOLARS)  
[CUW.EDU/ROUTE-38](http://CUW.EDU/ROUTE-38)  
[CUW.EDU/PRE-COLLEGE](http://CUW.EDU/PRE-COLLEGE)

**AS THE DAUGHTER** of two self-made small business owners, Gia Fazal knows what it takes to accomplish ambitious goals.

In her early years of life, Fazal's parents both held successful jobs in the restaurant industry—her dad was a general manager of Buffalo Wild Wings and her mother was a manager of a P.F. Chang's. But when her father was diagnosed with a brain tumor, it forced the couple to make some career changes.

At age 9, Fazal watched as her parents built their own company, CMG Detailing, from the ground up. Based in Cedarburg, Wisconsin, the company specializes in personalized automotive detailing. Her parents' grit and determination lit a fire in Fazal.

"You feel like a boss when you see all these things that you've set out to accomplish come together," Fazal said. "The reward becomes sweeter when you put in the hard work to get there."

And she has carried that philosophy with her into Concordia. Fazal will graduate in 2022 (just four years after she began) with both a bachelor's and a master's degree—and she'll get to do it for the price of just one degree, thanks to Concordia's Business Scholars program.

High-achieving incoming freshmen have the opportunity to apply for Business Scholars to take advantage of the deal. Through Business Scholars, students can acquire an undergraduate degree in a business field, as well as a Master of Business Administration in just four years.

While the reward is sweet, the path to get there is rigorous. These student scholars are required to maintain a 3.5 GPA and complete internships related to both their undergraduate and graduate degrees. This is only possible by maintaining a year-round course schedule of full academic loads averaging at least 18 credits per semester.

Fazal, who is working toward her undergraduate in business and an MBA in entrepreneurship, learned about the opportunity after she was already enrolled at CUW. When she started at Concordia, a master's degree wasn't on her radar, but the deal was too good to pass up.

"Not every company wants that piece of paper, but if I do have it, it gives me a leg up," Fazal said. "And it'll be helpful to be able to show that I was in this program that was really prestigious, just to back myself as a legitimate business person."

Fazal hasn't fully made up her mind about where she wants to end up after graduation. She's entertaining the idea of owning her own café art studio and also plans to stay involved with her parents' business. Either way, she plans to stay busy.

"I had a friend in high school tell me, 'In your future, I see you in pants suits,'" Fazal said. "I thought that was a really fun compliment to get. I think I have that persona, and I'm at my best when I'm busy."



## THE PERKS

- Business students can get a bachelor's and master's in just four years
- Tuition costs are the same as the regular four-year undergraduate fees

## WHAT IT TAKES

- ≥3.5 high school GPA
- 25 minimum ACT score
- ≥1200 combined SAT score
- 18 credits per semester + Winterim, summer, or online courses
- Completion of internship or research project

## ROUTE 38



### THE PERKS

- Education and nursing students can eliminate cost of summer courses
- Aids in early or on-time graduation
- Offers flexibility in scheduling

### WHAT IT TAKES

- Enrollment in education or nursing undergrad program (or other approved undergrad major)
- Completion of one full academic year at Concordia
- Good academic and financial standing

**TWO THINGS INITIALLY** attracted Spencer Woller to Concordia: its small class sizes and the chance to attend a school where he could express his faith.

A new program launched last fall further solidified his decision.

The program, called Route 38, allows traditional undergraduate students to customize their academic schedule and maximize their budget by paying the regular full-time tuition rate for up to 38 credits across fall, spring, and summer semesters.

Students can leverage the opportunity, for example, by shifting some of their course load from the

fall or spring semesters to the summer. Before, students had to pay an additional fee for summer courses.

For Woller, Route 38 provided the flexibility he needed to participate in the Federal Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) while still pursuing his secondary education degree. As part of his ROTC commitment, Woller travels to downtown Milwaukee every Monday through Friday morning during the academic year to participate in military officer training classes.

The problem he ran into: Two of his requisite courses are only offered in the mornings throughout his CUW tenure. Woller was faced with tacking on a semester or paying extra for summer courses. With Route 38, though, he was thrilled to learn he had a new option.

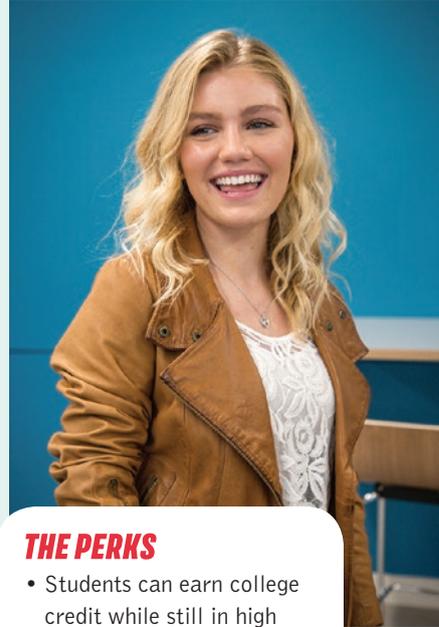
“I was prepared to just pay extra, but I’m so thankful everything fell into place,” Woller said. “I saved \$3,600 because of Route 38.”

