

# THE CONCORDIA COURIER

INVESTIGATE.INFORM.IGNITE.INVOLVE.

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## Concordia stars in PBS Special “All is Bright!”



**PICTURED ABOVE:** Recording PBS special to replace Concordia’s annual Christmas Concert.  
*Photo courtesy of: Courtesy of Bil Hood*

JOHN SYMANK  
STAFF WRITER

This year has been one for the books, with a pandemic striking the world and bringing life to a standstill. Due to this pandemic, this year’s annual Concordia Christmas Concert looks a little different.

Concordia has partnered with PBS SoCal to bring “All is Bright! A Concordia Christmas” to the screens of both local residents and Concordia families across the nation. This Christmas special is a collaborative effort of many hard workers, from both the PBS SoCal team and different departments of students, faculty and staff on campus.

“All is Bright” will have four showings, three of which will take place on PBS SoCal. The premiere takes place on Tues., Dec. 22 at 8 p.m. The following shows will be on Thurs., Dec. 24 at 10 p.m. and on Fri., Dec. 25, at 8 p.m. In addition, there will be one showing at 11 a.m. on Fri., Dec. 25 on KCET. “All is Bright”

will also be available to stream at [www.cui.edu/christmas](http://www.cui.edu/christmas) for those who are not local to the area or who are unable to access the televised performance.

The airings on PBS avail Concordia to potentially millions of viewers across Southern California.

One of the heads of this project is Rev. Bil Hood, Concordia’s Director of External Relations. Hood has been the catalyst for this project’s creation. After finding out that PBS SoCal was short on content due to COVID, Hood and other Concordia representatives reached out to PBS SoCal about potentially creating a special in order to fill out some of that needed time, as well as to replace Concordia’s annual Christmas Concert.

“Our community has lived through a year of dark times,” said Hood, referring to COVID-19 and the divisive presidential election, “yet even in the dark times there is a light,

and that light is best represented by Christmas, the coming of Jesus, the Light of the world.”

Of course, this program could not have come together alone. Hood was helped by many faculty members on campus in this Christmas creation. The planning team has included Rev. Dr. Steven Mueller, Dean of Christ College and Chief Mission Officer, who has served as the writer and producer for the show. “The special is more than a concert,” Hood explained. “We needed a narrative. [Dr. Mueller] led in the development of the ‘All is Bright!’ theme and the six narrative pieces that take us from darkness to light.”

Other key contributors include Dr. Jeff Held, who served as a co-artistic director, Professor Steve Young and Dr. Tom Mueller, who wrote and composed new music for the performance, audio engineer Mario Gonzales and Alex Guebert, who has served as the Concordia Handbell

Director. Hood said, “This was a collaborative effort with many people across the campus.” This has included the Theatre, Music, Christ College, University Services, and other administrative departments, along with Concordia’s Black Student Union club. “It took a cast of thousands to get this done,” Hood added.

Generous support from Golden State Foods and Charlie and Ling Zhang helped the willing participants on Concordia’s faculty and staff acquire all the resources needed to put together a top-shelf production.

On the roster for the Concordia Christmas Special will be some original work by our ensembles on campus, including, but not limited to, Concordia Choir, Sinfonietta, and Concert Bells. Concordia Choir’s performance is largely taken from the 2018 Christmas Concert at Segerstrom Concert

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## A Letter from Dr. Thomas



Dear Students,

The fall semester is quickly coming to a close. Normally that would mean last-minute assignments, studying late into the night for a dreaded final exam, putting the final touches on an essay, or if you are like some of my students throughout the years, just realizing that you still have to write a 15-page essay by tomorrow.

That would be a normal semester. But as we are all too aware, this semester has been anything but normal! Not only do you have to do all of that—perhaps from your room in Sigma or from home with your little brother constantly interrupting—but you are also worried about travel, the health of your friends and families, and spring semester. But let me remind you of our Lord’s words that speak so well to this moment: Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day’s own trouble be sufficient for the day (Mt 6:34). Isn’t that true in 2020?!? But what a gift of comfort if we can absorb that lesson regarding the importance to trust in the Lord always.

I want to say on behalf of the faculty and staff how proud we are of you! You have persisted in your classes, extended forgiveness to each other and to the faculty, and handled COVID life. Those on campus have observed social distancing and worn face coverings to love each other. We don’t know what spring will bring, but the CUI community will get through it together as Eagles while we await a new tomorrow! Blessed Advent and Christmas!

