

# Arbor Light

The Magazine of Concordia University Ann Arbor



## ON THE PULSE

Concordia sets a new standard  
of excellence in Christian care

SPRING/SUMMER 2019

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SPRING/SUMMER 2019



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# Arbor Light

**ARBOR LIGHT** is the official magazine of Concordia University Ann Arbor. It shares the stories of exciting advancements on campus; 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 the production of *Arbor Light*. The magazine's editorial team welcomes your feedback. Please send comments or queries to [Arborlight@cuaa.edu](mailto:Arborlight@cuaa.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 [Arborlight@cuaa.edu](mailto:Arborlight@cuaa.edu).



The 2019 Concordia Invitational Tournament brought together students from both the Mequon and Ann Arbor campuses.  
Photo by Ashley Kilgas

This summer marks the sixth anniversary of the merger of Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor (CUWAA). The blessings of this outstanding collaboration are abundant and evident across our institution. While each campus maintains its own distinct personality, Concordia's remarkable faculty, staff, and more than 7,300 students walk together in mission as we "live uncommon" lives for the good of Christ's Gospel in the Church and throughout the world.

Today, across two residential campuses, online, and at nine extension campuses, Concordia University's six schools of study offer 87 undergraduate majors and programs, 33 graduate/master's degrees and programs, five doctoral/professional programs, and six associate degrees. Our graduates go forth well prepared in mind, body, and spirit to lead lives of service and impact in an array of vocations. This issue of *Arbor Light* connects you to some of their stories.

In the "On the banks" section, we share information about CUAA's unique pre-seminary program that blends practical experience in ministry, connects students to pastoral mentors, and provides financial support. While this program is new, our commitment to preparing pastors for the Church and world is evident in our alumni who are prominently serving throughout the LCMS. A small few of them are featured.

Our cover story, "Vital to the operation," details what sets CUAA's School of Nursing apart. We highlight the state-of-the-art simulation center, complete with 13 cutting-edge manikins, and introduce the leaders and students who are setting a new standard in Christian care.

Throughout this issue, we lift students, faculty, and alumni who use their gifts to serve Christ for the betterment not only of self but of society, as well. It is my great privilege to work alongside these men and women each and every day at Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor.

To God be the Glory,

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








## ON THE COVER:

Everything about Concordia's nursing program is unique, including the stethoscopes.

# social scene

## CONNECT WITH US

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-  cuaa.edu/news

### STUDY BREAK

Recognize this place? We bet you do! The Zimmerman Library has not lost its charm since this photo was taken in 1983. Check out more on Facebook and Instagram with **#RedFeatherFlashback**.



### #CUAAGRAD19

Learn more about some of our graduates and their journey to the commencement stage at **blog.cuaa.edu/graduation-stories-2019**.

### Cold case

CUAA students put their investigative skills to work and looked into the 2013 case of a young mom who was gunned down in a check cashing store in Michigan. The class' efforts received attention from several local news stations.



**CU IN LOVE** We got the feels hearing your CUAA love stories on Facebook! Discover a few at [blog.cuaa.edu/meet-cutes](http://blog.cuaa.edu/meet-cutes). You may even see a couple you recognize!



**“When the unexpected happens, it takes the right person in the right place at the right time to help.”**

CUAA’s School of Nursing trains you to become that person. Learn more about our nursing program at [cuaa.edu/nursing](http://cuaa.edu/nursing).



**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!



**ALL STAR “LIKER”  
MOLLY BREITENBACH**

Molly has caught our eye by giving just about every one of CUAA’s posts a “like.” Molly is a dual credit student currently attending Sand Creek High School. She plans to attend CUAA in the fall of 2020 to study psychology. Thanks for the support, Molly!

**GENERATIONS CONNECTED**

Everyone knows that social media is a great way to stay connected. At Concordia, we embrace an audience of all ages and find joy in bringing generations together in one place. Here’s a taste of who follows our Facebook page based on age!

AGE/PERCENTAGE OF FOLLOWERS

13-24	<b>18%</b>	45-54	<b>23%</b>
25-34	<b>22%</b>	55-64	<b>12%</b>
35-44	<b>18%</b>	65+	<b>7%</b>



Curt Gielow and Rev. Dr. Ryan Peterson embrace leadership changes at CUAA.

## CAMPUS LEADERSHIP UPDATE

**O**n Jan. 1, Rev. Dr. Ryan Peterson was promoted to vice president of administration and the chief liaison to the Office of the President at Concordia University Ann Arbor. He succeeded Curt Gielow who retired after 11 years of service to both Concordia University Wisconsin and Concordia University Ann Arbor.

Peterson, an alumnus of CUW, previously served CUAA as campus pastor and has been an enthusiastic ambassador of the university's mission both on campus and throughout the community for the past 5 1/2 years. Pastor Randy Duncan, director of campus ministry since 2015, has stepped into the role of campus pastor.

Both Gielow and Peterson started at CUAA in 2013. Under the direction of Rev. Dr. Patrick T. Ferry and the guidance of the university leadership boards, the university experienced substantial growth in footprint, programs, and enrollment since then, including: the acquisition of the former Cooley Law School building, the establishment of a School of Nursing and a School of Health Professions, and significant growth in enrollment.

While all of those achievements are significant, Gielow is most proud of the fact that he helped to make the unprecedented relationship between two different universities in two different states work.

"We are a small, Christian, faith-based university nestled on a beautiful piece of property in the best college town in America," says Gielow. "With a visionary like President Ferry steering the ship, and leaders like Dr. Peterson and Pastor Duncan on the ground protecting and extending that vision, Concordia could continue to buck the higher education trend and attract more students to our culture of faith and learning and our community where everybody knows everybody."

As Peterson settles into his new role, he is still in awe that he gets to lead and live out Concordia's mission every day, and have such an impact on the lives of hundreds of students during such an important time in their lives. He notes that he trusts in the never-failing love of God in Christ and is grateful for his colleagues at both campuses for this opportunity.

## TAKING STEPS INTO PASTORAL MINISTRY

By **Rachel Thoms**, *Strategic Communications*

**P**astoral formation is more than simply academic. A unique pre-seminary program offering at Concordia University Ann Arbor blends practical experience in ministry, connects students to pastoral mentors, and provides financial support for their education.

STEPS—serving and training experience for pre-seminary students—is a paid part-time internship for CUAA's undergraduate students pursuing a pastoral ministry calling.

Since 2004, STEPS is made possible by grants through the Michigan District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, as well as contributions from individuals and congregations. Upper-level pre-seminary students work up to 10 paid hours a week in local partner parishes and other ministry settings assisting with worship, leading Bible studies, or practicing responsibilities within the youth group. Students may also join mentor pastors for home visits, hospital visits, or other congregational meetings.

"STEPS gives our students more opportunity to test their calling, providing confidence and certainty that this is where the Lord is leading them," said Rev. Charles Schulz, assistant professor of religion and pre-seminary director. "After all, pastoral ministry is different than student life. You won't have weekly Greek quizzes or 15-page research papers. You work with people, sharing the Word of Christ's salvation with God's people and to the world. Interpersonal skills serve that end."

Upon completion of initial theology and Biblical language courses, Schulz connects with students to consider beginning the STEPS program as early into their academic career as possible, usually within their sophomore year. While all pre-seminary students are required to participate for at least one semester, a longer tenure in the program allows growth in skills, lends more responsibilities within the parish, and provides expanded opportunities to lead and serve the congregations. STEPS is also available to students in a pre-deaconess program.

"For example, if you think about the fact that a new pastor has only seen his vicarage supervisor and maybe his field education supervisor lead an elders meeting, he doesn't have many models for how that could go," said Schulz. "Through STEPS, our CUAA students have more examples of what everyday pastoral operations could look like, and they gain experience doing them."