The program is geared toward education and nursing majors because of the formats of each. National trends show that it’s a challenge to complete either degree within four years at any university, said Robert Nowak, assistant vice president of enrollment. Students are typically required to take some summer courses, and the programs are also heavy on internship/clinical experiences.

Route 38 also provides a convenient path toward early or on-time graduation. While students are allowed to take up to 18 credits a semester at the traditional tuition rate, the average student’s capacity ends up being closer to 15.

“We value providing a high-quality educational experience that doesn’t place undue burden on students,” Nowak said. “Route 38 has allowed students to stay on track or even ahead without getting overwhelmed, or feeling like they had to give up certain activities.”

## PRE-COLLEGE PROGRAMS



### THE PERKS

- Students can earn college credit while still in high school
- Courses are offered at a reduced rate—\$50 per credit for Christian high schools and homeschools (\$0 out of pocket for Christian schools in Michigan) and \$150 per credit for in-state public/private high schools (students pay either 0% or 25% of the total course cost thanks to ECCP)
- For students who go on to enroll at CUW or CUAA, their dual credits are *free*
- Among the most competitive prices for homeschools or parochial schools in Wisconsin

### WHAT IT TAKES

- Must be homeschooled or enrolled in a Wisconsin or participating Christian high school
- $\geq 3.0$  GPA in high school classes

**BEFORE SHE EVEN** stepped foot on Concordia’s campus this past August, Alicia Gutknecht was already ahead of schedule.

She had to sacrifice some of her high school study halls to do it, but Gutknecht, who is majoring in nursing, earned 21 college credits during her time at Living Word Lutheran. Not only did the frontloading allow her to lighten her course load her freshman year at CUW (in anticipation of tough courses she felt would require extra

study time), Concordia granted back 100 percent of the dual credit tuition she paid. Essentially, she earned 21 credits for free.

Thanks to Concordia’s pre-college programs, more than 1,000 students have been able to jump-start their college career at a reduced price. The pre-college programs include the Concordia Promise Dual Credit Program—for Christian high schools or homeschools—and Wisconsin’s Early College Credit Program (ECCP)—for public or private high schools in Wisconsin. For students in the Concordia Promise Program who go on to enroll at CUW or CUAA (like Gutknecht), Concordia also offers the Concordia Promise PLUS Program, which grants back the cost of dual credit tuition paid.

Even though Concordia has been offering dual credit options since 2012, the university has ramped up its programs in recent years. In fact, the Concordia Promise Dual Credit Program and

the Concordia Promise PLUS Program are among the most competitive pricing options in the nation for homeschooled or Christian high school students (\$50 per credit or free for students who matriculate to CUW/CUAA).

Over the past seven years, Concordia has helped more than 1,100 students earn over 7,000 pre-college credits. Of all the students reached throughout the world, 83 percent were from Christian schools or were homeschooled.

“I have a younger brother who is at Living Word right now, and I did encourage him to do it, as well,” Gutknecht said. “I told him that even though it might be difficult initially, in the future you’ll thank yourself.”



# A BLESSED HOUSE ON SOLID FOOTING

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Concordia's new  
academic building is a  
collaborative effort

By **Lisa Liljegren**, *Strategic Communications*

Photography by **Andrea Michel**, *Strategic Communications*,  
and **Ashley Kilgas**, *Marketing*



Robert W. Plaster Free Enterprise Center



With master's classes held over the summer, two of Concordia's speech-language pathology students, Emily Smith (left) and Rachel Klumb, were among the first students to utilize the new building.

## PSALM 127

**“Unless the Lord builds the house,  
they labor in vain who build it.”**



In fall 2016, more than 700 students, faculty, and staff gathered to stake out the footprint of a new academic building. *Photo by Jeffrey Phelps*

**I**t was only a footprint. Actually more than 1,400 footprints. Three years ago, on September 14, 2016, Concordia University President Rev. Patrick T. Ferry, PhD, led a special outdoor chapel service on the grassy soccer practice field just south of the administration building to seek God's blessing upon a new endeavor: the construction of a state-of-the-art academic building.

Guided by Psalm 127, President Ferry's powerful prayer on the empty field was for alignment between what Concordia wanted to accomplish and what God had already planned.

Ferry prayed, “Help us to build up—not just buildings but people—people built for others to help others.”

Brick by brick the pieces of the Robert W. Plaster Free Enterprise Center—the new house for the Batterman School of Business, health clinics, and collaboration spaces—came together. With the Lord's blessing and through the labor of many gifted hands, dedicated prayers, and generous supporters, the dynamic Plaster Center took shape.



Erik Hollander (center), an assistant professor in the Batterman School of Business, interacts with students in the Collaboratorium space.

Pops of color are a feature of the new building. The main staircase sports a vibrant red.



Student and community innovators alike may make use of a 3D Maker Lab to collaborate and tap into some of its resources, including 3D printers for prototyping, allotted spaces for writing software code, and a virtual reality work area.



Below: Rev. Patrick T. Ferry, PhD, university president, celebrates the official opening of the building alongside Ted Batterman (left), donor and namesake of Concordia's Batterman School of Business, and Mequon Mayor John Wirth (right).



A sink in the Hospitality and Event Management Culinary Lab is one small piece of a fully functioning professional-grade kitchen. The lab will be utilized by students in the hospitality and the new product development programs.



On August 1, 2019, the community returned to the once grassy field to dedicate the marvelous glass structure standing tall and glistening in the late-summer sun.