Dr. Thomas



# It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!

GABI BECKMAN  
ASCUI SECRETARY

The best way to spread campus cheer is crying about finals for all to hear! We all know it is the end of the semester when everyone flocks to the library and waits to write all of their final papers till Week 15. Amidst all of the chaos of group projects and finals week coming sooner than we would like to admit, we hope you were able to experience some Christmas spirit with the events put on this past week!

Starting on Sun., Dec. 6, Intramurals hosted a Free

for All on the Lacrosse Field for anyone itching to let some stress out with physical activity. With every activity from giant jenga to bocce ball, they provided all the right equipment to have some fun before final projects are due. Weren't able to make it?

Well, no worries! Intramurals will be hosting another Free for All on the Lacrosse Field from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. on Sun., Dec. 13 for anyone wanting to play spikeball, football, soccer, volleyball and more!

Moving into cozy mode, Sigma's RAs hosted a Christmas Party for anyone

who needed to catch a break! With fun activities like ornament decorating and enough hot cocoa to keep you warm till Christmas morning, on-campus students were able to relax and unwind with some gingerbread house and snowflake making as the week was in full force.

Finally, Thurs., Dec. 8 was filled with joy and peace as ASCUI hosted Concordia Christmas! Starting with a special Christmas dinner in the cafeteria, Pastor Quinton Anderson welcomed students with a heartwarming Christmas message before digging into the always

delicious Christmas ham. Although the event looked different from Concordia Christmases of years past, ASCUI brought the cheer with hot and ready donuts and raffles for prizes like Airpod Pros and gift cards galore. To wrap it all up, Abbey West hosted a special SHOUT service as the semester comes to a close. We hope everyone is staying safe and sane during these crazy times and make sure to follow ASCUI's Instagram, @ascui, to check out all the latest shenanigans happening on campus!

## Christmas message and meaning from Christ College faculty

CATIE FULTON  
ARTS/ENTERTAINMENT  
EDITOR

This holiday season has come with new challenges that many of us are facing due to this pandemic. Christ College professors have given us some insight into what Christmas can and does look like in this season of unknown. Whether we are missing our families this season or tired from the hard work of the semester, we are reminded of what Christmas means to us as Christians.

This year has brought strain and challenges for those of us who are craving physical interactions. Dr. Mike Middendorf, Professor of Theology, explains how humans were not built to be alone. He said that "this was even true of Adam in the perfection of paradise (Genesis 2:18). We are created to be in fellowship with other human beings, a word our Monday chapel services through Philippians talked about repeatedly."

One way that we have been able to stay connected in faith has been through online alternatives

for worship. "While we can't be physically together, we are there with each other to share burdens and allay anxieties," said Dr. Jeff Mallinson, Professor of Philosophy and Theology. "This time of the pandemic itself is indeed like Advent; we know it will eventually pass, but learning to live in the anticipation can be a struggle against impatience."

The online alternative is still very difficult in a number of ways and is not a perfect substitute for usual in-person activities. "Zoom works OK, but there is something about being with people in

classrooms and in worship," Middendorf said, adding, "Jesus became a physical human being so that we could know God better in the flesh. I look forward to when we can teach, learn and worship in person again."

With higher unemployment, and certain people and populations feeling isolated or vulnerable, it has never been more critical to think of, and do for, others during this holiday season. "I worry about a lot of the homeless and food-insecure folks that we used to serve but can't easily connect with these days,"

said Mallinson. "As unsettling as the long food lines are around the country, I also worry about the folks curled up in some corner where they are not easily seen but where their suffering is real."

The season of Advent can be a source of joy that helps lead us to Christmas. Mallinson shared what we can focus on in this unusual year. "The trust in our ultimate rescue to come is what gives us the courage to live in the present penultimate moment," he said. "Because we know that God has got the future, we can

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# Top Ten Study Tips

ALEXIS RIOS  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Are you feeling frazzled by finals? This year is going to be a different kind of finals experience that many have never had before. But no need to fear as both senior students and professors are here to offer you all the tips and tricks to finish out finals with a bang.