Together with each student, Schulz looks over the variety of STEPS partnerships available, currently a list of about 20 local ministries including a diverse mix of urban, suburban, rural, school settings, and mission settings. Unlike the seminary experience where the students are assigned to their field education, vicarages, and first calls, students themselves have a choice to select where they think they will grow and benefit the most.

"I have seen beautiful relationships form between the students and the churches that they serve," said Schulz. "When it's time for the students to shift to a different STEPS location or head off to





Sean McNeil ('19) assists with the liturgy at his STEPS congregation, St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Milan, Michigan. Photo courtesy of Micah Penhallegon ('20)

seminary, there can be tearful goodbyes mixed with send-offs full of gifts and support.”

Sean McNeil ('19) has experienced firsthand the nurture and support of a congregation through his STEPS host parish, St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Milan, Michigan.

“On top of getting used to reading and praying in front of people, I've learned how great a blessing a congregation can be,” said McNeil, who has plans to attend the seminary following commencement in May. “As I focus on how I can serve the church, it has been a humbling experience to have them serve me in return.”

While McNeil says he enjoys receiving gifts around the holidays or being sent home with extra food after a church potluck, what he cherishes most from his STEPS congregation is the fellowship, support, and encouragement they have shared with him as he pursues his pastoral calling.

Schulz says that more than anything the true joy of serving in ministry is sharing Christ's salvation with people. STEPS is a key instrument in providing clarity to students discerning their call to serve as pastors and deaconesses, and allows them to grow in enthusiasm for it as they prepare for lives of service to Christ in the Church and the world.

Is there a member of your congregation whom God has gifted for ministry? Refer them to us at [Charles.Schulz@cuaa.edu](mailto:Charles.Schulz@cuaa.edu). Learn more at [cuaa.edu/programs/preseminary](http://cuaa.edu/programs/preseminary).

## CLERGY ALUMNI

STEPS is the latest in Concordia's earnest approach to preparing ready pastors for the Church and world, but a spirit of excellence and a commitment to the Kingdom has existed since the institution's inception. Thanks to dedicated faculty and dynamic programming over the years, Concordia has produced many prominent leaders in the LCMS. Here are just a few of them.



**REV. DR. DAVID P.E. MAIER ('78)**  
*District President,  
LCMS Michigan District*



**REV. DR. GREGORY SELTZ ('82)**  
*Executive Director,  
Lutheran Center for  
Religious Liberty*



**REV. MICHAEL W. NEWMAN ('83)**  
*District President,  
LCMS Texas District*



**REV. DR. JOHN NUNES ('85)**  
*President, Concordia  
College New York*



### Are you a pastor?

STAY CONNECTED TO CUA A THROUGH OUR MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER *CLERGY CONNECTION*, CURATED SPECIFICALLY FOR OUR PASTORAL SUPPORTERS AND FRIENDS. SUBSCRIBE AT [CUA A.EDU/CLERGY-CONNECTION](http://CUA A.EDU/CLERGY-CONNECTION).



Denali Katnik (18) works as a child life specialist in Ann Arbor.

## ADVANCED DEGREE FOR CHILD LIFE SPECIALISTS

By **Rachel Thoms**, *Strategic Communications*

**C**hild life specialists help children to understand and manage experiences of illness, hospitalization, trauma, and other difficult and unexpected life circumstances that can be surrounded by feelings of fear or apprehension.

Understanding emotions of fear, confusion, or loneliness—with the help of a professional—allows children to avoid lasting negative effects on their development and well-being.

Concordia University Ann Arbor is building on its existing leading role in the growing and innovative child life specialist field, launching a Master of Arts in child life in July 2019.

This advanced degree offering will complement students with undergraduate areas of study such as child psychology, family life education, education, recreational therapy, or developmental psychology where they’ve learned to proactively support children and their families.

“The child life profession is growing, continuing its work in the hospital setting but now also expanding into doctors’ offices, dentists’ offices, hospice programs, funeral homes, school districts, and private practices,” said Jennifer Fieten, MA, CCLS, who leads the child life programs at CUAA. “As more continue to become aware of our profession, training, skills, and the benefits of the psychosocial support that we provide children and families, the demand will continue to rise.”

The Master of Science in child life will be offered in a blended format of both online and face-to-face instruction, each eight weeks in length. Students will deepen their understanding of child development, and the processes of supporting children and families during medical interventions, crises, or hospitalization in developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed ways.

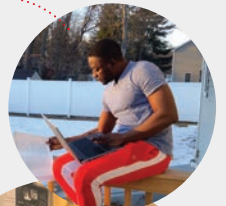
Learn more about how CUAA is preparing child life specialists who employ evidence-based methods in integrative health care settings by visiting [cuaa.edu/childlifemasters](http://cuaa.edu/childlifemasters).

## PRIMETIME FOR ONLINE

By **Lisa Liljegen**, *Strategic Communications*

**W**hether online or in person Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor provide a rich educational experience that is rooted in faith and transformative in practice. Busy online students from all over the world are fitting school work into their routines and at a pace that suits their lifestyle. Here’s a peek into the lives of a few online students “caught in the act” of studying.

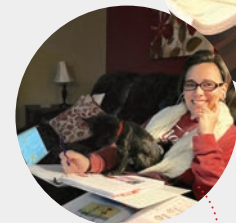
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SPRINGFIELD, MA  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



**Jane Goff**  
PLYMOUTH, MI  
CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION



**Bethel Ubochi**  
ROSEBURG, OR  
ADULT GERONTOLOGY  
NURSE PRACTITIONER



**Kathie Pereira**  
YPSILANTI, MI  
NURSE EDUCATOR

**Jennifer Ellis**  
SUSSEX, WI  
LITERACY



**John Holeton**  
SIOUX FALLS, SD  
THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

### Concordia online by the numbers:

**1,208**  
TOTAL ENROLLED STUDENTS

**60+**  
PROGRAMS, CERTIFICATES, AND CONCENTRATIONS

**#1**  
LARGEST MBA PROGRAM IN WISCONSIN

**41**  
STATES REPRESENTED



## UPCOMING EVENTS

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

### May

- 09—Transfer Open House
- 10—4th Annual CARDYS
- 15—Concordia Student Scholars Expo
- 18-19—Class of 1969 50th Reunion
- 19—Baccalaureate and Commencement
- 31—Cardinal Golf Classic at Stonebridge Golf Club

### June

- 01—Cardinal Hall of Fame Gala
- 08—Ann Arbor Symphony Performs on CUAA Campus

### July

- 07-08—Trinity Time
- 14—LCMS National Youth Gathering Alumni and Friends Reception
- 19—Alumni Outing at Madison Mallards Baseball Game
- 23—LCMS National Convention and Alumni and Friends Reception
- 25—Alumni and Friends Reunion at the Whitecaps Baseball Game
- 29-Aug. 8—School of Education Summer Institute Workshops

### August

- 01—Application Opens for Fall 2020
- 23-25—Welcome Weekend
- 26—Opening Service
- 26—First Day of Traditional Classes

### September

- 21—Admissions Visit Day
- 24—Clergy on Campus

### October

- 05—Admissions Visit Day
- 05—Homecoming
- 11—LEA National Convocation Alumni and Friends Reception in St. Louis



## NEW ROLE, SAME COMMITMENT

Spring is a season of new life, and the effects of this season are immediately apparent when you walk on Concordia's campus. Even as the academic year winds down and students look forward to Commencement, the campus enlivens with green grass, blooming plants, beautiful flowers, and a sense of optimism and hope. In the midst of academic intensity, there is a sense of "new."