The Robert W. Plaster Free Enterprise Center innovatively aligns business and healthcare disciplines to prepare ethical caregivers who are holistically equipped to serve patients' spiritual, financial, and physical needs.

The three-story 41,000-square-foot academic building houses Concordia's thriving business school, which graduates more students than any other academic school in the university. It is also home to the new Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic that will provide vital health services to the community, and prepare students with best practices and state-of-the-art equipment to be experienced practitioners in the field.

A hallmark of the Plaster Center is the massive Collaboratorium in the center. Everyone—students representing all disciplines and members of the community—are encouraged and welcomed into this creative space to collaborate and tap into some of its resources, including 3-D printers for prototyping, allotted spaces for writing software code, a green room curtain for creating marketing videos, a creative workspace/bench, a robotic automation setup, and a virtual reality work area.

On one side of the Collaboratorium is the Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic, a fully functioning clinic that will serve clients with speech and hearing concerns throughout the span of their lifetime. A few key features of the clinic include:

- Child Language and Literacy Center: a fully equipped preschool classroom and playground for group and individual intervention.
- Sensory Room: a colorful clinic room stocked with a variety of therapeutic equipment, including swings, therapeutic balls, deep-pressure equipment, and visual and auditory feedback equipment.
- Audiology Suite: serving clients of all ages, this space includes clinical audiometric equipment with a sound-treated booth.

It's all business on the other side. In addition to the dozens of business programs offered to undergraduate students, Concordia's MBA program (the largest in Wisconsin, as

reported by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*) is also housed in this dynamic building. With 15 concentrations to choose from, students can earn their advanced degree in areas like management, finance, innovation, international business, and nonprofit management.

The fastest-growing MBA concentration is healthcare administration. In this area of study, students learn the business side of the healthcare industry so that they can help to make compassionate care accessible, sustainable, and possible. These MBA students have firsthand experience in the business affairs of the Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic located just down the hall.

More business amenities:

- A fully stocked culinary lab with cutting edge components, including commercial-grade appliances, a hand-washing station, flexible counters, pull-down power sources, two video systems (including cameras in the hood of the stove), and separate labs for product development.
- A mock courtroom complete with a judge's bench, jury section, witness stations, and video screens for viewing digital evidence or presentations.
- An LED stock market ticker to be utilized by Concordia's accounting students.

Concordia has long been a hub for innovation and collaboration. A few of the signature business programs include annual start-up and accelerator competitions, an executive speaker series, and important summits in healthcare and economics.

The Robert W. Plaster Free Enterprise Center is the result of creative and imaginative academic leaders who had an uncommon vision to combine business and healthcare programs so that students will be better prepared to face challenges and find solutions in a rapidly evolving world.

Their vision is alive and thriving in the halls, classrooms, and noisy Collaboratorium. The entire university community is grateful for the hands that built the house, the donors who supported the vision and mission of the university, and the faculty who use this space to prepare the next generation for service. Their labor was not in vain, for this is a house that the Lord has built.



The Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic's clinical director, Angela Haendel (right), breaks in the new space and some of its literacy resources.



Games like this "Knock Down Number Challenge" are utilized by Concordia's speech-language pathology program to help young patients achieve their clinical goals.

Emma Flottesch (left) and Maria Vachachira, two of Concordia's graduate speech-language pathology students, enjoy the view from the second story of the new building.

**Largest MBA  
in Wisconsin**



**Preferred MBA of the  
Green Bay Packers**



**20%** of PharmD students  
simultaneously  
obtain an MBA

**54**

**Business Scholars**  
(a bachelor's and master's in  
business in four years)

**30+**

**Healthcare-  
related majors**



*Brand-new*  
**speech-language  
pathology master's**

# AROUND- THE-CLOCK Support

By **Kali Thiel**, *Strategic Communications*

**W**hen students enroll at Concordia University Wisconsin, they can expect to learn a great deal: how to think deeply, articulate compelling thoughts, master professional competencies, and ideate with the best of them.

Perhaps less expected, they'll learn to manage their mental health—and they won't have to be a psychology major to do it.

Thanks to a generous grant from The Charles E. Kubly Foundation, Concordia is poised to open the doors to a brand-new Stress Management and Resiliency Training (SMART) laboratory. Named Evelyn's Place, after beloved longtime Concordia employee Evelyn Hutchins, the SMART Lab, is designed to provide high-quality stress management services for undergraduate students. The university will be the first in Wisconsin and one of only a handful of colleges nationwide to have a lab of its kind.

"We really see this as a part of the college experience, especially for undergraduates. This is their transition from adolescence to adulthood," said Anne Spahr, PhD, a licensed psychologist and one of two full-time counselors in Concordia's Counseling Center. "We want students to learn that they are capable of managing more than they thought."

## A SMART SOLUTION

The lab, expected to open in November 2019, will utilize tools including biometric feedback (or biofeedback) and online educational modules to help students learn about mindfulness, meditation, and breathing techniques in order to reduce stress, anxiety, or feelings of panic.

Biofeedback therapy trains people to improve their health by controlling certain bodily processes that normally happen involuntarily, such as heart rate, blood pressure, muscle tension, or skin temperature. Concordia's lab will allow students to connect an electrical sensor to their ear or finger, which will monitor heart rate variability as they practice the coping techniques.