**1. Quiz! Quiz! And snooze**

Yep! You heard that right—quiz and sleep on it. Jennifer Cosgrove is a Professor of Psychology who teaches multiple online courses. When it comes to studying, her best advice is to keep quizzing and then sleep on that information. Whether it “is reviewing quizzes in the text, study groups that quiz each other, reviewing Quizlets, and then sleeping on this information” is the best way to soak it all up, said Cosgrove.

**2. Make the review guide your BFF**

Professor Cosgrove also recommends utilizing any review or study guides your professor offers. If they do not offer one, then she recommends you make one. “Use your review guide - next to the questions or topics, write down the page numbers in the text where that information

can be found and color-code your notes, e.g., blue mark, blue lecture.” By doing this, Cosgrove believes you’ll remember the information much more thoroughly.

**3. Location is everything**

This tip pertains specifically to online finals. Cosgrove recommends “making sure you have the right environment, find a place where you can concentrate and not be disturbed. Let others you are with know you are taking a final exam.”

**4. Put the phone down**

Senior Alina Inzometcvas has learned that it is best to put the phone away while studying over the years. “It’s so easy to get distracted when you’re at home, and your phone is right next to you,” said Inzometcvas. Even if you’re studying on your computer, having the phone somewhere else will limit the number of notifications and distractions, keeping you more focused on your coursework.

**5. Make a list**

If you feel like your brain is scattered, Inzometcvas advises you to write down your tasks to relax your mind. “Writing down all the tasks and marking them off when done helps me a lot mentally. When I see the whole list of

tasks crossed out, I feel a lot better,” said Inzometcvas.

**6. Create a schedule**

All the finals times are available here: <https://www.cui.edu/en-us/studentlife/registrar/final-exam-schedule>. The final exam times may be different from your class times, so it is imperative to check your final time, so you don’t miss it. Cosgrove also recommends creating a schedule the weekend before so you can prioritize your studies accordingly.

**7. Stay positive**

As cliché as it sounds Cosgrove, believes attitude is half the battle. If you’re feeling overwhelmed, she recommends taking a nature break, even if it’s just 10 minutes. Cosgrove also recommends focusing on God as your rock during the week, keening on prayer and praise. “Watch your mindset and focus on gratitude. Do your best, then let it go,” Cosgrove recommends.

**8. Focus on your skills**

Senior Melissa Klemsz, who also works as a WINGS mentor, recommends utilizing your skills. “Set time for yourself to power-study and then make sure to set time to relax and let the information soak in,” said Klemsz.



PICTURED ABOVE: Prof. Cosgrove with her corgi  
Photos courtesy of: Prof. Cosgrove

Understanding your skills and limits will help you utilize the times of the day you’re most focused and productive.

**9. Get some good sleep**

It’s a basic but undervalued tip. Sleep is essential to success in any area of life but especially crucial during finals week. If you’re struggling to sleep, Cosgrove recommends “listening to sleepy podcasts or sounds to help you take your mind off busy thoughts.”

**10. Get a puppy (Optional!** And if living at home, ask the parents first!)

If you don’t have a puppy, maybe consider it? Cosgrove recommends corgis.

At the end of the day, there is one common theme- relaxation. Trust yourself and trust God. “Include God in all your endeavors. Share with Him your concerns, your goals, your needs. Ask Him to bless your studies, to bless you with good health, and thank Him for all your blessings - to be a college student, to be able to learn about Him and the world He has made. We have much to be thankful for,” says Cosgrove.

And on that note-good luck. You got this, Eagles!

# Nursing White Coat Ceremony



PICTURED LEFT: Proud papa! Concordia dad Mario Castillo (left) with his son, Nursing student Colin Castillo.



PICTURED RIGHT: Nursing student Jennifer Cadman  
Photos courtesy of Timothy Maggs

FRANCESCA SANCHEZ  
STAFF WRITER

On Fri., Dec. 4, Concordia honored those making strides in the Nursing program. With the world still being in chaos, these students' celebration was done in a COVID-19 safe manner.

The Department of Nursing “White Coat Ceremony” took place on Concordia's campus in the east parking lot. Since it was

a drive-through ceremony, the guests of those being honored remained in the car or maintained social distance. The white coat ceremony calls for the student who is advancing to the next phase of their training in nursing to be “coated” by someone of their choosing. Medical residents and media students perform a similar ritual. The Nursing program at Concordia is advanced and fast-

paced, well known for its rigor; these students are well deserving of the celebration in their honorable convocation choice.