There is also a sense of "new" in my own life. It is my privilege and honor to serve as the vice president of administration and chief liaison to the Office of the President at Concordia, a position that is new to me since Jan. 1, 2019. Because of the excellent and committed service of Curt Gielow, who retired in December as chief campus executive, our campus is strong and vibrant. I am eager to build on these successes and look for more open doors of opportunity so that our mission might be more fully realized and our students served in more robust ways.

My commitment to Concordia is stronger than ever, even and especially in this new role. I have described my role to our Michigan Committee of Overseers as "a key collaborator for Concordia," working with many different programs, people, departments, friends, and even campuses (Mequon and Ann Arbor) to further our Christ-centered mission. My hope is that our campus continues to bloom and grow in the years ahead. Because of this hope, I am focusing a portion of my energy on working closely with our admissions team. But how will I do that on a daily basis? Here are a few ways:

- Leading Chapel at Lutheran high schools in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana in collaboration with our admission counselors being present and often a worship arts team leading music.
- Calling every accepted Concordia student, welcoming them, and congratulating them on making an excellent choice for their higher education journey.
- Welcoming each prospective student and family into my office as they take their campus tour, introducing myself to them, and reminding them of our commitment to them throughout the process.

We are a team at Concordia University Ann Arbor. Thank you for being a part of that same team as you pray for, support, invite, and encourage students and prospective students to experience an uncommon 21st century Concordia University.

#### REV. DR. RYAN PETERSON

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

# Sibling Dynamics

COLLEGE IS A TIME WHERE YOU MAKE FRIENDS-LIKE-FAMILY, BUT WHAT'S IT LIKE TO SHARE THE EXPERIENCE WITH ACTUAL FAMILY?

By **Rachel Thoms**, *Strategic Communications*  
 Photography by *Allie Milot* ('21)

**M**any are endeared to Concordia University Ann Arbor for its familial atmosphere. It's not uncommon to have a professor follow up on a prayer request shared in class or to receive a personal greeting from an acquaintance met in passing. Professors come to

campus at night to lead study sessions before a big exam or sometimes even invite classes into their home for a review.

Concordia is a place that cares; a place where students are known; a place that nurtures students in mind, body, and spirit. It's like a family.

For some, the familial familiarity is literal. This academic year, CUAA happens to have a number of siblings on campus,

which adds to the close-knit community already present and carries on a tradition that many other families before them have enjoyed.

No matter how different, or similar, siblings may be, there's something for everyone at CUAA. Here are a few siblings' takes on what it's like to be a part of the Concordia family with an actual family member.



ANGELA ('20) + JONATHAN KNICKLEBEIN ('21)  
 Ypsilanti, Michigan

- \* Have seven other siblings, besides each other
- \* Describe their relationship as "steady"

"The other day I was playing piano in chapel and then Jon walked in. We don't always have to say anything, we can just make eye contact with each other and be like, 'Hey, good to see ya.'"

*Angela*  
 PARISH MUSIC

"Ang and I are basically opposites. She's involved in everything—like residence life, worship arts, and lacrosse—and I'm more introverted. It's cool, though, because we've each still been able to find our place at Concordia, and we always root each other on."

*Jonathan*  
 NURSING



PRESTON ('20) + JORDAN SHERMAN ('22)  
 Homer, Michigan

- \* Cardinals Baseball teammates
- \* Both have plans to take over the family business

"It's a challenge for me to know when I should get on Jordan's case or not. He takes it really well, but I don't want our teammates to think I'm being mean. It's always out of love because I know he has so much potential."

*Preston*  
 BUSINESS

"At first I didn't really know if I wanted to follow in Preston's footsteps, but then I realized Concordia was the right fit for me, too. He is driven and always pushes me to be better. Preston's the go-getter."

*Jordan*  
 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT



HANNAH ('21) + MICAH BIERMANN ('22)

Grand Blanc, Michigan

- \* Members of the Concordia Choir
- \* Describe sibling dynamic as “authentic”

“Growing up, we were always together—all of the time. We were best friends and still are. Micah and I try to have quality time both at school and when we’re at home. I’m thankful that since we are both here we get to grow closer in our sibling relationship while also growing as independent adults.”

“Our class schedules don’t always align, so we eat dinner together and go to campus ministry events together, like Chapel, Tuesday Night Worship, or Evening Prayer. When we have free time we like to play board games and card games, too.”

*Hannah*  
FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

*Micah*  
COMPUTER SCIENCE

- \* Born one minute apart
- \* Were roommates for the first five semesters of college (until Emmi got married)

“When we first got to campus, we were told to make sure we weren’t being intimidating because we already knew each other. We were like, ‘What?!’ So we always try to be welcoming. Very chill. That’s our vibe. Well, at least we try.”

“We don’t have all of the same interests, so there’s not much competition, but it’s really fun to go to each other’s stuff, like when I go to Esther’s art shows. Supporting each other is fun to me.”

*Esther*  
ART AND MARKETING

*Emmi*  
SECONDARY EDUCATION



ESTHER SCHULZE ('20) + EMMI (SCHULZE) FORBES ('20)

Brooklyn, New York



JONATHAN ('19) + SIERRA DETWILER ('20)

Fort Wayne, Indiana

- \* 18 months and 4 days apart
- \* Jonathan gave Sierra her first tour of campus

“Our parents always say that they didn’t do everything they could to keep us together when they adopted us for us not to be good friends. We get along better now that we’re older. I’m the traditional one, and Sierra’s more free spirited.”

“It’s nice to have a sibling so close by, only one call away. Like last year I got really sick, and he went to the hospital with me. Sometimes when we talk he thinks that because I’m studying psychology I’m always analyzing him, but that’s not true!”

*Jonathan*  
SPORT AND  
ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS  
AND MBA (BUSINESS SCHOLAR)

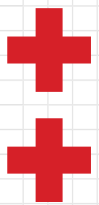
*Sierra*  
PSYCHOLOGY



Professor Betsy Cambridge (right) oversees a simulation performed by nursing students (from left) **Sherrie Anderson ('19)**, **Kassim Nasser ('19)**, and **Kimmy Thompson ('19)**.

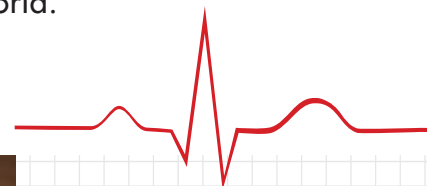


# VITAL TO THE OPERATION



Concordia's School of Nursing may be young, but its impressive simulation setup already is putting CUAA on the map. Armed with a state-of-the-art simulation center, 13 cutting-edge manikins, and a tried-and-true crew of simulation experts, Concordia's nursing school is able to turn out truly exceptional young professionals. When combined with a commitment to Christian care, the result is a standard of excellence that is arguably tough to beat, and one that is sorely needed by the Church and world.

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





From behind two-way mirrors, Professors Betsy Cambridge (left) and Anita Simmons are watchful but deliberately removed from the students' simulation experience. They use computers to adjust "patient" heart rates and responses to treatments, and they communicate through headsets.

Sherrie Anderson didn't expect to ace her first nursing simulation at Concordia University Ann Arbor. In fact, no one does.

The goal of these carefully orchestrated hands-on exercises is not for learners to perfectly deliver clinical care as burgeoning students, but rather to present opportunities for rich discussion post-experience about where they went wrong and how they could do better.

Still, the rookie Anderson couldn't have made a worse judgment call during her first attempt.

The Ann Arbor native was about a month into her experience at Concordia when she and a classmate were asked to assess and then treat a "patient" (a high-fidelity manikin) that was programmed to display signs of congestive heart failure (CHF).

Anderson, who will graduate in May with her bachelor's degree in nursing, was a sophomore at the time. She and her classmate entered

Concordia's state-of-the-art simulation space to find the patient lying supine with a feeding tube inserted. He was coughing and wheezing, and his ankles were swollen.

