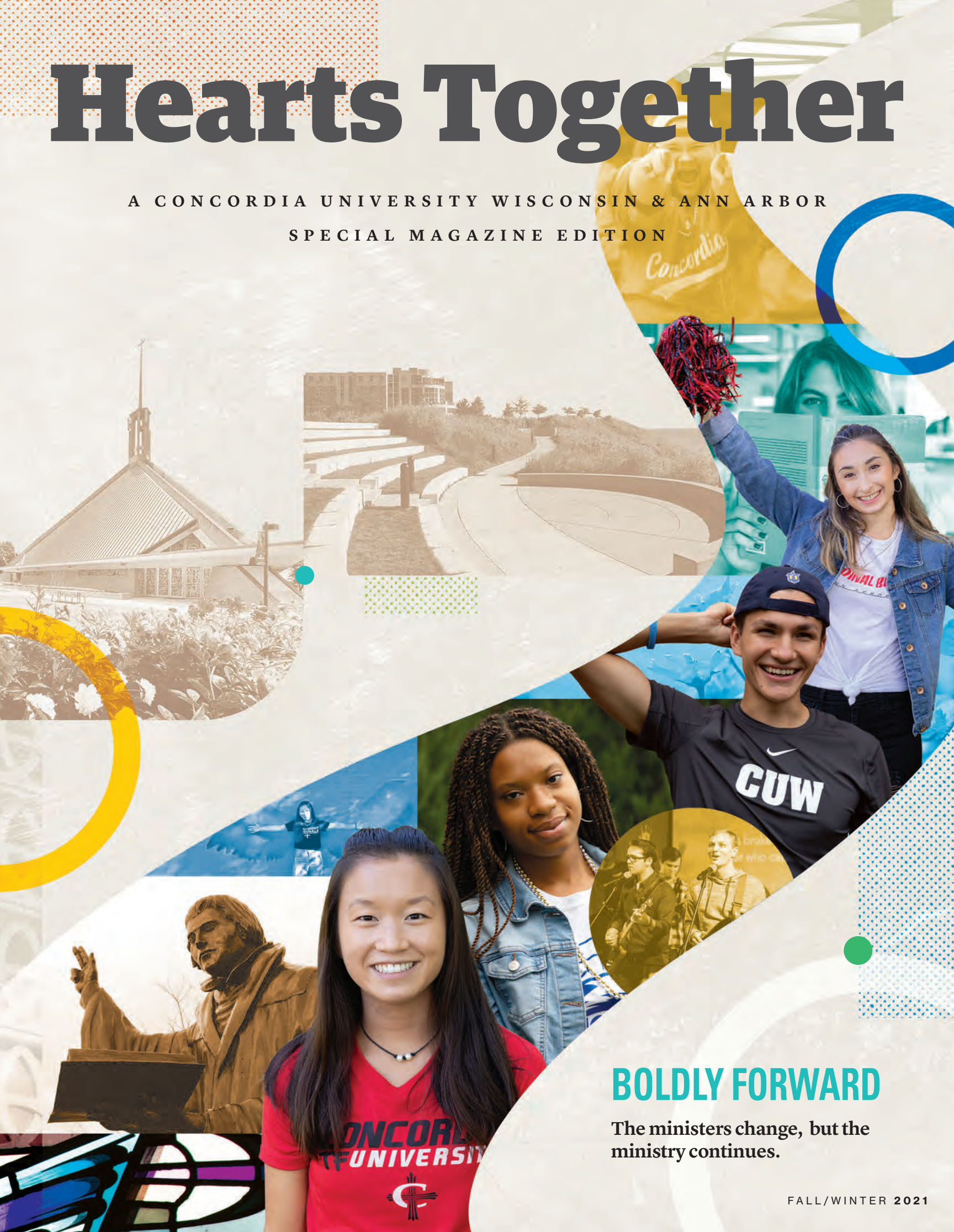


# Hearts Together

A CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY WISCONSIN & ANN ARBOR  
SPECIAL MAGAZINE EDITION



## BOLDLY FORWARD

The ministers change, but the ministry continues.

FALL/WINTER 2021



# Hearts Together contents

FALL/WINTER 2021



## ON THE COVERS

**FRONT** Bold colors for a bold strategic plan, which will illuminate the path forward for faculty, staff, and students to extend Concordia's mission into the future.

**BACK** There are too many people to count who have shaped Concordia throughout its history, but a few are represented on the back cover. Visit [blog.cuw.edu/back-cover](http://blog.cuw.edu/back-cover) and [blog.cuaa.edu/back-cover](http://blog.cuaa.edu/back-cover) to learn more about who is pictured.

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## Leaders change, but ministry continues

**A**s a historian, I am quite used to observing both continuity and change from one time period to the next. As Concordia's interim president, I have the unparalleled opportunity to view Concordia University as it experiences significant changes. While change can be difficult, I know that the Concordia community will endure and thrive, in great part because its mission endures, and its ministry continues.

Two of our more challenging current changes are the continuing COVID impact and our CUWAA presidential transition. Not only has COVID affected us individually, it has changed the way that universities like Concordia pursue their mission. And a presidential transition is a significant change at Concordia in great part because we have not experienced that transition for 25 years.

This letter is not the place to provide updates on either of those challenges; nor is it the venue to share how well our community is responding to either change. Instead, I wish to remind you that amidst all of the changes going on around us and the changes that Concordia itself experiences our ministry will continue. There are structural reasons for this assurance of mine—dedicated and excellent faculty and staff members, a strong and experienced leadership team, a position of comparatively strong financial strength, and a history of our institution adapting to change and growing—but I want to focus on a more fundamental reason.

As the chosen theme verses for the 2021–22 academic year remind us, we have a God who is in charge! The Ann Arbor campus theme verse, 2 Corinthians 4: 7–9, focuses our attention on an “All-Surpassing Savior,” while the Mequon campus theme verse, Isaiah 64: 8, describes that we are “Shaped With Purpose.” In a world where change seems the only constant, the knowledge that our Creator, Redeemer, and Comforter does not change gives the Concordia community a foundation on which to continue its educational mission. The theme verses also remind us that our God loves us so much that He is willing to continue to mold and shape us toward His purposes. That is true of Concordia, as well; as much as it might change, its mission and ministry to our students will endure.