Nursing program student, Samantha Gray, was once of the students coated at the event. She participated in the oath deliverance in which nursing students recite their promise and commitment to upholding a high standard of care for every

patient they encounter. They are also given a pin to wear, which symbolizes their commitment to keeping healthcare human. Gray said, “We promise to always practice ethically and professionally.” The oath is something nurses hold close to their heart throughout their career.

Although this ceremony was different from those in previous years, Gray said, “it felt appreciated because our professors did their best to make the ceremony happen safely. It felt special to hear my name be called while my family was cheering me on from the car.”

When asked about how she felt about choosing this career path during this time, Gray said, “At first, I was hesitant to start nursing school during such a horrible time. I am grateful that I chose nursing as my career path after seeing all of the harm this virus has done to people and their families. I am working my hardest to get into the field right

away to be there for whatever the hospitals need me to do.” Gray believes that, “In a fearful time, it is important for nurses to stay strong for the well-being of others, and that is what I intend on doing.” It is a beautiful and comforting feeling to know that Concordia produces excellent nurses who are entering this field determined to make a difference.

So what comes next for these freshly coated students? “Following this ceremony, we are now able to enter the clinical setting at the hospital. We will be completing several clinical rotations over the next 12 months,” Gray explained. These students are eager to get into the field and get to work. Given the current times, succeeding and advancing in this program takes perseverance and strength. This ceremony is a small token of appreciation for these young minds who will soon play a large role in the nursing field.





**PICTURED ABOVE:** Mikayla Jean making her way down the lane  
*Photo courtesy of: CUI Athletics*

**BILLI DERLITH**  
ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT

In the last few days of November, Mikayla Jean was honored as Newport Rib Company Eagle of the Week. Jean is a senior for the CUI women's swimming and diving team.

This season, Jean is utilizing her four years of experience by stepping into a leadership role on her team. She accredits her development as an athlete and individual to her time at CUI.

"CUI has helped me develop as a player and student," said Jean. "The school and community have challenged me to work my hardest in everything I do, whether that be in my academics or my athletics. Both the coaches and professors at Concordia University Irvine want

everyone to excel and push us to be successful in everything we do."

When Jean was asked to pick her favorite memory from CUI so far she replied that it was, "the boy's swimming and diving team winning our conference meet my sophomore year. Although it wasn't the girls team that won, our team is one team. We train together and are one family. Getting to watch the boys fight for that win on the last day of conference was inspiring and such a great moment to be a part of."

Jean is majoring in Liberal Arts and plans to be an elementary school teacher after she graduates. Jean is passionate about teaching and has been set on being an elementary school teacher since she was a little girl.

If she isn't in the pool, Jean enjoys being outdoors. One of her favorite spots is the beach. Jean also values spending quality time with her friends and family. She mentioned that she has a big family and that anywhere spent with them is her favorite place to be.

When Jean was asked what something was that she couldn't live without she stated, "Something I couldn't live without is my mom," said Jean. "She has supported me my entire life and I can't even begin to imagine where I would be without her."

One thing you may not know about Jean is that she believes she could eat ice cream for every meal. Good thing there are a lot of different flavors for her to choose from!

# Concordia Sports giving when COVID-19 is taking

**GRIFFIN BOOK**  
STAFF WRITER

The holidays are hard on the family especially during the pandemic, so this winter season Concordia gave back to the community through food drives and festive cards.

The men's volleyball team donated cans for a food drive. "We all brought in two cans per player," said McClain Mott sophomore setter on men's volleyball. The cans were brought in then dropped off to the athletic director and redistributed to the elderly for Thanksgiving. "It's nice to be able to give back during this year especially for people who wouldn't be able to normally celebrate on top of the pandemic," said Mott.

Men's volleyball wasn't the only sport giving back this year, women's basketball also helped with the food drive. "We all brought three to five canned goods to help a cause for people who don't have much and who need food during these times. One of our coaches is also putting on a canned goods and winter apparel drive for our team so we are able to donate and give canned goods and clothing to those who need it during the holidays and during these hard times too," said Destiny Sambrano, sophomore on women's basketball.

This canned drive is annual. "In SAC we do a food drive every year where we try to give back, normally we compete with schools in the PacWest for the most generous school," said Mott.