What the two should have done was perform a head-to-toe assessment, notice the swollen ankles, and then bring the patient to a sitting position, supply oxygen, and elevate his feet. Instead, the perplexed pair decided that perhaps the patient was hungry. In their efforts to further insert the manikin's feeding tube, they managed to stop his coughing ... by increasing his nutrition levels to the point where he became overloaded with fluids.

That was two years ago, and Anderson has long since let go of the frustration and embarrassment felt in the moment on that day—she even gets a healthy chuckle when recalling her naivety—but she hasn't let go of the lesson.

To be clear, Anderson now knows how to

treat a patient with CHF, and should one find themselves the subject of her future care, they need not worry about being overloaded with fluids.

"What were we thinking?" Anderson said with a laugh while recalling the exercise. "That was so embarrassing, but we were brand new, and, ultimately, it was a learning lesson."

And that's precisely the objective of simulations: to help students experience learning in a way that causes them to never forget.

Concordia's nursing simulations are deliberately designed to mimic the high-stakes environment of a clinical setting. CUAA nursing staff have even gone so far as to bring in actors who played the role of frantic parents rushing to the bedside of their coma-induced daughter, or students from CUAA's justice and public policy program who acted as law enforcement so that nursing students could

practice managing the emotions in the room—emotions including their own.

“We’ve had tears from students during simulations; they take the exercises very seriously,” said Betsy Cambridge, RN, BSN, one of CUAA’s simulation education specialists. “The goal isn’t to make them cry, but it’s not a bad thing either. When you’re emotionally involved in a situation, you never forget it.”

## COMPLEX PROBLEM SOLVING

Beyond the emotional component of patient care, there’s a critical thinking muscle that students must learn to flex, ideally before a human life is at stake. Thus, simulation goes beyond simple “skill and drill” (that’s what lab time is for), and instead asks students to troubleshoot and solve multifaceted medical scenarios that sometimes do not have a single right answer.

“We’re dealing with medicine in 2019, where people have very complex illnesses,” said Anita Simmons, RN, MSN, director of simulation and interprofessional education. “Patients often have three or four different concerns going on when they arrive for care. Sometimes it’s not exactly cut and dry, and sometimes it’s knowing when do I need to gather more information?”

Simulations are not meant to replace the real experience. Clinical rotations, where students work in an actual medical environment under the mentorship of a licensed professional, are still very much a part of every CUAA nursing student’s requisites for graduation. But with technology bursting onto the medical scene in new ways each year, Concordia is in a powerful position to narrow the gap between nursing education and real-life care through its advanced simulation technology on campus.

In addition to keeping up with evolving technology, competition for clinical placements has long posed a challenge for nursing schools nationwide, but there hasn’t always been the research to back up simulation as an effective alternative. So when the 2014 “NCSBN National Simulation Study” showed that up to half of students’ clinical hours can be replaced in a high-quality simulation lab with no drop-off in learning, it came as celebrated news to nursing schools across the country. A more recent article—published in 2018 by the international, peer-reviewed journal “Clinical Simulation in Nursing”—takes it one step further even in its findings that high-fidelity simulation is not only equal to clinicals in some instances, it has been found to actually enhance learning in clinical settings.

Perhaps this is because simulations place otherwise unpredictable factors within the



Chief Simulation Specialist Ben Oliver demonstrates a high-fidelity manikin’s capabilities.

## FIRST IN THE WORLD

Concordia’s latest simulation manikin is so lifelike it could easily be mistaken for the real thing. It’s no wonder either because the “Lifecast Adult Female” was made using scans and 3D imaging of real people.

The Lifecast simulator also features realistic fine details such as veins and underlying structures. Its skin mimics the texture of actual human skin, and it weighs the amount of an average elderly woman to allow students to rehearse authentic bed transfers and fundamental skills.

At the time of the manikin’s April 2019 arrival on campus, Concordia was the first nursing school in the world to acquire the model. Thanks to the expertise and ingenuity of Concordia’s chief simulation specialist, who requested that Lifecast manufacture the manikin with lifelike bed sores on its skin, Concordia will also be able to simulate neglect scenarios. The truly one-of-a-kind manikin will allow the sim team to put CUAA’s mock courtroom to use, as well, in rehearsing the legal ramifications of patient abuse.

The Lifecast simulator brings Concordia’s total manikin count to 13, and each one offers its own nuanced capabilities, including software that allows manikins to authentically cry, bleed, blink, and even give birth.

Simulators can range in price from \$18,000 to \$110,000 each. For that reason, Concordia has sought to purchase its manikins with the help of donors and grant funding. Oliver’s decades of experience in the sim field and his deep connections with manufacturers also have come in handy.

“You see some schools where they’ve purchased the Cadillac of manikins just because they can, and they’re having students do the most basic assessments on it,” Oliver said. “You don’t need a \$110,000 manikin to check a pulse. Instead, at Concordia, we’re really striving to match the fidelity of the manikins with their intended use. We want to be good stewards of the money we’ve been blessed to have.”

SUPPORT CONCORDIA’S SIMULATION EXPERIENCES. VISIT [CUAA.EDU/GIVE](https://CUAA.EDU/GIVE).



control of the teachers so that instruction and assessment become more standardized and efficient. Concordia's nursing faculty like to point out, for example, that CUAA's high-fidelity manikins can simulate birth as often as every 8 minutes if needed.

"Through simulation, we're able to ensure that students have the opportunity to observe medical complications and have certain experiences that we just can't guarantee in their clinicals," Simmons explained.

## A CUT ABOVE THE REST

There's an art to creating a formative simulation experience, and Concordia's nursing faculty and staff rival the Michelangelos of the field.

When Campus Dean of Nursing Cindy Fenske, DNP, RN, CNE, arrived in 2015, she said she marveled to see God at work through the incredibly gifted people He provided to lead simulation at CUAA. Fenske, a former faculty member of the University of Michigan's reputable nursing school, had high standards for the people she would employ, and the four faculty members who make up Concordia's Simulation Center did not disappoint. Simmons and Cambridge, along with Joseph Yaksich, MS, RN, ACNP-BC, CHSE, and Ben Oliver, BS, AEMT-P I/C, represent a combined total of over 100 years of experience in the health care field, with more than half of those years devoted to simulation.

The four individuals have lent their expertise on multiple occasions to national and international audiences, either through scholarly presentations or, in Oliver's case, to help a partner institution in Ghana set up its own state-of-the-art simulation lab. The overseas lab was so lauded within the developing country that the First Lady of Ghana attended the May 24, 2018 open house.

Last fall, the sim team's proficiency and innovative thinking also notably caught the attention of a Yale University instructor who was impressed with how the team is incorporating students from other disciplines into simulation experiences. Following a global webinar presentation that Simmons, Cambridge, Yaksich, and Oliver delivered last October, Yale University faculty member Mary Showstark, MS, PA-C, invited the CUAA team of educators to observe an upcoming interprofessional education virtual exercise among Yale, University of Southern California, George Washington University, New York University, and Georgetown University students.

Concordia's nursing, child life, and justice and public policy students afterward were invited to join the elite Ivy League learning exercise, which happens annually. Concordians will first participate in one this upcoming November.

And the list of accolades goes on. It's the type of team any university would envy, and it's one that Fenske is confident in saying is in a league of its own.

"We're the best there is when it comes to simulation," said Fenske. "The simulation team we have at Concordia is amazingly creative. I think some of it is experience and some of it is that it's just within their nature to be innovative. They're willing to try new things, and they put in the work to go to trainings and conferences to continually expose themselves to the latest and best ideas."

Add to their academic achievements a deep passion for the mission and vision of Concordia University. As a result, Concordia has been able to combine an intentional focus on Christian care with a standard of excellence that is arguably tough to achieve for any new program.