I look forward to seeing what God has in store for Concordia University as it adapts and changes to address challenges like COVID. I also look forward to seeing the impact of the next generation of Concordia leaders that God has planned for our institution. Most important, as always, I look forward to seeing the impact that Concordia has on its students. By God's grace, Concordia will continue to have that impact on the world.

In His service,



**WILLIAM R. CARIO, PH.D.**  
*Interim President*



**HEARTS TOGETHER** is a joint publication of the Mequon and Ann Arbor campuses of Concordia University. In 2013, the two formerly independent universities merged into one institution, overseen by one president and one governing board. This publication shares the stories of the exciting advancements on each of the campuses; the notable accomplishments of faculty, staff, students, and alumni; and the life-changing service Concordians—*hearts together*—undertake for Christ in the Church and the world.

The Strategic Communications department is responsible for the production of *Hearts Together*. The magazine's editorial team welcomes your feedback. Please send comments or queries to [Kali.Thiel@cuw.edu](mailto:Kali.Thiel@cuw.edu).

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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 [news@cuw.edu](mailto:news@cuw.edu) or [news@cuaa.edu](mailto:news@cuaa.edu).








# social scene

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### • **Treasured tiles**

Thank you to John for finding and fixing all the loose spots on CUW's historic tile! Our maintenance team does an amazing job of keeping our campus beautiful.

### **GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT!**

The Cardinal Field House was rockin'! 🔥 So glad that CUAA Cardinal Athletics camps are BACK.



**THEY'RE BACK!** From busy sidewalks and classrooms, to bustling res halls and practice fields, #CUAA is better when we can be here together. Praising God for the 59th academic year at Concordia!

**WE ♥ BETHESDA!** This year, Bethesda College at CUW hosts the largest cohort the college has seen since its start in 2014! Welcome to campus, all! Read all about Bethesda at [blog.cuw.edu/largest-bethesda-cohort](http://blog.cuw.edu/largest-bethesda-cohort).



• **ALL NATIONS PRAISE HIM**

Amare Teklu, who is enrolled in CUW’s Master of Church Music program, is bringing the Lutheran tradition of parish music to churches in Ethiopia. Learn more about his efforts at [blog.cuw.edu/Ethiopian-music](http://blog.cuw.edu/Ethiopian-music).



• **BILL AND THE BIRDS**

July 1: the beginning of a new era! Today, William Cario, PhD, continues his service to CUWAA as interim president. Between Bill, Corky, and Freddy, we continue to be in good hands (and wings!).

**A CUA A Icon: The Manor**

The Earhart Manor at #CUAA is many Concordians’ favorite spot on campus. Have you ever read the fascinating history behind this building? Now is your chance! [blog.cuaa.edu/earhart-manor-origin-story](http://blog.cuaa.edu/earhart-manor-origin-story).



**Featuring ... YOU!**

We love watching for all the photos you post of CUW and CUA A campus life. Keep 'em coming, and be sure to tag us!



@brookecarolinesunshine concordia bound!! 🤩 can't wait to start @cuwisconsin in fall & i figured it was time i let everyone know :)



@zanadia\_y Live uncommonly 🌟 #cuw #lakeviews #collegegirl



@micahhoehner The weather was so breezy man why can't life always be this easy



@hali.paige probably laughing at something @katrina.noell said



@c2visualmedia The secret is work 📄🏀



# take five



## Get to know one of our *uncommon* Concordians, philosophy and political science double major **Adam Urban ('23)**.

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

**H**is birth name is Mahadevan. At camp, he's known as Taj. On campus, he goes by the name his adoptive family gave him when he was welcomed into their home at age 2½. No matter how you know him, however, one thing is certain: Adam Urban is a person worth knowing.

And it's not hard to find opportunities to get to know him if you attend Concordia. On top of his very full academic load, Adam makes a point of getting involved. This year he's an RA, a member of the SGA executive board, president of Concordia's Philosophy Club, a CMLT Bible study leader, and he's working to start a Society of Law club.

### 1 **What motivates you to be involved in so many aspects of campus life?**

I have a hard time saying no. [Laughs] But I also realize that if you don't do something, it's an opportunity missed. I just love helping out and improving things that can be improved upon. The more you get out of your shell, the more you meet people and the more you can take advantage of everything it has to offer.

### 2 **Have you always had your sights set on Concordia?**

This is actually the last place I thought I'd be. I had looked at several other colleges and just didn't think of Concordia because, honestly, I had some misconceptions about it. But then I was at Camp Luther in Three Lakes, Wisconsin, where I've worked or attended for the past 16 years. One of the counselors encouraged me to consider Concordia, and I realized that this school represents everything I believe in, so it just made sense to put myself among people who share my faith beliefs. Now, knowing

what I know, I wouldn't hesitate to enroll here again.

### 3 **Tell me about your camp name.**

Taj is a shortening of Taj Mahal, because I'm Indian, and it's something that reminds me of this really impactful trip I took to India when I was in high school. It was a mission trip, but then my dad and I stayed for an extra week and went back to the orphanage that they adopted me from. I met my house mother who took care of me as an orphan, and she remembered me! She remembered how sensitive my ears and stomach were. I don't think I can put into words how incredible that was for me.

### 4 **What else was meaningful about that trip?**

My trip to India taught me how important education is. All those kids want to do is learn, and we're so privileged in the States to be surrounded by books and have ready access to information. It's motivated me to want to start a nonprofit to help others in some kind of way. I want to adopt as well. I want 12 kids, but I'm settling for six to eight.

### 5 **What advice would you give to someone just starting out at Concordia?**

Take your studies seriously right away, especially freshmen year, but don't neglect the other parts of college life. Building friendships and people skills is equally important for life. And if you don't know how to get involved, come find me.

Learn more about student life at Concordia. Visit [cuw.edu/life](http://cuw.edu/life).



# Getting away from it all

Student ministry leaders Rachel Osell ('22), Brian Frank ('24), and Macee Boehmann ('24) relax at Concordia's beautiful Whispering Pines Retreat Center. Since at least the 1990s, members of the Campus Ministry Leadership Team (CMLT) have come to Whispering Pines in August for a time of training, spiritual refreshment, and fellowship. To read more, visit [blog.cuw.edu/whispering-pines](http://blog.cuw.edu/whispering-pines).