"It's funny because I've had multiple students express skepticism about some of the common coping strategies," said Spahr. "I actually had one student say to me, 'If you tell me to breathe deeply, I'm leaving.' But they really work, and there's something powerful that happens when they can see the physiological response their body is having as they do these things."

Modeled after Ohio State University's SMART lab, Concordia's

version will be housed in the Student Life/Campus Ministry wing of the university, next to the Luptak Terrace Room. The lab will feature pods, or self-contained areas, which will help to maintain a level of privacy even when multiple users are present. Students also must be granted keycard access to enter the room. Access will be received after they participate in an initial training session with one of Concordia's trained counselors.

"The beauty of this lab is that, once they're trained, they'll be able to access it 24/7," Spahr said. "If it's midnight and they have a big exam the next day, they can go to the lab, do some relaxation, and have a better outcome."

## HOLISTIC CARE

Almost 30 percent of undergraduate students said they experience overwhelming anxiety, according to a 2018 American College Health Association study that surveyed more than 26,000 students at 40 universities nationwide. That same study found that 33.2 percent reported having been diagnosed with or treated for a mental health condition within the past 12 months.

Concordia's data mirrors the national trend, said Dean of Students Steve Gerner, EdD.

"Today's Concordians—and college students in general—are facing more pressure than any other generation," said Gerner. "Our Christian mission compels us to not only care about how well students are performing on tests or within the classroom, but to care about the whole person, as Christ does for each of us. Thanks to the support of the Kubly Foundation, Concordia will be able to enhance a vital piece of our mission to prepare students in 'spirit' as well as 'mind' and 'body.'"

The lab is just one of the options available to Concordia students. Of course, they can still see one of the counselors on CUW's staff.

It is Spahr's hope, though, that with the help of the SMART Lab students will discover they have more ability to help themselves than they realized.

"The counseling staff at Concordia is not trying to foster dependence; we're trying to foster independence, and the SMART Lab will help our students recognize that they are capable on their own of managing many of the anxieties or stresses they're facing," said Spahr. "The ability to be resilient and cope with stress is something that can be learned. It's so important for students to feel that sense of self-efficacy."



**30%** OF UNDERGRADS NATIONWIDE  
**EXPERIENCE OVERWHELMING ANXIETY**  
 American College Health Association



**1<sup>ST</sup>** IN THE STATE TO  
**PILOT A SMART LAB**



**24-HOUR** ACCESS FOR  
**STUDENTS**



## *Evelyn's* **PLACE**

Ask anyone who knows Evelyn Hutchins, and they'll tell you there isn't a better person to run into on your worst day. Evelyn, a beloved former employee of Concordia, has an ability to make everyone she encounters feel valued and uplifted.

Morgan Van Thiel ('18) recognizes the gift it was then, that on her lowest of days at Concordia, she somehow had a knack for bumping into Evelyn in the hallway. With red, puffy eyes and tears streaming down her face, Van Thiel would lean into Evelyn's warm embrace and soak in the relief of having someone demonstrate they truly cared.

Evelyn didn't know that Van Thiel was struggling with undiagnosed obsessive-compulsive disorder at the time of their encounters. During her time at Concordia, she treated everyone at Concordia with the same measure of Christian care that she extended to Van Thiel.

After nearly 32 years of working in housekeeping for Concordia, Evelyn retired in 1998. She continued to make her home at Concordia even after retirement, working part-time until 2017, when health concerns forced her into a retirement home where she now lives. Her impact has been felt by decades of Concordians, said Spahr, which is why the decision was made to name Concordia's new SMART Lab after her.

The SMART Lab is housed in the last room Evelyn used as her office.

"Everybody loves Evelyn, and she views Concordia as her family," Spahr said. "Students and employees regularly sought her out for conversation and advice, and she was probably the best anxiety cure Concordia had. Given her long history with the school and her loving ability to care for students, we thought it only fitting to name the new lab in her honor."

# take five

Get to know one of our *uncommon* Concordians,  
**Christine Specht-Palmer**, CEO of Cousins Subs, Foundation  
 Board Chair and member of the Board of Regents



By Kali Thiel, *Strategic Communications*

**T**here was never a discussion about the day Christine Specht-Palmer would step into her father's shoes and head up the successful East Coast-style sub sandwich chain that he and his cousin built from the ground up.

Specht-Palmer is thankful for that, because, while she did eventually work her way to the top of Cousins Subs, she did so on her own terms—and the company is better for it, she contends.

Today, the 47-year-old Cousins Subs operates about 100 restaurants, mostly in Wisconsin. Specht-Palmer stepped into the roles of president and COO in 2008, and in 2015 her father passed on the CEO title. She has helped to steer the company through a series of strategic moves—including a branding refresh and menu enhancements—in order to position it for scalable growth in the years to come.

She's brought her business acumen, winning people skills, and commitment to quality to her role as Chair of Concordia's Foundation Board and as a member of the Board of Regents for the past nine years. Just like the family business, when Specht-Palmer believes in something she puts her all into it.

## 1 What made you want to serve on Concordia's Board?

I always wanted to continue this idea of service to others, and while I'm not an alum of Concordia I remember thinking at the time I was first asked that I liked what they were doing. I thought Concordia filled a need in higher education—to provide a Christ-centered education while obtaining readiness for the next step of your career as a young adult.