For Sherrie Anderson, the fruits of that combination have been apparent through her professors' personalized, caring, and intentional approach in all of her classes—even when she made blunders like trying to feed a CHF patient who is actually short of breath.

»»» **DID YOU KNOW?** About 40 percent of the 84,500-square-foot North Building—located just 3 miles north of CUAA's main campus—is devoted to Concordia's nursing school. The state-of-the-art simulation center includes five hospital rooms, eight clinic rooms, a 10-bed skills lab that acts as an emergency department, a three-room apartment, and a courtroom. The rooms are used daily as the setting for a variety of inpatient and outpatient simulations.



An apartment-style setup in CUAA's Simulation Center allows students to simulate at-home care scenarios with authenticity.

"When they saw I was getting defeated, I could tell that they'd work to adjust their approach with me and go a route that actually helped me instead of made me feel even more discouraged," Anderson said. "It's not that they were giving me a shortcut. I think they're just really good at understanding everyone's learning styles, and they care enough to expect the best out of you."

The faculty's Christian approach extends to all aspects of CUAA's nursing program, including simulation. In the first year of nursing courses, for example, students are presented a simulation scenario that has an ethical component woven in: a patient has cancer and has just decided that she wants to forgo further treatment, but her husband is resistant to her decision. Students are then asked to rehearse how they would engage with the husband to help him come to terms with the patient's choice.

Cambridge notes that many students, without being prompted, will respond by asking the husband if they can pray with him. When they debrief the exercise, it provides a chance for the whole group to discuss the approach, as well, and perhaps become more comfortable with incorporating prayer themselves in future simulations.

Not all students are required to pray, but at the very least they see it as an option for care, said Fenske.

"It's a real gift to be able to incorporate our Christian values into the curriculum instead of having to eradicate it from what we're trying to teach," Fenske said. "We have a team that is committed to doing their job excellently so that our students can go out and do their job with equal excellence, and that means everything from properly intubating a patient to extending Christian love and care that surpasses patients' expectations."

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EXCEPTIONAL NURSING PROGRAM.  
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**1.5–5.5** Number of hours all nursing students spend in simulations per week of their CUAAs experience

**8:1** Student to sim instructor ratio



Percentage of CUAAs nursing graduates who felt simulation helped them better understand content in their nursing courses



Percentage of CUAAs nursing graduates who felt simulation helped prepare them for their clinical experiences

**2018**

Year of inaugural Bachelor of Science in nursing graduates

**39**

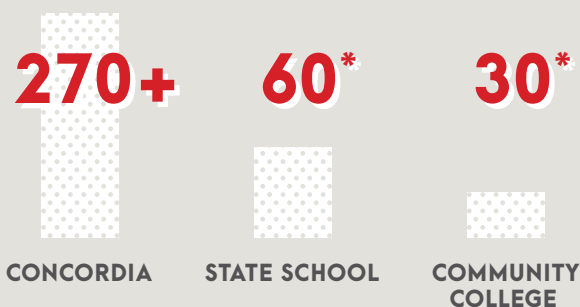
Number of CUAAs nursing graduates

## EXCEPTIONAL AT SKILL BUILDING

Not only does CUAAs allocate more class hours to simulation than most of its competitors, the university doesn't sacrifice valuable hands-on learning opportunities to do so.

"Many schools use simulation but do it on a sporadic basis, taking time away from the students' clinical experiences," said Fenske. "Instead, we re-appropriate time from classroom lectures to provide our students with weekly simulations throughout the entire six semesters of nursing courses. This provides our students with a tremendous amount of hands-on, experiential learning."

### HOURS SPENT IN SIMULATION OVER THE COURSE OF A STUDENT'S NURSING EXPERIENCE



\*Numbers were validated for two specific nursing schools in Michigan. Names of schools were purposefully omitted to demonstrate a general trend within higher education.

## THE ALPHA CLASS SOARS

In fall 2016, CUAAs launched a new School of Nursing and began to make good on a strategic university vision to prepare more Christ-inspired nurses for the Church and world. Following the December 2018 commencement, the university began to see the first fruits of this effort with its inaugural cohort of nursing graduates out in the field. Read about one of the original nursing graduates below, and see how the rest of the Alpha Class is impacting the world at [blog.cuaa.edu/alpha-class](http://blog.cuaa.edu/alpha-class).

Aubrey Alfano will be the first to say that CUAAs's simulations are no joke. In fact, the accomplished Alfano—who served as the December 2018 student commencement speaker—was so shaken by one experience that she cried in the simulation room.

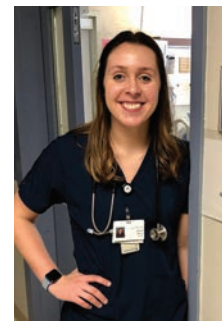


Photo courtesy of Aubrey Alfano

The Michigan native was two years into her nursing program when Concordia's sim team charged her and her classmates to hang a secondary bag on an IV pump. According to the sim team, the four nursing students stood huddled around the pump for a solid eight minutes before someone finally noticed their patient had flatlined.

"He just arrested right in front of us, and none of us even saw it coming," Alfano said. "The first couple of seconds when someone loses a pulse are so crucial, and we just completely missed it. I felt like a failure leaving simulation."

Had that experience never happened, however, Alfano might not have been able to send a triumphant text to Chief Simulation Specialist Ben Oliver on Jan. 22, 2019.

Fresh off the commencement stage and a week into her new job at Ascension St. Mary's Hospital in Saginaw, Michigan, Alfano was in the midst of her very first day in the surgical ICU when a patient went into cardiac arrest. Alfano hustled to the patient's room and participated in her first real-life code. She assisted the medical team by administering compressions.

"When I told my colleagues afterward that I hadn't done compressions before, they were all really impressed because some people's technique is really not up to snuff when they first start out. It's a lot harder than people realize to do proper compressions," said Alfano.

"I couldn't help but think of my CUAAs professors and all the times they coached me through the feel of a proper compression in simulation. I know that there are other programs that don't teach those things, and it just makes me so grateful for my Concordia experience."



The Alpha Class poses at the entrance of the North Building.

# A CONCORDIA CLASSIC

English professor inspires generations of Concordians to better understand themselves through literature.



By **Lisa Liljegren**, *Strategic Communications*  
Photography by *Allie Milot* ('21)

Samantha Smith ('15) didn't know what to expect when she enrolled in Dr. Mark Looker's English Lit II course in 2014. It was a required course for the English major; one that Smith admits she was hesitant to take. Smith remembers wondering how the content would be relevant to her current life as a student at Concordia University Ann Arbor. Her opinion would drastically change, however, as Looker introduced himself to the class, and opened up about his passion for literature and the arts. His enthusiasm was so palpable that Smith, herself, was excited to dig into her first taste of British literature. Years later, Smith still smiles as she recounts that first day.

Her transformational experience is a shared one at CUAA; one that generations of Concordians have in common, due in part to Looker's engaging teaching and prolific presence throughout campus.

Professor Mark Looker is best known for his expertise in art and literature, and his generous enthusiasm to share it with others. For 44 years, the professor of English, director of the Krefl Arts Program, study abroad leader, and author has inspired generations of students, faculty, and staff to find larger meaning, greater understanding, and inner joy by studying literature and appreciating the arts.

From as early as he can remember, Looker, a '71 CUAA alumnus, has loved to read. The pastor's son describes his childhood home in Detroit as "lined with books and filled with readers." A lifelong

Lutheran school kid, Looker had the idea that if he became a teacher he could make a living by reading and discussing books all day.

With that as his goal, he applied to CUAA (then Concordia Lutheran Junior College) and later to Concordia University Chicago (then Concordia Teachers College, River Forest) to make his plan a reality. He continued his education by earning an M.A. at Washington University, St. Louis, and then his PhD from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. In 1975, Looker returned to CUAA, his first alma mater, as an English faculty member and has been here ever since.