## Shaped with purpose

“But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.” —*Isaiah 64:8*

C UW’s 2021–22 academic year theme is “Shaped With Purpose.” The inspiration verse for the theme, Isaiah 64:8, calls to mind the image of an artist, a potter who creates something out of near nothingness.

C UW campus pastor Rev. Steve Smith explains it this way:

“A skilled potter can make things that are both beautiful and useful. Even pots that are misshapen or deformed can be reformed into a functional and uniquely beautiful shape. So it is with us; we, who are tainted with sin, can be transformed to serve God’s purpose.

And what is that purpose? Our purpose is that we be caught up in God’s desire—that we, and everyone we know, be saved so we can enjoy eternal life in heaven.”

Read more of Pastor Smith’s theme verse explanation at [blog.cuw.edu/2021-22-theme](http://blog.cuw.edu/2021-22-theme).



## UNITED IN SONG

T he Word of the Lord may remain the same forever, but the Rev. Dr. Stephen Starke has a knack for presenting it in new and enlightening ways.

Starke, pastor emeritus of St. John Ev. Lutheran Church of Amelithin Bay City, Michigan, has carved out a reputation within The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod as a prolific and gifted hymn writer. Since his first hymn written in 1983, he has penned more than 200 hymns, some of which appear in the *Lutheran Service Book*. For his work on behalf of the Church, Concordia’s Mequon campus presented him with an honorary doctorate in 2011, and in 2018 the Ann Arbor campus honored him with its Christus Primus Award.

Starke’s latest hymn was specially crafted for Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor. At the suggestion of Dr. James Freese, the university commissioned him to write the theme hymn for the 2021–22 academic year and premiered it at Opening Service.

The hymn, which is set to a tune by Stephen R. Johnson, is titled “Have You Known and Been Assured.” Starke drew inspiration from each campus’ theme verse for this academic year (read more about Ann Arbor’s theme verse on page 24).

“Hymnody is beyond enriching; it’s a teacher,” says Starke. “There’s always great value in the new. If you say the ‘old’ truth in a new way, you help people think about it in a different way.”

As for what he hopes Concordians will take away from the piece he wrote expressly for them?

“My hope is that those who are Christians are strengthened in their faith and reminded of their joyful privilege of sharing the Gospel,” Starke says. “And for those who are still journeying in their faith, I hope that they’re sort of hit in the face by those opening lines of the hymn; He loved you as an individual. You are not some random blip in time. You are created specially by God!”

## SAVE THE DATE

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



### Visit Days

Oct. 1, 15 & 29



### Homecoming

Oct. 11–16

*Family Weekend and a special 2020 commencement will also occur this week*



### Leadership Series

Oct. 21



### Christmas at Concordia

Dec. 3–4



### December Commencement

Dec. 18





This past year, Kylee Marks served as a graduate student researcher for Estrigenix Therapeutics, one of the start-ups that CU Ventures is newly supporting.

## A PROMISING VENTURE

Concordia has launched a new initiative to help turn the innovative ideas bred on campus into genuine entrepreneurial opportunities. CU Ventures connects students and faculty with the capital, mentoring, and other resources needed to help turn ideas into real-world business enterprises. Concordia, meanwhile, retains a financial stake in the new company.

“It’s a win-win,” says Curt Gielow, CU Ventures executive vice president.

“Universities are facing increased financial pressures, so the need to explore alternative revenue models is greater than ever.”

In addition to Gielow, the CU Ventures leadership team is made up of Dr. Daniel Sem, president of CU Ventures and dean of Concordia’s Batterman School of Business, and Rev. Dr. Roy Peterson, board chairman and president of the Concordia University Foundation.

Much like any other fledgling business, CU Ventures is still in the start-up stage, but already there are a handful of ventures in the works. One of those, Estrigenix Therapeutics, is a pharmaceutical company cofounded by Sem and collaborators from two other Wisconsin universities. The company’s founders developed a chemical compound that reduces hot flashes and the occurrence of dementia in women.

Just this past summer, the promising start-up placed second in a statewide business plan competition. During the competition, Kylee Marks (’21) presented to a panel of venture capitalists/judges on behalf of Estrigenix. Marks took on marketing for Estrigenix as part of her senior thesis project. She graduated from Concordia in May with double master’s degrees in product development (pharmaceutical concentration) and business administration.

“Being a part of the Estrigenix team has provided me with invaluable experience,” says Marks. “I have had the opportunity to learn from three incredibly knowledgeable individuals whose passion for improving women’s health is truly inspirational. I am excited for the potential impact this drug will have on women and their future generations.”

Read more and learn how you can get involved at [blog.cuw.edu/cu-ventures](http://blog.cuw.edu/cu-ventures).

## TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

In today’s business world, it takes a special mix of talent, skills, and experience to get ahead. And that’s just what Amber Gray, CPA, brings as the new director of the MBA program for Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor.

Concordia’s MBA holds the highest enrollment of any single program within the university. Gray, who is based in Ann Arbor, says she’s eager to build upon its success.

“It’s time to put the finishing touches on the program, to fine tune what is already a really competitive, solid, and in-demand offering.”

Gray got her professional start in auditing at KPMG, one of the Big Four accounting firms. After quickly rising in the company ranks in various corporate accounting roles, she later served as CFO and controller of a Michigan-based medical case management company. Despite her success, it wasn’t long before she realized the academic world was where she truly belonged. In 2003, she began her “second career” in college academics.

“The classroom energizes me,” Gray says. “I like taking something that is hard and making it easy. The greatest compliment I could receive is for a student to say, ‘You made this fun.’”

And she’s thrilled to now teach and lead at a university where faith is prioritized.

“I can just tell, culture-wise, that everyone really does care for each other,” Gray says. “It’s a place that truly believes in developing others for service to Christ in the world.”

Learn more at [cuw.edu/mba](http://cuw.edu/mba) or [cuua.edu/mba](http://cuua.edu/mba).



### Alumni connection

CONCORDIA HAS WELCOMED GREG WITTO TO SERVE AS DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI AND PARENT RELATIONS. Greg is a ’94 alumnus of our CUAA campus and a CUW parent with two children currently enrolled at Mequon. Alumni, be sure to say hello to Greg next time you’re on campus!



of alumni surveyed said they have a good/great opinion of CUW

### Your voice heard

IN MARCH, WE INVITED ALUMNI TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR SECOND-EVER ALUMNI ATTITUDE SURVEY. Thank you to those who shared your feedback! See what we learned from you: [blog.cuw.edu/alumni-survey-results](http://blog.cuw.edu/alumni-survey-results).