The festive ritual of giving back is also branching out to other sports, "Last year we had the option to donate a dollar or bring in canned goods...I definitely know this helped a lot of people who needed food. This year we also had to send out two cards to some of our family members or friends who we thought would like to receive a written card from us during the time of COVID-19," said Sambrano.

This pandemic has proven to be problematic for all and on top of the normal struggle that comes with the holidays, Concordia is supporting local organizations with food as well as cards. "During these times it's hard for many people especially the older people so these cards are to cheer them up and let them know that we are thinking of them," exclaimed Sambrano.

The holidays are a struggle normally but with the help from Concordia athletes and coaches, we can all give back and help to restore faith even if the faith comes in a .69 cent tin can on Aisle 6.

# Athletes see the light at the end of the tunnel

**KAILYN CASE**  
STAFF WRITER

On Thurs., Nov. 12, the Pacific West Conference released and reiterated their plan to continue playing in the spring. A unanimous vote across the board kept the energy in motion to bring a little more positivity to this year. Although 2020 has been incredibly difficult for most people, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Sports are great outlets for athletes and escapes for student spectators, but this year, sports have become almost nonexistent. From conditioning in masks to sanitizing and testing every day, the new normal is becoming repetitive and exhausting. Seeing that the PacWest conference is continuing their plan to play is a huge relief. The seniors who have dedicated so much of their time to be able to go out on one last hoorah are extremely inspiring.

In a university statement, Crystal Rosenthal, Concordia athletic director said, "We are excited to have progress in our PacWest sports as the conference has worked together to provide the best-case scenario for our student-athletes as we work to follow state and NCAA guidelines. Our coaches and student-athletes have worked hard all fall to prepare, and I cannot wait to watch as our Eagles return to compete."

Seeing our leaders in the Athletics Department push for success and have our athletes' backs is something that shows how Concordia is truly a family. In these troubling times, it is important to be there for one another and push for the opportunities we deserve.

When hearing of the press release to have the ball rolling for competition in the spring, Phil Quartararo, a senior baseball player said, "That's super reassuring and makes me super excited. We practiced all fall not knowing whether or not we'd be playing in the

spring, but this is just amazing." The baseball team has been practicing hard and doing everything they can to stay in shape as well as keep their mind sharp to be the best they can when they can return to play.

Erik Boisvert, a junior outside hitter on the men's volleyball team said, "[He is] super stoked that season is happening. People don't realize it's a full-time job and you don't want that taken away from you."

A full-time job is the best way to describe the all around commitment these athletes have had the past year. Not only have they been preparing as if they were going to be playing at any moment, but they have also had to be in the training room, making sure their bodies are ready to go.

Training rigorously for a long period of time is straining on the body and it is amazing that the training staff at Concordia is always looking out for our athletes. From class to practice to the weight room and then to the trainers is a normal day for these athletes. Seeing all this hard work and dedication be used for the spring is a huge positive note for the end of this semester.

As the semester comes to a conclusion, it is important to focus on the little things and take on the end of the year with a high note. For the remainder of 2020, look for updates on the sporting schedule on the CUI Athletics website or follow their Instagram. 2021 is already shaping up.



**PICTURED ABOVE:** Christian Oviedo, Josiah Kaa, Jordan Hoppe, and Erik Boisvert celebrating after the game.  
*Photo courtesy of: CUI Athletics*



# Campus response to false COVID-19 scare before the holidays

CHRISTOPHER SHELLEY  
STAFF WRITER

Before Thanksgiving break, Concordia offered students rapid COVID-19 testing before going home for the holidays. A number of these tests came back positive. Upon receiving this information, the university presumed there was a coronavirus outbreak on campus and responded accordingly. The day before Thanksgiving, it was made clear that the tests had given false-positive results. The university quickly emailed the student body explaining what had happened.

Some students on campus were affected by the false-

positive round of testing results, taking steps such as cancelling their flights and plans to go back home over break. Students were placed in quarantine. According to Jason St. Pierre, a sophomore RA in the Sigma dorm, the mandated quarantine made his job harder because, “Not having [his] boss because she was in quarantine, and many of the other RAs also being in quarantine meant that we had to take over their shifts. Due to many RAs testing positive, “there wasn’t a lot of RAs on duty so we had professors help us deliver food to the students and staff on campus that were quarantined.” With many of the RAs in quarantine, St.

Pierre said “I was expecting to have to work less because of a break but initially I had to work more than [my] normal work week.”