"My entire adult life is bound up with CUAA," he jokes.

"As a student at Concordia, I had a sense that I could have both an intellectual life and a life of faith. They were compatible—not mutually exclusive," says Looker. "Now as a professor I try to help my students understand that their faith, relationships, intellectual life, and appreciation for the arts are all part of the same fabric."

While Looker has witnessed many changes during his long tenure at Concordia, one thing that has remained relatively constant is his ability to connect with the students. "Everyone talks about how different this generation of tech-savvy students is," he notes, "but at heart they are looking for the same things Concordia students have always wanted: a relationship with God and with the people around them, and a place in the world where they can make a difference."

Despite the nationwide trend that college students read far fewer books than in decades past, Looker is optimistic about the students in his classrooms. One thing he does to help his students discover

the joy of reading is to carefully select the assigned reading material each semester. He also tries to get to know the students personally so that he can recommend the right books to get them hooked.

Smith recalls feeling a particular connection to the novel *Jane Eyre*. "Dr. Looker used that book and the experiences that the characters were going through as a way to get us talking about our own lives and our own struggles," says Smith. "It was life changing for me when I learned that the classics asked the same questions about life, love, and God that we do today."

Smith's freshly sparked passion for literature led her into a career in publishing. She is an associate editor at a research foundation in nearby Ypsilanti, Michigan. She and Looker continue to keep in touch and discuss literature. She still covets his book recommendations and shares a handwritten list of postmodern suggestions that Looker gave to her recently. The list had some stretch pieces, including a puzzling suggestion about the war in Chechnya. Smith read them and "was blown away" that each one offered a message that was exactly what she needed at the time.

If Looker had his druthers, everyone would read *Don Quixote*. The famous line in the book, "I know who I am and who I may be if I choose" is a message that he thinks everyone at Concordia needs. It reminds him of the freedom he has at Concordia to teach and enjoy the arts in all of their forms, and to be a Christian who knows God and lives by the Word. As Looker evaluates his mission at Concordia, he wants to be known as a professor who uses literature and the arts to help others know who they are, and to have the freedom to be awake and self-aware—to know God.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE KREFT  
ARTS CENTER AND PROGRAMS VISIT  
[CUAA.EDU/KREFT-ARTS-PROGRAM](http://CUAA.EDU/KREFT-ARTS-PROGRAM).



# take five

Get to know one of our “uncommon” Concordians on campus, accounting major **Alex Ouellette**

By Kali Thiel, *Strategic Communications*

This isn't your grandpa's Friday night bowling league. Concordia University Ann Arbor's championship-level team is in a league of its own.

Since its modest start in 2011 as a club sport, the Concordia program has grown tremendously under the leadership of Head Coach Doug Spicer, who came on board in 2013. Since his arrival, men's bowling has earned three Wolverine-Hoosier Athletic Conference championship titles, and Spicer has helped bring the team up to the caliber of national events such as the Hoosier Classic.

It's no surprise then that one of Spicer's recruits is among the best in the conference. Alex Ouellette ('19) from Linwood, Michigan, has notched more than 20 perfect games during his time on CUAA's roster. His current collegiate average is a 198 per game, and in league bowling he averages 231. For the past two seasons, Ouellette has done his part to bowl over the competition and help bring out the best in his team, both on and off the lanes.

## 1 When did you start bowling?

I have a little sister who has Down syndrome, and she also had some medical complications where she had to have heart surgery when she was 3. My dad, who has always been a bowler himself, introduced me to bowling when I was 18 months old as a way for me to have one-on-one time with my parents. Every week they tried to give me at least a couple of hours with them at the bowling alley, and it was kind of my guaranteed, uninterrupted time with them.

## 2 When was it apparent that you were a cut above the rest?

I stopped bumper bowling when I was 3, and I joined my first league when I was 5. I think it was when I was 5 that my community newspaper did a highlight on me because I was so good for such a young age. Night league players would stop and watch when I played because they'd be amazed to see someone as young as me be able to bowl.

## 3 For someone who's so talented, it's hard to believe you didn't start your collegiate experience on a bowling team.

There are not a lot of scholarships offered for bowlers because the sport doesn't have NCAA sanctioning. So even though I had looked at several college bowling teams when I was in high school, I needed a scholarship to make it work, and it just wasn't there. I started going to a community college instead, and when two years came and went I just assumed the opportunity had passed me by. Coach Spicer stayed with me, though, and continued to follow me through my bowling leagues. He introduced me to the CUAA team, and I was so excited for an opportunity that I thought had passed me by that I decided to transfer to Concordia.

## 4 What has been the benefit of joining Concordia's team?

It's opened the door to a lot more recognition and a lot of opportunities that I might not otherwise have had. I've been fortunate to have a lot of people reaching out to me as a result of my success on the team. By next summer, I'll have my degree and the ability to get a job, and then I'll be able to go out and chase the dream of joining the Professional Bowlers Association Tour with the assurance of a safety net in place.

## 5 Outside of bowling, how has Concordia been a good fit for you?

I've really liked the faculty at Concordia. At the school I went to before, it was a little bit bigger school, and you could tell the professors were more about just getting their paycheck. At Concordia, you see your teachers around campus, and they always talk to you. They're all very accommodating, and they want you to learn.



## alumni notes

**10s** Nate Kern ('17) married Kate Robison of Laurel, Mississippi, in Watercolor, Florida, on Nov. 30, 2018. The couple resides in Birmingham, Alabama, while Nate attends the University of Alabama-Birmingham in a Doctor of Physical Therapy program. ▼



Taylor McDaniel ('17) married Ethan McDaniel on Sept. 29, 2018. CUA A Campus Pastor Randy Duncan officiated their wedding. ▼



Jessica Klieber ('16) is working to finish her graduate thesis at Eastern Michigan University. Her thesis is titled "Shakespearean Murder Plots: True Crime as Told Through the Posthuman," and is inspired by her final project at CUA A and her studies of Shakespeare at CUA A. ▼



Rachel (Ferry) Thoms ('16) and Kyle Thoms ('08, '17) celebrated their wedding on Sept. 2, 2018 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Both employees at CUA A, Kyle works in athletics and Rachel works in strategic communications. ▼



Kassandra Kaitlyn Wilson ('13) married Aaron Joseph Bock ('10) on Aug. 7, 2016. ▼



Richard Her ('12) is currently in Thailand on a mission trip, the first leading Hmong laity back to share the Gospel in their home culture. ▼



## Announcements

### LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

When you stay connected with Concordia, you open yourself up to countless opportunities. Keep informed of your alumni benefits and news by taking a moment to update your preferred email address, current address, and phone number(s) at [cuaa.edu/alumniupdates](http://cuaa.edu/alumniupdates). You may also share additional milestones on this form and indicate if you want them shared on the alumni updates page. Our monthly alumni e-newsletter will also keep you informed of opportunities to connect with other alumni, mentor students, be a classroom presenter, help others, and live out the Concordia mission.

### BATTER UP!

Join CUA A and CUW alumni for a fun-filled night of baseball in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The West Michigan Whitecaps will take on the Lansing Lugnuts at Fifth Third Ballpark on July 25.

Special ticket packages are available. Register or learn more at [cuaa.edu/alumni-white-caps](http://cuaa.edu/alumni-white-caps). Email [John.Richert@cuaa](mailto:John.Richert@cuaa) or call 734-995-7374 with questions.

### SUMMER SPORTS CAMPS

Hone your skills over the summer through youth or teen sports camps at CUA A.