## 2 You've said you appreciate that your parents gave you space to spread your wings when you were first starting out. Why was that important?

If it isn't a person's dream to run the family business it will impact their ability to have personal satisfaction, and it will affect

the culture. I believe wholeheartedly you really need to want to be where you work. So, ultimately, I would say I choose to be at Cousins, I love what I do, and I think that authenticity resonates with everyone.

## 3 How does that choice or desire to be with Cousins translate to your employees or franchisees?

I take an example from my dad because he's always been really good about visiting restaurants and respecting that the business succeeds because there are hardworking people who are making it happen every day. I try to demonstrate that as much as possible in my own way. For example, this year I'll cashier at all of our corporate locations, which gives me opportunity to interact with our guests. The best part though is meeting the teams in the restaurants. They all have a story and it's fun to get to know them.

## 4 Besides your dad, who else has served as a model for growth for you?

I'm a big believer in surrounding yourself with people who are smarter or better or more accomplished than you because there is always something to learn. That's another reason why I wanted to be on Concordia's Board. Obviously, Dr. Ferry is one of those people, so seeing him in action and learning from him has been a true blessing.

## 5 As Chair of the Foundation Board, you played an important role in helping The Robert W. Plaster Free Enterprise Center come to fruition. What is the importance of the new building?

It demonstrates that Concordia has its finger on the pulse of what the needs of its students are. Overall, it's about giving students what they need to be servants of Christ in the Church and world. At a time when higher ed is facing great challenges, Concordia is looking ahead to the next 10, 15 years.

## alumni notes

**'10s** **Zoe (Panetti) Smith ('19)** and **Noah Smith ('16)** started dating in high school and both ended up at Concordia. They held their wedding ceremony Aug. 3, 2019, in Concordia's Chapel of Christ Triumphant. *Photo courtesy of Photos & Design by Erin Ashley* ▼



**Erich Podbielski ('19)** competed at the AAU National Taekwondo Championships in July 2019 and brought home four medals—a gold, silver, and two bronzes. ▼



**Dani Vance ('19)** was accepted by the American Music Therapy Association as one of two individuals to receive a music therapy internship at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City.

**Brianna Veldboom ('19)** recently accepted a kindergarten teaching position with Howards Grove School District (Wisconsin). She will be getting married June 20, 2020, and is currently remodeling a house she purchased with her fiancé. ▼



**Anne (Karsten) Nightengale ('18)** married Seth Nightengale on Sept. 1, 2018, in Waupun, Wisconsin. ▼



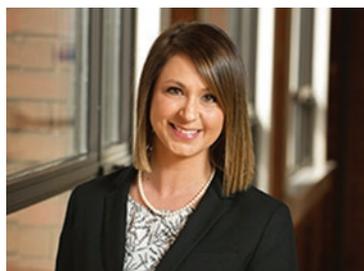
**Liz (Rindt) Ekblad ('18)** and **Anders Ekblad ('17)** welcomed their child, Johannes Lyle Ekblad, on April 1, 2019. He was baptized the following Sunday at Trinity Lutheran Church in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. ▼



**Jonathan Michel ('18)** and **Andrea Michel ('16)** were married on April 27, 2019. ▼



**Cynthia Marchese ('17)** led a new program initiative with the education law firm Lusk Albertson. This program is a human resources on-demand service specifically designed for school districts to access HR expertise backed by legal experience at an affordable rate. ▼



The 2019 LCMS Youth Gathering not only drew hundreds of thousands of youth from around the globe to Minneapolis, it brought together plenty of CUW alumni, too, including (from left) Sue (Nichols) Lilienthal ('91, '13, '14), Tim Fraker ('10), Rev. Josh Baumann ('08), and Jeff Froesch ('02).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Have you heard the latest?

We're filled to the brim with opportunities for our alumni, and we'd love to share the news with you. We just need your preferred email! A monthly e-newsletter—with information on CUW news, events, opportunities, and alumni stories—is sent out to all alumni who provide us with their preferred email. We would also love to share your news with the rest of the Concordia community—whether you published a new book; snagged a promotion; or celebrated a milestone like marriage, the birth of a baby, or an anniversary. Send us your updates and current contact information at [cuw.edu/alumniupdates](mailto:cuw.edu/alumniupdates) and check out the stories at [blog.cuw.edu/alumni](http://blog.cuw.edu/alumni).

### Concordia receives reaffirmation of accreditation

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) has reaffirmed Concordia University's accreditation. This is the first accreditation approval received since CUW's 2013 merge with CUAA. A major aspect of the evaluation was a comprehensive report in which

Concordia demonstrated, using evidence, that it meets the standards of high quality set forth by the HLC. After reading the report, review teams from the HLC visited both campuses last spring. Reviewers commented specifically on the evidence of strong growth of the two universities into one institution. Concordia received the maximum number of years for this cycle of accreditation; it will next seek reaffirmation in the 2028–29 school year.

### Committed to lifelong learners

Concordia continues to offer its Luther Promise and Uncommon Scholarships, which are specifically designed to support Lutheran learners, alumni, and beyond. Luther Promise guarantees up to \$20,000 for undergraduates of any Lutheran congregation or high school, or dependents of CUS alumni or rostered church workers. At the graduate level, Concordia offers the Uncommon Scholarships for alumni, and employees of Lutheran schools and churches.