As a result of the false-positive report, many events and groups on campus cancelled practices, including sports and music program groups. The presumed “outbreak” drew the attention of local news outlets and Public Relations Director Lizz Mishreki had to field many media requests. Working with reporters covering a scare on campus could be stressful, but Mishreki said, “As for my job as Director of Public Relations for CUI, it's great if you like change.

Every day is different, you're working with various departments, programs, and leaders across campus so you get to learn and need to know about a lot of different things which I like.”

Luckily for the student body and staff, the tests were confirmed to be false-positive tests and Concordia didn’t have an outbreak on their hands. In fact, Concordia has only had 28 cumulative confirmed

cases on campus to date, with most of those cases designated as “recovered.” To keep updated on coronavirus and campus news, please visit <https://www.cui.edu/covid-19/covid-dashboards>. To hear Concordia’s response to California’s December regional stay home order please visit <https://www.cui.edu/covid-19/community-updates>.



# Merry and bright through the December holidays



PICTURED ABOVE: Christmas lights in Balboa  
Photo courtesy of: Vanessa Bernzen

CARLIE CHAULSETT-UTLEY  
CAMPUS EDITOR

After a year that felt much longer than 365 days, we deserve an extra burst of happiness. Check out some of the lesser known national holidays coming your way throughout December.

## December 12: Gingerbread House Day

Grab some friends and make memories and a house! Target sells a “Holiday Deluxe Gingerbread House Kit” for \$10. It comes with cookie walls and roof, gummy candies for decorations and icing. Pro tip to save icing: instead of joining

the walls together with icing, boil water and sugar together to create a “glue” to avoid wasting the precious icing!

**December 14: Free Shipping Day**

Do what you do best! Shop ‘til you drop! We’ve been shopping online all pandemic - we might as well save a few bucks on shipping! Shop online at your favorite small business or Amazon and only pay for what you actually buy.

**December 18: Answer the Phone like Buddy the Elf Day / Ugly Sweater Day**

The best way to spread Christmas cheer is to answer the phone for all to hear. “Buddy the Elf, what’s your favorite color?” Join Will Ferrell and dive head first into Christmas spirit. Maybe continue the day by making gingerbread houses, eating cookie dough, go ice skating and hold hands with someone in your own household, cause you know, ‘rona.

## December 20: Christmas Movie Marathon Day

Let's be honest we've been doing this since March. Grab blankets, hot cocoa and Netflix. Rotten Tomatoes has a list of the 62 Best Christmas Movies of all Time. Topping the list is the animated “How the Grinch Stole Christmas” (1967). The remade version featuring Jim Carrey as the,

the, the, the Grinch will always be a Christmas staple. Another classic near the top of the list, “It’s a Wonderful Life” (1946). Critics call it a holiday classic with bittersweet comedy and drama. Other mentions on the list are “A Charlie Brown Christmas” (1965) and “A Christmas Story” (1983). Anyone want to cuddle and watch the ultimate Christmas movie, “Diehard”?

## December 21: Winter Solstice

The solstice marks the day with the shortest amount of daylight and longest night of the year. Many cultures use this day to feast and celebrate. Take this day to celebrate the shortest day of 2020! It's one more day until we are out of this year. In modern times, groups gather at Stonehenge in England each year. When inside the monument and facing east toward Heel Stone, the sun will rise right above the stone. Write that on your New Year resolution list!

## December 22: National Cookie Exchange Day (also National Math Day, but that's less fun)

The best day of December - don't @ me. Organize a cookie exchange with friends and get to baking! The toughest part will be deciding which cookie is the best. You can also attach recipes. As someone who used to work in a bakery, Christmas

cookies are a staple in everyone’s December diet. It’s basically it’s own food group. The chocolate chip cookie was invented in the 1930s by Toll House Restaurant owner Ruth Graves Wakefield when she thought the chocolate chips would melt into the batter when baked. Did someone get her a Nobel Prize?

## December 26 National Thank You Note Day

Thank your friends and family for all the wonderful gifts and memories they have brought to your life. Take time to handwrite a note to tell them how much joy they have given you in a year that has been so dark.

## December 31: New Years Eve / National Champagne Day

Pop those bottles, we're getting OUT of 2020! As the 74th month of the year comes to a close, come together (socially distanced of course) and ring in the new year with new resolutions. So much for my “get out of the house more in 2020.” Maybe try “only 3 hours a day on TikTok” or “cultivate the confidence level that Kanye West has.” No matter your resolution always remember, you're doing amazing, sweetie!