- Football (grades 9–12)—May 11, July 13
  - Men's lacrosse (grades 9–12)—June 14
  - Volleyball (grades 2–8)—July 8–12
  - Basketball (grades 2–8)—July 15–19
  - Women's lacrosse (grades 9–12)—July 18
  - Cheer (grades 9–12)—July 26–28
- Register for these summer camps at [campscui.active.com/orgs/CUA A](http://campscui.active.com/orgs/CUA A).

### CLASS OF 1969 REUNION

Alumni from the CLJC Class of 1969 will reconnect with classmates and friends during their 50th reunion May 18–19 on the CUA A campus. This two-day event, which takes place in tandem with Concordia's Commencement exercises, will provide ample opportunities for fellowship and sharing.

The reunion committee would like to display Class of '69 mementos on campus. Look in your keepsake files and let us know what you plan to offer.

For more information, visit [cuaa.edu/1969-reunion](http://cuaa.edu/1969-reunion). Contact Linda Sproul at 734-995-7491 or [Linda.Sproul@cuaa.edu](mailto:Linda.Sproul@cuaa.edu) with questions.

### SUPPORT THE SCHOLARSHIP OF A PRE-SEM STUDENT

Donate to Concordia's Diligent Timothy Book Grant and help high-achieving pre-seminary students offset the cost of books needed for their studies. Students with a 3.0 GPA or higher qualify for funding from this unique program.

To give online to Diligent Timothy (or other areas of the university), visit [cuaa.edu/give](http://cuaa.edu/give). Checks may be made payable to CUA A with Diligent Timothy in the memo.

### SAVE THE DATE: CLERGY ON CAMPUS

Concordia was pleased to welcome more than two dozen pastors to campus last fall for the inaugural Clergy on Campus day. Pastors had the opportunity to hear from CUA A students; sit in on classes; dialogue with University President Rev. Patrick T. Ferry, PhD; and more.

If you are a pastor, save the date for the 2019 Clergy on Campus event on Tuesday, Sept. 24. Learn more at [cuaa.edu/clergy-on-campus](http://cuaa.edu/clergy-on-campus).



Karen Sue Murdy shares her passions for God, relationships, and movement through her blogs. *Photo courtesy of Karen Murdy*

By **Lisa Liljegen**, *Strategic Communications*

**T**he best way to catch up with Karen Sue (Hinz) Murdy is by walking alongside the blogger, writer, motivational coach, wife, and busy mom of four boys. No matter what's on her packed calendar, she always makes time for the Lord, her family, and for exercise. Oftentimes, all at once. And she uses her gifts and training to help others keep God, relationships, and movement into their own daily lives.

As a student at Concordia University Ann Arbor, Murdy took full advantage of the beautiful campus to walk out her stresses, a daily habit she learned from her parents growing up in Reese, Michigan.

"There are so many decisions to make as a college student, so I walked a lot when I was at Concordia," says Murdy. "I prayed for guidance along the river bank and remember knowing a profound sense of peace during my time there."

Not all of Murdy's movements on campus were solitary, however. She laughingly recalls leading her friends in aerobic-type exercises in the ballroom of the Manor. In between dance moves, they would talk about their favorite subject, the New Testament. She didn't know it at the time, but her impromptu "Manor-obics" would be a precursor to an impressive career as a motivational speaker who gets people moving and fired up for our Savior.

The pastor's daughter would go on to earn her degree in exercise physiology, start a cardiac rehabilitation program, marry an internal medicine physician who shares her passion for the Lord and healthy

living, and design a multidisciplinary weight management program that would help people lose weight and shift priorities in their lives.

Murdy's enthusiastic personality and positive approach to Christian wellness have helped her to become a vivacious motivational speaker. To learn more about Karen Sue Murdy, visit her blog at [blog.cuaa.edu/mission-minded-karen-murdy](http://blog.cuaa.edu/mission-minded-karen-murdy).



**Tyrel Bramwell ('10)** published another book this fall, "Come in, We're Closed," describing the biblically faithful practice of Communion.

**'00s Chad Downs ('08)** was recently presented with the Milken Educator Award and a \$25,000 cash prize from the Milken Family Foundation.

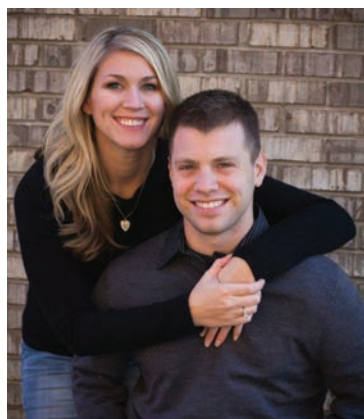
**Alicia Rodenbeck ('08)** and her husband, Joseph, recently welcomed their second child, Philip Allen, on Oct. 10, 2018. He joins big sister, Clara, who is 18 months old. ▼



**Christie Lypka ('07, '11)** recently published her first novel, "Sunshine Through the Rain." She is currently enjoying her book tour through the South and working on her second book. ▼



**Stephanie Bante ('06)** currently lives in Macomb, Michigan, with her husband, Joshua, and their three boys, Dane, Jackson, and Lucas. Stephanie is a music teacher at Trinity Lutheran School, and Joshua is in the military and currently deployed in Afghanistan. ▼



**Rev. John Zimmerman ('06)** of Scranton, Pennsylvania, married Krista Walker of Wyoming, Pennsylvania, in September 2008. ▼



## CAMPUS MINISTRY UPDATE

**Abbey Bentz ('21)**, left, and **Kala Swanson ('19)** provide service with a smile throughout their time on the Panama City mission trip. Photo courtesy of Abbey Bentz

By **Abbey Bentz ('21)**, Student Contributor

In January, I traveled with a group of 10 students from Concordia University Ann Arbor on a mission trip to serve Panama City, Florida. We partnered with Trinity Lutheran Church in Panama City to assist in the Panhandle's process of picking up and clearing out debris from the devastation caused by Hurricane Michael in October 2018.

It was eye-opening for me to see how three months after the storm there were still people's belongings everywhere, houses destroyed, and damage untouched. None of us realized how bad the destruction was and still is today.

The people we encountered and the faith they had, and continue to have, in the Lord through this disaster was what left the biggest impact on me and my own faith. Every person we worked with had a positive outlook on their situation. They weren't complaining about what happened, but instead thanking the Lord that they're still here. Most of them were right there with us helping with the clean-up and debris removal. Talking to these people, hearing their life stories, and how they trusted and continue to trust in the Lord's plan through all of this was amazing and inspiring to me. It made me realize how much I take for granted.

If these people who had so much taken from them, some even without a bathroom nearby, are still positively trusting in the Lord, then certainly I can do the same. Through everything, God is good. This is one of the reasons why I think it's so amazing that CUAA offers opportunities like these for us to go and serve others. It's so easy for us to get caught up in ourselves and our own lives. Going and serving these people who are picking up the pieces of their lives from a disaster that'll take years to recover from is very humbling and helps us to put things into perspective. We're all a part of God's family, and we should be picking each other up when a part of our family is weak, whether it's in a different country, state, or even in our everyday lives on campus.

This mission trip was a good reminder to not only think of our own needs but the needs of others, as well. It was a life-changing experience to be able to serve and build relationships with so many servant hearts of CUAA, volunteers from Trinity, and the people of Panama City.



CUAA worship arts students often travel to nearby LCMS schools, conferences, and churches with Director of Church Music and Worship Arts Dr. John Boonenberg or Vice President of Administration Rev. Dr. Ryan Peterson to help lead worship. Pictured left to right: **Angela Knicklebein ('20)**, **Conner Forbes ('19)**, **Austin McManus ('19)**, **Jonah Grimm ('20)**, Boonenberg, and Peterson.



Photo courtesy of JaJuan Collins

By **Rachel Thoms**,  
*Strategic Communications*

**J**aJuan Collins ('15, '17) may have graduated from Concordia University Ann Arbor two years ago, but he still spends every day on a college campus.