## WASHED AND WON

The icy waters of Lake Michigan combined with the all-powerful Word of God on May 3, 2021 to create a miraculous change in CUW student Kylie Nelson’s life.

That day, dozens of Concordians surrounded Nelson on the shores of CUW’s beach—a fitting location and audience since it was at Concordia, and because of Concordians’ faithful witness, that she first started to seriously consider baptism.

Nelson began her college tenure at CUAA, wholly uninterested in anything to do with God but highly attracted to CUAA’s cheer team. Her young life had been fraught with tribulations: the divorce of her parents, the death of a sibling, and abuse from her biological mother. The struggles effectively drove a wedge between her and the Lord; that is, until tragedy struck again while she was enrolled at CUAA. The evening of Oct. 31, 2019, just an hour adjourned from Rev. Dr. Ryan Peterson’s religion class, Nelson received word that her boyfriend had died.

“Instead of retreating from God, I found myself turning to Scripture for answers,” says Nelson. “Pastor Ryan’s class became a weekly reminder and, in an odd way, a weekly support to me.”

Still, a change was in order for her. At semester, Nelson transferred to Mequon—away from the memory of that dreaded call and physically closer to supportive family.

She found in Mequon a new support system and one that continued to steer her toward the truth of God’s Word. The Holy Spirit further opened Nelson’s heart when she began to date CUW football player Nick Mirasola, who became a godly support by delving into heavy faith discussions with her and introducing a nightly prayer routine that the pair maintains to this day.

It was Mirasola who posed the idea of baptism. Nelson’s only stipulation was that she be baptized by Peterson, who continued to check in on her throughout her transition to Mequon. Lake Michigan, an adjoining feature of Wisconsin and Michigan, proved an apt choice because it symbolized the unity of the CUW and CUAA campuses, and the impact both had on her faith walk.

Following her baptism, Nelson’s faith continues to be nourished through her attendance at Grace Lutheran Church in Menomonee Falls, where Mirasola and his family attend. “My baptismal day was honestly one of the most special days in my life,” Nelson says. “I’m so thankful for the journey the Lord has me on.”

Learn more about how faith comes first at Concordia. Visit [cuw.edu/christianlife](http://cuw.edu/christianlife) or [cuaa.edu/christianlife](http://cuaa.edu/christianlife).

## LEADING FOR THE CHURCH

The good work of preparing called workers for The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod remains strong at Concordia University Wisconsin. The most recent data for the six Concordia University System locations shows CUW as a leader in this area. Highlights of the fall 2020 system-wide census data show that the Mequon campus has:



Most pre-seminary students



Second-largest Lutheran Teacher Diploma program



Sole director of church ministries program



Most graduate-level learners who identify as LCMS



Most undergraduates who identify as Lutheran (any denomination)

## UPPING OUR GAME

The Most Improved award goes to the Falcons locker room this year.

Generous gifts from Matt Burow of Catalyst Construction and several other donors made possible an overhaul of the men’s facilities this past summer. It had been more than three decades since the locker room last received upgrades.

The project included the installation of new flooring, 150 lockers with industrial-grade wooden doors, LED lighting, renovated showers, and a state-of-the-art audiovisual entertainment system.

“For athletes, a locker room is so much more than just a place to get ready for competition or practice,” says Director of Athletics Dr. Rob Barnhill. “It’s a place where values are imparted through inspiring talks from coaches, player bonds are built, and important pregame rituals occur. It’s a place that can set the tone for the season. With this renovation, our locker rooms now meet the caliber of our programs.”

Alumni athletes and other Falcons supporters still have several opportunities to contribute, including naming rights on lockers. To give, visit [cuw.edu/supportlockers](http://cuw.edu/supportlockers).





## TEAMWORK FOR THE WIN

She's the most decorated female athlete in Falcons history, so it should come as no surprise that Amanda (Kuca) Lorenzen ('06) knows how to lead—and how to be a team player. She and her husband, Micah ('08), began their partnership while at Concordia, as teammates on CUW's cross country and track and field teams. They now practice teamwork daily as they raise their five children: Nole (11), Coen (9), Neely (7), Grady Mae (5), and Bode (3).

Before becoming a mom of five, Lorenzen put her Concordia nursing degree to work in a hospital postpartum unit, pediatric in-home health setting, and, later, as a school nurse. The family recently moved to Westland, Michigan, where Micah serves as principal of Lutheran High School Westland. Read more at [blog.cuw.edu/amanda-lorenzen](http://blog.cuw.edu/amanda-lorenzen).







# est HIGHER EDUCATION

## *Six doctoral degrees and counting ...*

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

**T**he energy at CUW was as high as learners' academic ambitions on July 12 when 15 professionals arrived on the Mequon campus to begin the pursuit of their doctoral degree.

The week marked a start not just for the learners but for Concordia, too. It was the launch of the university's newest doctorate program, the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA).

The DBA brings CUW's doctoral total to six. Six programs that offer learners worldwide the chance to achieve, grow, and expand knowledge at the highest possible level within their field—and to do it with the Christian underpinning and uncommon care that is characteristic of a Concordia education.

"We have intentionally designed our programs to be rigorous and Christ-centered and caring," says Interim Provost Leah Dvorak. "We set a high bar, but then we support the students all the way through. That support is baked into the equation, and I would argue that we do it exceptionally well."

CUW's entry into the doctoral realm began in 2002, but within the past five years the university has doubled its terminal degree repertoire. Read on to see how Concordia is reaching new heights with its highest academic offerings.

Want in? Visit [cuw.edu/apply](http://cuw.edu/apply) or [cuaa.edu/apply](http://cuaa.edu/apply).

### **SOON THE ANN ARBOR CAMPUS**

*will pilot two of its own terminal degrees. CUAA will launch a Doctor of Occupational Therapy degree in 2022 and a Doctor of Physical Therapy program in 2023, pending successful candidacy status from each one's professional accrediting bodies.*





## DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

*Launched summer 2021*

CUW's latest doctorate is offered completely online, outside of two week-long on-campus requirements. The DBA aims to equip learners to transform organizations and improve performance through grounded research methods. The three-year, 60-credit (minimum) program features three concentration options: financial and economic management, organizational change and performance, and health care administration.