Learn more at [cuw.edu/luther-promise](http://cuw.edu/luther-promise) or [cuw.edu/uncommon-scholarships](http://cuw.edu/uncommon-scholarships).



Rev. Darrel Bergelin has been pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Howards Grove, Wisconsin, for 40 years and has supervised 21 vicars within that time—among the most of any pastor in the LCMS.

By **Kali Thiel**, *Strategic Communications*

One of the first things Rev. Darrel Bergelin (‘70) told Evan Veen (‘17) when he began his vicarage this summer at Trinity Lutheran Church in Howards Grove, Wisconsin, was that “you’ve got to write your sermons with the congregant in mind. If the mother with small children goes home with something, then other people certainly will, as well.”

It’s a lesson that Bergelin has imparted to exactly 20 other men over the years who were assigned to his charge during their final year of seminary. Since 1999, Bergelin has annually supervised a burgeoning pastor from Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, during their yearlong vicarage, placing him among the longest-running vicar supervisors within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Because Bergelin has had plenty of opportunity to hone his mentorship strategy, it’s no accident that he opens each vicarage experience with an urging to keep sermons focused.

“Sermons are one of the most fundamental parts of a pastor’s job, but they’re also something that can be easily messed up,” Bergelin said. “I tell my vicars, ‘If you don’t have it clear in your own mind after writing it and working with it for hours, there is no way the hearer in the pew—hearing it one time, cold—is ever going to get anything out of it.’”

The decision to begin supervising vicars came 19 years into Bergelin’s time at Trinity, an approximately 600-member congregation located in rural Sheboygan County.

“Our congregation, we’re at that size where we’re not large enough for two pastors, and yet it’s more than what one pastor can deal with properly,” Bergelin said. “We talked about different solutions, and we settled on the vicarage route.”

While the vicars certainly help to lighten Bergelin’s workload, the supervisor role is not without its share of extra responsibilities. Bergelin meets formally once a week with the vicars, and with his office next to theirs he regularly accommodates the organic conversations and queries

that arise throughout the week. Bergelin has learned to manage life’s minor interruptions with ease, however; he and his wife, Deede, raised 10 children—eight whom also graduated from CUW and two whom became pastors themselves.

Through his non-anxious demeanor and patient approach, Bergelin has eased what could otherwise be a stressful experience. The congregants of Trinity have played a vital role in encouraging dozens of the Church’s leaders, as well, said Bergelin.

“Nobody wants to be the first vicar at a church,” Bergelin said. “They come nervous enough, and they all want to do what’s right. They appreciate a congregation that’s loving and gracious to them.

“I can confidently say that’s been a big reason I’ve remained at Trinity all these years—because the congregation has been so loving and forgiving,” Bergelin continued. “I always say this is the top congregation in the LCMS. When I make that statement, I think that’s how every pastor should feel about his church.”



**Tessa Sain ('17)** opened a new pharmacy in downtown Stevens Point, Wisconsin, in June 2019.

**Marta Schmitt ('17)** married Andrew on April 27 at their church, Mercy Vineyard, in Minneapolis. The couple works together at Pro Deck Supply. ▼



**Adam Waggoner ('17)** accepted an offer of admission to the University of Michigan's PhD program in philosophy. He also was accepted into the University's Greek master's program and is working to simultaneously obtain his second master's degree and PhD. ▼



**Andrew Rosicky ('16)** married Sarah Hamilton on May 26, 2019. Andrew works as a clinical pharmacist at Ascension Saint Mary's Hospital in Rhinelander, Wisconsin.

**Jeremy Hanson ('15)** recently retired from the U.S. Air Force after 20 years of service. He is now headed to Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne to start his Master's of Divinity. ▼



**Jason McKinney ('15)** started a position as a general manager of Commercial Auto and Equipment Leasing at North Shore Bank. ▼



**Deanna Moore ('14)** is working with adults with disabilities in the Milwaukee area. She is continuing her education at Concordia University Wisconsin in the master's program for family studies. ▼



The 2019–20 faith associates.

*“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)*

If you went to Concordia or to a Christian college some years ago, maybe you know the term “dorm chaplain.” Dorm chaplains were students who held evening devotions or organized Bible studies, and many or most (or all, in days when it might have been mandatory) students joined in. Today’s college students are often from a wider spectrum of faith backgrounds and the old idea of how to foster faith in the residence halls doesn’t work quite the same.

Enter faith associates.

While I, along with some great colleagues, am blessed to serve the students, it is often fellow students who are best able to approach faith issues with their peers. In fact, a student survey from a couple of years ago told us just that: Students who had doubts or questions about faith sometimes felt most comfortable addressing them (at least initially) with their peers.

So now CUW is in its third year of having a number of faith associates placed in the residence halls. Eight students—four males and four females—have been trained to be faith associates this year. In partnership with Student Life, they are placed in the residence halls where the most freshmen live.

Their role is to help students acclimate to Concordia and especially integrate into the vibrant faith community. Some students are so well versed in church and faith that they simply want to be pointed in the right direction to faith activities, and they’re ready to join in. Others are starting from square one. Sometimes eliminating misconceptions about faith and God takes some friendship and walking alongside to build up trust. Believe it or not, some people find even the friendliest and kindest of Christians as “intimidating” or less than approachable.