As Living Center Director for Grand Valley State University in Michigan, Collins is putting his Master of Science in student personnel administration in higher education (SPAHE) to good use in his current career, a vocation he discovered through the faithful mentorship of John Rathje, CUAA's dean of students.

His calling clicked in his first SPAHE course, Foundations of Student Personnel Administration.

"I was introduced to all of the theories about student development, which I had never heard of before," said Collins. "I was looking back at my own personal development and applying each of the phases I was learning about to my own experiences. That's when I knew I wanted to be present to help the next generation of college students."

Every day is different for Collins. Most of the time he can be found meeting with one of his 11 resident assistants, helping them with their varying professional and personal development pursuits.

He oversees four buildings of freshmen communities, totaling nearly 700 students for whom Collins is ultimately responsible.

Collins says he usually wakes up not knowing what he's going to see that day. It's important for him to be flexible and adaptable to wherever he's needed when handling a crisis, managing a student conduct issue, advocating for student needs, or mentoring a student through transition.

The people skills Collins uses to execute his daily goings-on he attributes to his time at CUAA.

"Concordia taught me how to build and shape relationships," said Collins. "Because of the tight-knit community, I can implement the ways that I connected and created bonds with my peers and my leaders in my current role, like I did at Concordia."

Collins likes to think he's bringing a little piece of everything he loved about his alma mater to the students now in his charge.

"It's important to me to be connected to people, and that's something that I fell in love with at Concordia." Learn more about CUAA's SPAHE program at [cuaa.edu/SPAHE](http://cuaa.edu/SPAHE).





Photo courtesy of Seth Hinz

By **Rachel Thoms**, *Strategic Communications*

**S**eth Hinz is passionate about blending creativity, communication, and the Church, and he knows what it's like to take on big projects that combine the three. In his previous role as media director for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Michigan District, Hinz tackled formative undertakings and maintained a consistent (and impressive) social presence for the largest district in the LCMS. Now, a recent job change has led him to one of his biggest creative projects to date.

Together with his wife, Rachel (Cousino, '06), and their three young children, the longtime Michigander moved to St. Louis, Missouri, in fall 2018 to direct the creative team at St. John Church Ellisville—now Pathfinder Church—home to one of the largest congregations within the LCMS.

Prior to joining the Pathfinder team, Hinz served in the Michigan District office for more than eight years. Hinz has also been a social media team lead with the LCMS National Youth Gathering planning team since 2013. With two degrees from CUAA, a bachelor's in business and communication ('06) and a master's in organizational leadership and administration ('09), Hinz holds experiences

both educationally and professionally that have prepared him to lead initiatives in the Church that are interactive, intentional, and inspiring.

"What I love about my job is that I get to share the Gospel message, lift up stories that bring people hope and encouragement, and communicate messages that lead to meaningful connections," Hinz said. "The Church is at a unique point in history—social media has forever changed how relationships can begin and flourish. Modern means of communication offer us an exciting opportunity to connect with real people and share the real hope we have in Jesus."

Hinz is gifted in bringing together communicators within the LCMS. As founder and administrator of the Facebook group Lutheran Communicators, Hinz has created an online community for more than 1,700 members to ask questions about social media and communication within Lutheran congregations. Members willingly share tips, tricks, and best practices with one another, offering advice on everything from useful applications for graphic design needs to tips on live streaming weekly worship and setting up sermon podcasts to even bouncing ideas off

of one another on better ways to reach out to the community.

That sense of Christian community is something he experienced at Concordia, too.

"I'm incredibly thankful for my time at Concordia," said Hinz. "I was able to study alongside fellow believers, form lifelong friendships, and discover a passion for church communication."

While the role of "church communicator" is relatively novel, Hinz said he believes more churches will see the value in adding the position to their payroll in the years ahead.

"The message we, as the Church, share hasn't changed, but the ways in which we share it certainly have," said Hinz. "If it's a career path you're considering, know it's a field that's constantly evolving and you'll need to be a lifelong learner, but also know there is a growing community of like-minded communication professionals out there—people who are willing to share their experiences along with the ups and the downs. There is strength and joy to be gained by sharing mission, ministry, and life together."

Learn more about Concordia's Haab School of Business offerings at [cuaa.edu/business](http://cuaa.edu/business).

## PURPOSEFUL GROWTH

**Jonathan Bolt ('05, '15)** was named the 2019 LEA Distinguished Lutheran Middle School Teacher. He teaches grades 6–8 science, and is the technology lead teacher at Central Lutheran School in New Haven, Indiana. He was selected by the LEA's Middle School Teachers Network leadership team.

**Jason Girard ('05)** is a case transition liaison for Botsford Commons. He currently lives in Farmington Hills, Michigan. ▼



**Jennifer Burnette ('03)** is enjoying her time volunteering for Habitat for Humanity. She currently lives in Evansville, Indiana, with her husband and her son.

**'70s** **Rev. Dave Davis ('79)**, third vice president of the LCMS Michigan District, is CUAAs 2019 Outstanding Alumnus Award recipient. Davis will be honored at the May Commencement ceremonies on campus.

**Steve Zill ('76)** retired from Valley Lutheran High School in Saginaw, Michigan. He enjoys coaching ladies golf, driving the bus, doing grade school chapels and science shows, and fishing.

## Advancing the mission



There is a story I have heard throughout my time in ministry that has been told many times in many different ways. In all cases, though, the key message remains the same: a seemingly small and simple act can make a big difference in the life of another.

The story goes something like this: Once upon a time, there was an old man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach every morning before he began his work. Early one morning he was walking along the shore after a big storm had passed and found the vast beach littered with starfish as far as the eye could see, stretching in both directions.

Off in the distance, the old man noticed a small boy approaching. As the boy walked, he paused every so often, and as he grew closer the man could see that he was occasionally bending down to pick up an object and throw it into the sea.

The boy came closer still, and the man called out, "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?"

The young boy paused, looked up, and replied, "Throwing starfish into the ocean. The tide has washed them up onto the beach, and they can't return to the sea by themselves. When the sun gets high, they will die unless I throw them back into the water."

The old man replied, "But there must be tens of thousands of starfish on this beach. I'm afraid you won't really be able to make much of a difference."

The boy bent down, picked up yet another starfish and threw it as far as he could into the ocean. Then he turned, smiled, and said, "It made a difference to that one!"

Many times, this is how it is with giving.

Donors to Concordia University have sometimes asked me if their gift really makes a difference. As in the story of the starfish, all gifts, large and small, have an impact in every single case. Many of the gifts received provide scholarship support that makes a Concordia education possible for another student. Some gifts help provide facilities or technology that allow our students to be the best prepared in their chosen vocation. And in all cases, these gifts matter in the lives of students who are blessed through them.

Thank you for making a difference and for the impact you make every time you support Concordia.

**REV. DR. ROY PETERSON**

*Senior Vice President of Advancement*

*Story adapted from The Star Thrower by Loren Eiseley (1907-1977).*

## Together again



Members of the Class of 1968 gather on the CUAA campus for their 50th reunion. The group held its class reunion in May 2018.

HAVE YOU HAD A SIGNIFICANT LIFE EVENT OR EXCITING ACHIEVEMENT THAT YOU WANT US TO INCLUDE IN THE NEXT *ARBOR LIGHT*? PLEASE EMAIL YOUR NOTE TO [ALUMNI@CUAA.EDU](mailto:ALUMNI@CUAA.EDU). PHOTOS MAY BE SHARED, AS WELL. PLEASE SEND A HIGH-RESOLUTION IMAGE, IF POSSIBLE.





“I’m grateful for alumni and donors who go out of their way to ensure that we have the resources we need to be prepared for the working world.”

**Elizabeth Trent** / CLASS OF 2022  
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

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