## DOCTOR OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

*Launched summer 2020*

Concordia converted its post-professional Doctor of Occupational Therapy program, which was started in 2013, to an entry-level Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTDe) degree in order to keep up with the ever-changing demands of the field. The newly refurbished program prepares professionals to enter the top ranks of OTs in America. The three-year program is offered in a blended format for the convenience of learners.



## DOCTORATE OF EDUCATION IN LEADERSHIP IN INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

*Launched fall 2018*

The three-year EdD LICl program is an interdisciplinary program offered in an online format with two residency requirements. It comprises three core areas: leadership, research, and improvement science and innovation, as well as a fourth elective area. Already, the LICl program has welcomed over 275 learners to the fold, including more than 100 Portland transfer students.



## DOCTOR OF PHARMACY

*Launched fall 2010*

Concordia was the second university in the state to offer a PharmD, and it remains one of the only universities in the Midwest to train pharmacists from a distinctly Christian approach. Additionally, the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education recently noted Concordia's PharmD as one of only five "Noteworthy Examples" of exceptional achievement nationwide.



## DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE

*Launched summer 2008*

Over the years, CUW has set itself apart as a leader within the health care realm. The university padded that reputation in 2009 when it became the first school in Wisconsin to graduate Doctor of Nursing Practice students. Decades later, the university continues to produce Christian leaders who are eligible for some of the highest-ranking positions within health care organizations nationwide.



## DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY

*Launched fall 2002*

CUW's inaugural doctoral program remains one of its strongest academic offerings to date. Concordia's Doctor of Physical Therapy graduates annually achieve above-average pass rates on the national certifying exam required for professional practice. In fact, seven of the past eight year's cohorts have achieved a 100 percent first-time pass rate on the National Physical Therapy Exam.









# TOGETHER, WE WILL

To the glory of God for CUW, "Shaped With Purpose"  
and for CUAA, "All-Surpassing Savior"

Have You Known and Been Assured

1 you know I been as - sured That the LORD's e - ter - nal Wor  
2 God's own re on dis - play, Trea - sure - hold - ing jars of clay  
3 we of may feel weak, We be - lieve, and so we spea  
4 gh all chan not lose heart, Ev - 'ry sun - rise, our new start

he us and am own, to res - cue you? Is your life  
for our old Christ's love and joy; Though weighed down  
He who raised our Lord, will raise us too; It is all  
bap - tism we re - call, washed pure and clean. All these thing

y, Or are you God's pot - ter - y— Pre - cious,  
care, Some - times driv - en to de - spair, No - al -  
sake, That the last to life a - wake, As God's  
pare Glo - ry's weight be - yond com - pare, Look - ing

and u - nique, in Christ made new?  
trial, or loss can fail to re - stroy  
tends to them with pleas - es due  
tran - sient things, but things un - seen

Refrain  
at pass - ing Lord and Sav -

The bold alignment  
of people, plan, and  
purpose for Concordia's  
eternal mission

By **Lisa Liljgren**, Strategic Communications







ISAIAH 40:3

*"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."*

**T**here's no time to rest. Mere weeks after the retirement of Rev. Patrick T. Ferry, PhD, beloved long-standing president of Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor, Concordia released a bold five-year comprehensive strategic plan that protects the sanctity of the university's mission and ministry, and prepares the way for our faculty, staff, and students to extend God's mission for generations to come.

"Higher education is experiencing such change," says William Cario, PhD, interim president. "Our plan is based on things that won't change, like mission, vision, and purpose, and it also is flexible to address the changes and continue to meet the needs of our traditional, graduate, and post-traditional learners."

More than 150 administrators, faculty, staff, and board members participated in the months-long planning process. Prior to the process, Concordia alumni and friends engaged in a series of focus groups that provided valuable insights and perspectives. The assembly was charged with two very different and equally important tasks: chart a solid course for immediate university success post pandemic and secure long-term eminence in higher education well into the 21st century.

While the higher-education industry faces several threats beyond COVID-19, including demographic decline, competitive pressures, public perceptions, and technological shifts, for our Concordias that hold to historic Christian orthodoxy even in the face of an increasingly secular world the challenges are especially acute. The strength of the plan and our community's fidelity to its execution are more crucial than ever.

The plan represents an uncommon galvanization of people who consistently relied on God's guiding hand to map and execute a future for Concordia as He intends.





# THE PEOPLE

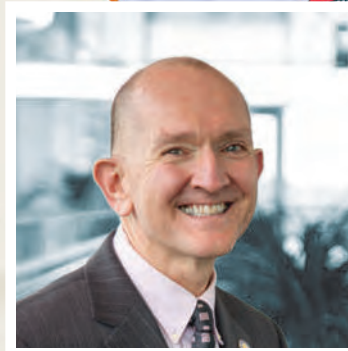
The leadership team at Concordia represents a collective 135 years of service to Concordia. They are pastors, professors, scientists, history buffs, business pros, fitness enthusiasts, techies, authors, parents, spouses, advisors, and brothers and sisters in Christ. They bring their whole selves in mind, body, and spirit to faithfully guide and protect the university as a premier higher-education institution of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. They accepted the call to boldly create new opportunities and innovative solutions for Concordia to make a larger, more lasting impact in the Church and the world.



**William Cario, PhD**  
Interim President  
*31 years*



**Allen Prochnow**  
Executive Vice President &  
Chief Operating Officer  
*22 years*



**Rev. Dr. Roy Peterson, CFRE**  
President, Concordia  
University Foundation  
*14 years*



**Rev. Dr. Ryan Peterson**  
Vice President of  
Administration, CUAA  
*8 years*



**Leah Dvorak, PhD**  
Interim Provost  
*10 years*



**Steven Taylor, EdD**  
Vice President of Student Life  
*22 years*



**Dean Rennieke**  
Vice President, Concordia  
University Foundation  
*4 years*



**Thomas Phillip**  
Vice President of  
Information Technology  
*24 years*



# THE PLAN

The framework of the plan builds on the strengths and distinctions of Concordia University, and prioritizes resources and energies accordingly. The plan identifies key performance goals and strategies for significant achievement in five priority areas that have been identified as critical to the university's mission and future.

These five priority areas guide operational decision-making, resource allocation, and action prioritization.