Many on campus devote time and energy to drawing others into the fellowship of faith. Our faith associates simply help lead the way into our winsome witness.

**REV. STEVE SMITH**  
Campus Pastor

Twelve Concordia University students from both the Mequon and Ann Arbor campuses spent a week in Minneapolis as stage hosts for the 2019 LCMS Youth Gathering. Pictured here is **Hannah Lull ('21)** helping to pump up one of the morning session crowds before they dive into a daily devotion. Photo by Ashley Kilgas



grad on the go

Hiwot Abebe ('19) landed a coveted fellowship with Eli Lilly. Photo courtesy of Hiwot Abebe

By **Kali Thiel**, *Strategic Communications*

Following her graduation from Concordia University Wisconsin this past May, Iowa native Hiwot Abebe began a fellowship at Eli Lilly and Company, one of the leading pharmaceutical companies in the world. Abebe is the first at CUW to match to a postgraduate fellowship program, a highly competitive process. Furthermore, she'll be the first fellow in Eli Lilly's Clinical Information and Process Automation (CIPA) group. In order to land the opportunity, Abebe participated in a rigorous interview process this past December.

The CIPA fellowship entwines Abebe's interest in informatics and technology, giving her the opportunity to learn and grow from the internationally recognized Indianapolis-based company.

During her time at Concordia, Abebe was also the first student from CUW to be selected to complete an Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) rotation at Bristol-Myers Squibb. The global

biopharma company, with facilities in New Jersey, offers a limited number of APPE experiences each semester in areas including medical, commercial, and regulatory research.

A desire to be close to family fed into Abebe's decision to only apply to pharmacy schools in Wisconsin. At the time of her application, that meant either the University of Wisconsin-Madison or Concordia. Abebe was immediately attracted to Concordia's personalized approach.

"When I interviewed at Concordia, I felt like the sentiment was 'What can we do for you?' instead of the other way around, and so I figured if I'm going to go somewhere for four years, I might as well enjoy it."

"I'm so glad I chose Concordia," Abebe continued. "I honestly feel like my professors care about me. It's definitely a more human type of educational experience that Concordia offers."

Learn more about Concordia's School of Pharmacy by visiting [cuw.edu/pharmacy](http://cuw.edu/pharmacy).

**Courtney Glover ('13, '18)** is working on a master's in curriculum and instruction—educational research and serves as an academic advisor in the college of Education and Human Services at Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio. ▼



**Ian De Jong ('11)** finished his PhD in Renaissance English at the University of Nevada, Reno in May.

**'00s Sarah Salazar ('00)** has been married for 18 years and has two daughters. She met her husband in Guatemala City through a Christian community. They currently live in Houston, Texas. ▼



**'90s Victoria Toliver ('96)** has served as a housing program manager with the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services since 2015. She helps the community serve low-to-moderate-income individuals through federal grants.



Stacy Hoeft ('96), president and CEO of Lutheran Special Education Ministries, received the LEA's *Christus Magister* award.

Photo by Allie Millot ('20)

By **Kali Thiel**, *Strategic Communications*

Stacy Hoeft's earnest prayer has long been that the Lord would use her to make "the biggest, most positive impact" that she could within Lutheran schools.

These days, she's working to fulfill her vocation as president and CEO of Lutheran Special Education Ministries (LSEM), which exists to connect Lutheran schools or churches nationwide with certified special education professionals, and with the specialized programming and resources they need but can't always afford.

Under Hoeft's leadership, the LSEM team has expanded its reach from 37 schools—grades preschool through high school—to almost 70 nationwide.

It's been a long road to get to the place where she's currently at, however. In 2004—eight years after she graduated from CUW with her degree in elementary education—she involuntarily began an arduous journey that placed her in the midst of what *The Wall Street Journal* called one of "the most important religious liberty cases in a half century."

In 2004, as the brand-new principal of Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran School in Michigan, Hoeft was thrust into the national

spotlight where she and the school community were forced to silently endure years of public scrutiny over a decision made to dismiss a called teacher on staff. The teacher, bolstered by the backing of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), decided to sue in federal court.

For the eight years that followed, Hoeft and her team were in the throes of a legal battle that held such weighty implications for the Church that it seemed at times an unbearable load to manage.

"We took a lot of criticism for how we dealt with things, and it was rough," Hoeft said. "Because we weren't permitted to talk openly about the case while legal proceedings were underway, people often wrote their own version of the story."

The details of the story may have varied, but the crux of the legal struggle remained: should government force a church entity to retain a called worker who violates church teachings?

Ultimately, in 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court decided unanimously that the answer was "no," and in so doing upheld the principle that churches should be free to choose their leaders without government interference.

For her labors with the lawsuit and more, the Lutheran Education Association honored Hoeft earlier this year with its top honor, the *Christus Magister* award.

While she's proud of the work that went into the case, she does not want it to be what defines her.

"My life's ambition has always been to work with kids, and I felt like this case took me far from the kids. I hope that instead my legacy can be all the students who are touched through LSEM."

Hoeft will attest that Lutheran education has had an undeniable effect on her own life. A proud alumna of CUW, Hoeft said many of her Concordia professors, in particular, had a profound impact.