To keep up to date on national holidays, check out <https://nationaltoday.com>



# Fall 2020 semester recap

OMAR ABUL BURGHUL  
STAFF WRITER

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States in March, students have had to transition from going to class in-person to now attending lectures online.

Online teaching has made communication with professors and other students challenging due to the distance. The coronavirus has also impacted how students are studying for finals and may also change how finals are administered.

Savanna Winchel, a junior in Biology and the President of Beta Beta Beta, described that she is treating this semester like any other semester, by trying her best and leaving the rest in God’s hands. “I’m going to try not to be too hard on myself, knowing this is a difficult time and semester for everyone,” she said.

Winchel also described the challenges of retaining focus as a commuter. “As a commuter too, I’ll be doing all my finals and preparation at home (with my five siblings, and parents)! While that alone can be challenging, I want to instead remember to choose to focus on the blessing of getting to spend more time with family during this time,” Winchel said.

Winchel categorized the

professors at Concordia as amazing in the way that they transitioned from having in-person classes to doing their best online. “They are a blessing in my life and have never been more of an inspiration to me than they have been this semester. I want to one day become a college professor, so having them as my role model has been a blessing,” Winchel said.

Erin Thompson, senior Mathematics major and President of Math Club agreed. “Professors have made an extra effort to check in on the students’ well-being and be as accommodating as possible,” she said.

Breann Alvarado, a senior in Communications Studies, described the difficulties catching up with the online environment this fall and technical issues that arose, such as not being able to hear fellow students or Q/A in “dual mode” wherein professors needed to balance interacting with students both in class and also online. “Talk about making it even tougher for the students that are online!” she said.

Makenna Myers, a senior in English and Humanities with an emphasis in Creative Writing, described how this semester was one of the hardest college semesters she has had.

She explained how she is used to living closer to the university and being away in San Diego has made it harder for her to see her friends. However, Myers felt this semester has been a little easier in regard to studying. “I have been studying less because my classes with actual exams are all take-home and open book. That’s been a nice reprieve,” she said.

Nicollette Gonzales, a senior in Business Management, felt this semester was a lot harder because students can have many distractions when they are home. To keep herself prepared for finals, Gonzalez is “doing my best to rewatch recorded classes, create flashcards and review our online material.”

Dr. Angela S. Williamson, Adjunct Communication Professor, described how she teaches online classes at Concordia and how well her students are doing in her classes. “The students in my online classes this semester did an incredible job, and many students did not have any trouble completing the assignments on-time,” she said. Williamson described how the project for the final was divided into different weeks so that the student would not be stressed when finals week hit. She advised students to “plan personal and mental breaks during your finals so

## Christmas message and meaning from Christ College faculty

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

The season of Advent can be a source of joy that helps lead us to Christmas. Mallinson shared what we can focus on in this unusual year. “The trust in our ultimate rescue to come is what gives us the courage to live in the present penultimate moment,” he said. “Because we know that God has got the future, we can endure three weeks of Advent in quarantine, or away from family with whom we cannot yet reunite. In other words, my favorite thing about Advent is learning to be present here at this moment with a deep sense of peace that the light is coming into our darkness.”

Dr. Michael Eschelbach, Professor of Theology, provides perspective into what it was like for the shepherds when Jesus was born for us. “The shepherds were still under the Roman Empire, still held in low opinion by their religious leaders, still living on a low and vulnerable income; still in the field, in the cold, in the darkness. Yet everything was different now.

So different that these shepherds found their voices and shared what they had heard and seen with everyone,” said Eschelbach.

We have the same connection to God as the shepherds. “Jesus, which means ‘Salvation is from the Lord’ was among them, just like another of His names promised, ‘Immanuel’ which means, ‘God with us.’ The life of a soul regenerated by God’s Word and Spirit in the image of His Son was thriving in these shepherds,” shared Eschelbach. “They had light and warmth and providence from God that could not be paralleled nor taken away. God is bringing that same message, the same joy, peace, love, and hope that Joseph, Mary, the shepherds, and so many others experienced to you, right now, as you read this and always as you read His Word.”