All Concordians at every level within the organization understand their part in the plan and are activated to ensure success in the higher-education landscape. Progress toward goals will be monitored and assessed on a quarterly basis.

## TOGETHER, WE WILL...

### OFFER UNSURPASSED WHOLE STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPING.

Through excellent teaching—a core strength and defining characteristic of Concordia—and uncommon Christian care, students will prepare to lead rich, fulfilling lives of purpose.



### EXPAND THE IMPACT AND REACH OF CONCORDIA'S MISSION.

Through expansive collaborations, and the intentional cultivation and stewardship of diversified financial resources, Concordia will touch as many lives as possible and dramatically shape a new generation of leaders.



### EXEMPLIFY CHRISTIAN VALUES AND ETHICS WITHIN ALL ENGAGEMENTS.

Through clear, efficient, and effective policies, Concordia will be regarded as a trusted employer; valuable corporate partner; and an asset to the Church, the community, and the world.







**TAP THE FULL POTENTIAL OF ALL LEARNERS.**

Through unmatched scholarship, opportunity, and flexibility, we will honor and equip students, wherever they are in life, with skills, knowledge, and training for meaningful vocations.



**ALLOCATE AND INVEST IN INNOVATION ACROSS CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY.**

Through frameworks and processes that prioritize diversity, creativity, and change-readiness, Concordia will deliver a competitive, durable, and sustainable 21st century education.

**PREPARE *The Way***

Throughout the summer now past, there was a lot of preparation taking place at Concordia. Faculty and students were preparing for another academic year, and our leadership team was preparing for the first change of presidential leadership in nearly a quarter of a century.

The theme “Prepare the Way” describes well what is happening on our Concordia campuses. On one level, many may think that this theme refers to getting ready for our next president. And certainly we do want to ready ourselves for that day. But those words have a much deeper meaning in light of our mission of preparing students for lives of service to Christ in the Church and the world.

Many will recognize the biblical reference of “Prepare the Way” as it refers to the work of John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ. Even as John prepared the way for the incarnate Christ, Concordia, along with the whole Christian Church on earth, is preparing the way for the triumphant return of Christ. Nothing is more important than equipping our students to live our mission as faith-filled followers of Jesus.

During this year of transition, please keep Concordia in your personal prayers as we prepare the way for our next president, but more importantly as we prepare the way for our students to serve Christ in the Church and the world.

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



**THE PURPOSE**

The Concordia experience is based on whole-person formation for every student. Every encounter, in person and online, is an opportunity to demonstrate Christ-focused interactions that will prepare for uncommon lives of deeper purpose, stronger connection, more meaningful service, and global citizenship.

With God’s guiding hand, and the support of all members of our community, together, we will secure a world-class, distinctively Lutheran, higher-learning experience for generations to come.



# take five

Get to know one of our *uncommon* Concordians,  
CUAA Director of Donor and Alumni Relations **Linda Sproul ('92)**.

By **Mike Zimmerman**, *Strategic Communications*



It would be hard to find anyone with a deeper passion for Concordia than Linda Sproul. She's been a part of the CUAA community since 1988 when she became a student and then returned to the fold in 2018 to serve on Concordia's Advancement team. She's also a chapel organist, an enthusiastic alumni connector, and a friendly and familiar face around campus. Whether she's new to you or an old friend, here are a few fun facts to help you get to know her better.

**1 What makes your Concordia connection so strong?**

I fell in love with CUAA on a trip here with my high school youth group. I knew then that I would attend. Over the years, I've kept in touch with dorm mates and faculty members who feel like family. My husband John ('84) and my daughter Alison ('20) are also CUAA alums, so we're a big Concordia family!

**2 What's your favorite thing about working in Advancement?**

Connecting people! I love the challenge of staying in touch and helping people re-connect. A lot of times alumni will reach out to me to get back in touch with a former professor, roommate, or somebody else. Being able to help people hold hands again after 20-plus years, that's been awesome.

**3 How did you get started playing the organ?**

When I came to Concordia as a student, I was a piano major. I had never touched an organ, but we have this beautiful, enormous Schlicker organ in the chapel, and one day the organ professor sat me on the organ bench after chapel and literally pulled out all the stops, which makes it as loud as it can be. He coached me through a few chords, and then it was *liftoff!* I was hooked! From that minute, I started practicing to declare organ as a double major.

**4 What are your passions outside of work and music?**

My husband and I share a big interest in WWI history. We were in Sarajevo for the 100th anniversary of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and our interest grew from there. We also both appreciate Victorian-era antiques and music, and really anything from that era. We both joke that we were born 100 years too late!

**5 Do you have any hidden talents we should know about?**

Well, I can recite all 66 books of the Bible in less than a minute! *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers ...*



ON A SCALE OF PIANISSIMO TO FORTISSIMO, HOW MUCH DO YOU LOVE CUAA? SHOW YOUR ANN ARBOR PRIDE BY GETTING INVOLVED! VISIT [CUAA.EDU/ALUMNI](http://CUAA.EDU/ALUMNI) TO SIGN UP FOR THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER, LEARN ABOUT ALUMNI RESOURCES AND BENEFITS, AND MORE.





# Learning in the moment

Professor of English Neal Migan, PhD, is quick to share wisdom and inspiration in each student encounter. He challenges the perspective and lives his love of literature—a class with Dr. Migan is a “must” while you’re at CUA!

Explore a world of possibilities with a degree in English at [cuaa.edu/english](https://cuaa.edu/english).





Alex Hinojosa ('21) benefitted from CUAA's STEPS program. He and his wife, Abbey (Bentz) Hinojosa ('21), now live in Fort Wayne, where Alex is studying to become a pastor. *Photography courtesy of Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne*

## MINISTERS IN TRAINING

Since 2004, Concordia University Ann Arbor's STEPS program has helped more pre-seminary and pre-deaconess candidates gain early, on-the-job training and access to mentors than any other school in the Concordia University System.

This year CUAA will expand the successful internship model to two other church work programs. Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts in family life ministry or Bachelor of Arts in parish music programs may now opt in to a paid part-time internship experience with any of CUAA's 20-plus partner parishes or LCMS ministries.

Typically church work students don't participate in the equivalent of an internship until their senior year at CUAA or seminary, but STEPS aims to get them into real-life ministry settings their sophomore year.