"The influence my professors had on me as a teacher and the support they've given me even after leaving college has been huge," Hoeft said. "They showed me how to be a teacher with a lot of compassion and passion. They modeled it. You saw it in them every day."

Read the full story at [blog.cuw.edu/new-heights-hoeft](http://blog.cuw.edu/new-heights-hoeft). Learn more about Concordia's School of Education at [cuw.edu/education](http://cuw.edu/education).

**'80s** **Neal Hinze ('87, '00)** resides in Grafton, Wisconsin, with his wife, Monica, and their daughters Ella and McKenzie. Neal currently serves Lutheran Manor Retirement Community in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, as director of loss prevention, safety, transportation, and reception. ▼



**Bill Hilgendorf ('72)** was ordained as a Specific Ministry Pastor on November 3, 2018, serving at Sterling Lutheran Church and Cooper Landing Community Lutheran Church, Alaska. ▼



**'50s** **David Young ('54, '56)** is retired but continues to preach once a month. He has served in Colorado, Florida, and most recently in Buffalo, New York, for the last 20 years. ▼



**'70s** **Katrina Mosley ('79)**, a photojournalist, had her work titled, "Jennifer, a series of portraits," on display at the Greenwood Park Gallery in Milwaukee over the summer. ▼



Nursing alumni returned to campus for the annual School of Nursing Alumni Night at the Chinooks baseball game. Pictured from left are: Cacia (Scheler) Speckhard ('14); faculty members Jennifer Delwiche and Brenda Jobe; Samuel Speckhard ('13); and Jill (Peterson) Krell ('94, '10, '14), who also serves on CUW's faculty.

UPDATE YOUR INFO AND SEND US YOUR ALUMNI NOTES AT [CUW.EDU/ALUMNIUPDATES](http://CUW.EDU/ALUMNIUPDATES). VIEW ALL OF THESE ALUMNI UPDATES AND MORE AT [CUW.EDU/ALUMNI](http://CUW.EDU/ALUMNI).



# Advancing the mission



Even as some students are still learning their way around campus, prospective students and parents are visiting us and considering if Concordia is the right place for them. They might be drawn to us because of a specific program, it could be that they have heard how beautiful our campus is, or perhaps the reputation of our faculty and the Christian ethos that permeates our culture causes them to check us out. Whatever the motivation, we are glad to welcome them to campus so that they can experience Concordia firsthand.

After that initial visit, many factors will determine if they will become one of our students in the future. Even if the fit seems perfect, one factor that often plays an important role for many families is the matter of finances. While many quickly recognize the value of a high-quality, Christ-centered education, the reality of how to pay for it cannot be ignored.

Thankfully, significant financial aid is available to help make a Concordia education possible. With more than 99 percent of our traditional students receiving scholarships, grants, and other financial aid, students can focus on their education and preparation in "mind, body, and spirit for service to Christ in the Church and the world." In other words, living the Concordia mission.

But where does all of this financial aid come from? While the sources are many, a vitally important part of the financial aid package comes from gifts made to the Concordia Fund. The Concordia Fund receives gifts of all sizes that help offset the cost of education. Through the generosity of alumni, past and current parents, friends, businesses, and congregations, the Concordia Fund is a keystone to student support. No gift is too big or small to be appreciated, and to make a difference for our students.

If you annually support the Concordia Fund, thank you. On behalf of the thousands of students who benefit in many ways from your annual gift, thank you. You may never know the name of any specific student who was touched by your gift, but rest assured that you are having an impact on the life of another person.

And if you have never made a gift to the Concordia Fund, please accept this invitation to begin the tradition today. Doing so is easy and is explained on the next page of this issue. You can also always go to our website and select the "Donate" link at the top of the page.

Whether your support of the Concordia Fund is a first-time experience or continues decades of support, every student who comes to Concordia will be blessed. Thank you.

**REV. DR. ROY PETERSON**  
*President, Concordia University Foundation*

# SUPPORT THE FUTURE



## What is the Concordia Fund?

Tuition only covers a portion of the actual cost to educate each student at Concordia. The Concordia Fund was established to offset the remaining expenses, allowing us to offer Concordia's students the increased quality and excellence that they deserve, without placing a greater financial burden on them.

Gifts to the Concordia Fund support scholarships and the day-to-day mission operations of the university.

***This is our greatest need.*** Your support of the Concordia Fund is vital in sustaining our mission to help students develop in mind, body, and spirit for service to Christ in the Church and the world.

## WHAT DOES YOUR GIFT SUPPORT?

 **100%**  
of traditional  
undergrads receive  
financial support

 **9 center**  
locations around  
**Wisconsin**

 **LARGEST**  
**MBA**  
program in WI

 **80**  
undergraduate  
majors

 **12:1**  
student-to-faculty

 **7,404**  
total enrollment

 **49**  
graduate &  
professional  
programs

**ratio**

    **30** varsity-level  
athletics



## WAYS TO GIVE

### Mail

Make check payable to "CUW Foundation" and send to:

Concordia University Wisconsin  
Office of Advancement  
12800 N Lakeshore Dr., Mequon, WI 53097

### Online

Give a one-time or recurring gift at [cuw.edu/give](http://cuw.edu/give)

### Phone

Call 262.243.4423

**Gifts of stock or securities**

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