"We found the program to be so beneficial for our pre-seminary students that we wanted to expand it to our other church work candidates, as well," says CUAA's pre-seminary director Rev. Dr. Ted Hopkins, who oversees the STEPS program.

"The more we can help students put their classroom knowledge into action and connect them with positive role models for their future vocations, the more they're able to mature and grow into their callings."

That certainly was the case for Alex Hinojosa ('21). While pre-seminary students are only required to participate in STEPS for one semester, Hinojosa chose to stick with the program through to his graduation this past May. He's now enrolled at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne and is thankful for the extra opportunities he had to "get his feet wet."

"It gave me a new appreciation for the amount of work that goes into ministry," says Hinojosa. "And I gained so much confidence and support from the overwhelming amount of love that was shown to me by my STEPS congregation."

STEPS is funded by grants received by the Michigan District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and contributions from donors. To support this uniquely CUAA program, visit [cuaa.edu/give](http://cuaa.edu/give). Learn more about church work programs at CUAA at [cuaa.edu/church-work](http://cuaa.edu/church-work).

## CALL ME CARDINAL

A familiar face at Concordia University Ann Arbor, with strong Lutheran roots and campus loyalty, is now heading up CUAA's admissions operations.

Kyle Thoms ('08, '17), who previously served as CUAA's assistant athletic director for external relations, has been named director of enrollment. He began his new role July 19.

As head of the department, Thoms is responsible for all graduate and undergraduate recruitment and enrollment efforts on behalf of the Ann Arbor campus, and works closely with Concordia's Wisconsin campus to ensure growth on behalf of the university as a whole.

A double alumnus, Thoms got his professional start with the university in 2012 as an admissions counselor before moving to the athletics department in 2015. Prior to CUAA, he padded his portfolio with a four-year stint in ticket sales for the Fort Wayne Mad Ants.

Thoms grew up in Fort Wayne, where he attended Lutheran schools from kindergarten through high school. Numerous family members currently serve or have served in called positions within The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, mostly as teachers or administrators. His wife, Rachel (Ferry) Thoms, also works for CUAA as manager of campus communications.

Find your fit at Concordia! Learn more at [cuaa.edu/apply](http://cuaa.edu/apply).



### Fresh look

A NEW BUT FAMILIAR FACE JOINED CAMPUS THIS FALL AS CUAA RELEASED A REFRESHED DESIGN OF CORKY THE CARDINAL AND ATHLETICS BRANDING. VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE FORMER CARDINALS LOGO WERE INCORPORATED TO MAINTAIN THE HISTORY AND TRADITION OF THE PREVIOUS LOGO MARK. LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DESIGN AT [BLOG.CUAA.EDU/NEW-CARDINAL-LOGO](http://BLOG.CUAA.EDU/NEW-CARDINAL-LOGO).



**CARDINAL CLOSET**  
SHOP CONCORDIA  
CARDINALS APPAREL  
AT [SHOP.CUAA.EDU](http://SHOP.CUAA.EDU)!





The impact of Rev. Dr. Paul Foelber (pictured directing in 1982) is long enduring.

### The conversation continues

Thank you to all of the alumni who joined the conversation this past spring when we invited you to participate in the 2021 Alumni Attitude Survey. Your feedback is helping us prepare the way for future Concordians! Through your responses, we learned about the people who impacted your time at CUA​A (people like “Doc” Foelber), what you care about most, and how we can better serve you.

Learn more at [blog.cuaa.edu/alumni-results](http://blog.cuaa.edu/alumni-results).



## A LASTING IMPACT

It’s fitting that alumni should sing the praises of Rev. Dr. Paul “Doc” Foelber. He did, after all, serve as choir director at CUA​A from the institution’s inception in 1963 to 1990. Still, few people exist who are more deserving of praise.

Among his more notable contributions to Concordia was the cofounding of the Boar’s Head Festival tradition (making its triumphant return in 2021!), but his influence extends far beyond the programs he built. His love of the Lord deeply touched countless students, and, like a full-volume blast from the Chapel pipe organ, his influence continues to resonate with Ann Arbor alumni.

Evidence of this came through loud and clear in the results of the latest Alumni Attitude Survey. More than 30 years after his retirement, Foelber was still among the most mentioned “people of influence.”

“His legacy represents the epitome of Concordia’s mission,” says Director of Donor and Alumni Relations Linda Sproul (’92). “It’s impossible to count all of the ways in which he shaped servants for Christ.”

In honor of his recent 95th birthday and 70th wedding anniversary, a group of alumni created a tribute book in his honor. The range of alumni who chose to contribute—from 1965 (CUA​A’s first class) to 1992 (two years after he retired)—is a true testament to the influence he wielded. Here are just a few of the sentiments shared:

“Doc, you always inspired us to be better than we believed we could be.” Deb (Samuel) Wolf (’70)

“God bless you for serving Him so faithfully with the gift of beautiful music, encouragement, and love.” Kim (Moyer) Onnen (’80)

“Thank you not only for teaching us the gift of God in music, but for imprinting my life with your wisdom and ethics for life.” Phil Krupski (’85)

Foelber and his wife, Dorothea, continue to support CUA​A through personal donations. You, too, can support Concordia and pay tribute to “Doc” Foelber with a gift in his name. Visit [cuaa.edu/give](http://cuaa.edu/give) for details. Read the full story at [blog.cuaa.edu/Doc-Foelber](http://blog.cuaa.edu/Doc-Foelber).

## SAVE THE DATE

For more happenings or full event information, visit [cuaa.edu/events](http://cuaa.edu/events).



### Homecoming and Family Weekend

Oct. 8–10



### Visit Days

Oct. 7, 9, 14 & 19;  
Nov. 6 & 16



### Veteran’s Week Celebration

Nov. 10–13



### Boar’s Head Festival

Dec. 3–5



### December Commencement

Dec. 19  
Class of 2020 graduates will also be honored during December Commencement



## HERE TO ASSIST

**C**UAA received approval to launch a certified nursing assistant (CNA) program to help better prepare its bachelor candidates and train workers for one of the most sought-after entry-level health care jobs in the nation.

The three-week program consists of content instruction, patient skills training and practice, and a clinical experience. Once completed, candidates are eligible to sit for the State of Michigan's certification exam.

Many health care workers choose to begin their careers as CNAs because it gives them early hands-on experience assisting with direct patient care. At Concordia it's a requisite for the Bachelor of Science in nursing program.

Those who choose to solely complete the certificate program are promised plentiful job prospects. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that nursing assistant positions are expected to grow in demand nationwide by 8 percent from 2019 to 2029.

Learn more at [cuaa.edu/cna](http://cuaa.edu/cna).



## IT NEVER GETS OLD

**I**n late July, my family traveled to the Smoky Mountains to enjoy a vacation. As we approached Ann Arbor on our way home, traveling north on US-23, we crossed the Huron River, and I saw the sight I look for every time from that vantage point: the cross over the Chapel of the Holy Trinity. The view never gets old.

“Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim till all the world adore His sacred name.”

Some of you may recognize these words from the well-known hymn. This is one of our favorite processions at CUAA for major celebrations. Looking to the cross, fixing our eyes on the One whose love for the world held Him to that cross, we launch into our 59th academic year. Indeed, “... he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent” —*Colossians 1:18*. For 59 years, that verse has defined our campus motto: Christ First in Everything.

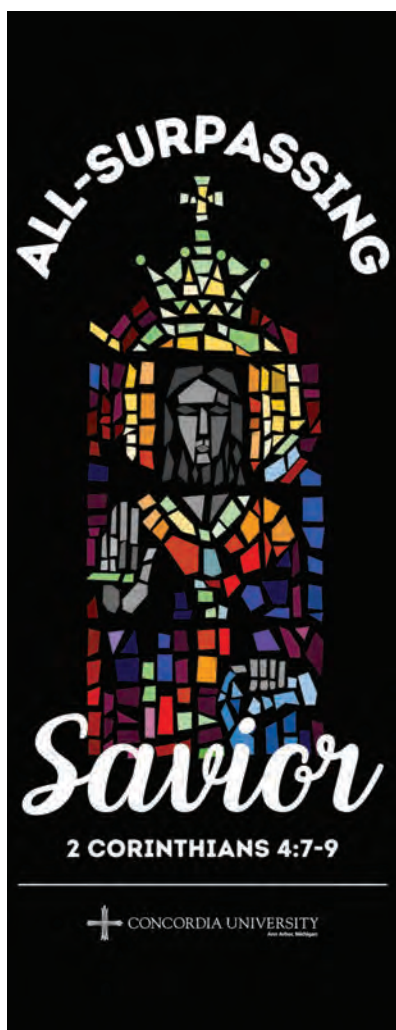
We are a Christ-centered, mission-driven, student-focused community of Lutheran higher education. As I often admit to parents who are entrusting their students to us and then remind students a few weeks into the semester: We are not a *perfect* place. We are not perfect people. But because we are Christ-centered, and our faculty and staff integrate faith and learning in the classroom and beyond, Concordia University should be an uncommon place.

Our uncommon mission energizes me as our new academic year begins. The empty cross and empty tomb—with the promise of Christ's return—compels Concordians to truly live uncommon.

Next time you are in Ann Arbor, traveling north on US-23 crossing the Huron River, look to the left just a bit. I assure you that the view—and more importantly the meaning of that cross—never gets old.

**REV. DR. RYAN PETERSON**

*Vice President of Administration  
Chief Liaison to the Office of the President*



## ALL-SURPASSING SAVIOR

“But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.”

—2 Corinthians 4:7-9

**C**UAA selected “All-Surpassing Savior” as the theme for 2021-22.

Inspired by 2 Corinthians 4:7-9, the phrase reminds Concordians of Christ's power, even in the midst of struggles, and His promise of salvation.

“We have endured much this last year and a half,” says Campus Pastor Rev. Randy Duncan. “Yet, Jesus remains faithful. His love and power transform our trials into triumph.”

Last spring, Duncan assembled a Theme Team of five CUAA students from various grade levels to brainstorm and prayerfully consider the biblical inspiration for the year ahead. Paxton Green ('22) was then tapped to create the design for the chapel banner.

Read more about this year's theme at [blog.cuaa.edu/all-surpassing-savior](http://blog.cuaa.edu/all-surpassing-savior).





## HARDEST WORKER IN THE ROOM

Norman Cyr ('17) shares his keys to success include these three things: control your attitude, maximize your effort, and always be willing to learn. Channeling his own advice, Cyr has earned three promotions in four years as he puts his Concordia biology degree to use. Most recently, Cyr was named the MVP of the staff at the annual award ceremony and moved from his position as lab manager at Accurate Analytical Testing to become manager of quality assurance at Avomeen Analytical Services.

"My motto is to always be the hardest worker in the room. I manage a lot of people, and I'm not going to delegate a task to someone that I haven't done or wouldn't also be willing to do," says Cyr. "I want my team to buy in, and I see it as my responsibility to make their job as easy as possible."

Cyr shares that his experience at Concordia, knowledge gained from the classroom, and the team culture of the CUAA football program gave him the tools he needed to be successful. Learn more about how he applies those tools to his career at [blog.cuaa.edu/norman-cyr](http://blog.cuaa.edu/norman-cyr).





# Happy TO BE HERE

Good friends, good teachers, good people—all learning and growing together by the grace of a good and glorious God. What’s not to smile about?

Concordians on the Mequon and Ann Arbor campuses show their enthusiasm for the start of another academic year. Pictured are scenes from Fall Welcome Weekend, Aug. 26–29.







# You COULD BE HAPPY HERE, TOO!

Try out life as a Concordia student for a day, and see why CUW or CUA A could be the perfect choice for you.

**SCHEDULE A VISIT**  
[cuw.edu/visit](http://cuw.edu/visit) | [cuaa.edu/visit](http://cuaa.edu/visit)

**OR APPLY TODAY**

- AUGUST 1** ● Application opens online
- SEPTEMBER 1** ○ Concordia begins reviewing applications
- OCTOBER 1** ○ FAFSA opens
- JANUARY 1** ○ Housing application opens, financial aid packages begin to be sent
- APRIL** ○ RSVP for summer orientation
- MAY 1** ● College commitment deadline

Most of our master's and doctorate programs have a rolling application deadline, which means you can apply at any time.

Apply for free at [cuw.edu/apply](http://cuw.edu/apply) or [cuaa.edu/apply](http://cuaa.edu/apply).





## BOLDLY BEFORE

Over the years, many faithful servants have shaped Concordia into what it is today. Who were the people that impacted you during your time at Concordia?