To read devotions during this Advent season, visit [www.cui.edu/devotions/advent](http://www.cui.edu/devotions/advent). To join Chapel services and watch past services, visit [abbeywest.online.church/](http://abbeywest.online.church/).

you don’t feel overwhelmed. Time management is the key to surviving finals, online, this semester.”

Dr. David Schulz, Communication Professor, explained how teaching Communication courses both in-person and online has been a challenge, but it has given students a chance to practice Communication Theories. “The students in my classes have demonstrated both resilience and grace performing a key communication competency: the ability to adapt our communication to changing contexts,” he said.

Alec Leissring is a senior English major with a Lutheran Teaching Minor. He is also

Men’s Ministry Coordinator for Abbey West as well as ODK President. Leissring encourages fellow students to “trust the knowledge you have,” adding, “Once you spend the time studying you need to in order to feel prepared, do not overstress yourself and continue to study super late at night or hours before your exam; have a couple hours between your final studying and your exam.”

Schulz added his advice to students. “You are almost across the finish line, keep your good momentum, rely on your community of colleagues, and pray! When you think you are at the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on!”

## Concordia stars in PBS Special “All is Bright!”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



PICTURED ABOVE: Checking the sound for the PBS Special  
Photo courtesy of: Bil Hood

Hall in Costa Mesa, but still will feature new music, some of which was directed by Held.

“This format allows us to utilize the finest audio equipment in the Borland-Manske Center studios, and

it allows us to feature some musical acts that wouldn’t be included in our traditional Christmas concerts,” said Held. “These include an Americana Ensemble version of ‘Joy to the World,’ a jazz poetry reading, and numerous multi-track

songs mixed by Steve Young and Mario Gonzales, our amazing leaders in Commercial Music.”

At PBS SoCal, Michelle Merker, Program Development Manager, National Productions, was a key partner to make the special happen. Merker is a Concordia mom; her daughter is a graduate, and “she’s been our champion at PBS the whole way through,” said Hood.

On the stage for this Christmas special, students in our ensembles have helped to create new music and accompaniments. Jan-Patrick Aquino, senior and member of Concordia Choir, was a leading force on the choral side of the project.

“I took on the role of being a vocalist leading ‘O Holy Night.’ I also participated as a member of a small choir setting on ‘Sweet Little Jesus Boy’ and ‘Silent

Night,” said Aquino. “It feels unusual for this to be taking the place of a Christmas Concert. This is definitely not how I imagined my last Christmas concert to be at Concordia, but it has been an exciting and fun new experience. It’ll be an experience I won’t forget.”

In addition, Al Almanza, freshman and first violinist with Sinfonietta, felt that the new experience was more than just a special, or a replacement for the Christmas Concert.

“Generally, it’s to promote the Christmas cheer and spread the holiday spirit for all to hear!

But, for the students and staff in the school, I feel like it is more than that,” said Almanza. “For me, it is a demonstration of our determination to move forward. It is believing that we can still make the best out of what we have left in the present, despite the unpredictable setbacks and limitations that we have adapted to this season.”

For more information on how to tune into “All is Bright! A Concordia Christmas”, visit [www.cui.edu/christmas](http://www.cui.edu/christmas)



# Softball's week of gratitude

BROOKE JACKSON  
SPORTS EDITOR

Since Starting Nov. 22, the Concordia softball team began their Week of Gratitude in honor of the time of Thanksgiving. Each day, a few of the athletes shared who they were most grateful for during this stressful time.

At the beginning of the week, sophomore Jocelyn Pino kicked it off by thanking her mom. “She sacrificed a lot for me to go to the college I wanted and play the sport I love. She is the most strong, honest and loving person in my life,” said Pino.

Next up for the sophomores was Danielle Cole and Missy Nemeth. Cole expressed her love for her twin sister. “She has been my rock and my best friend since literally day one and I truly wouldn’t be where I am without her,” said Cole. Nemeth wanted to mention her entire family. She said, “No matter what obstacles we go through, we are always there for one another through thick and thin. They support me and push me to be better, and my parents work hard to provide for me and my siblings.”

Day three of the week brought in seniors Lauren Lopez and McKinsey Thorpe. Lopez shared her thankfulness for her family. She said, “Every single one of them has made sacrifices for me and I am so appreciative of the love they give me everyday. This is truly the best support system anyone can ever have.”

Thorpe continued in her thankfulness for her family. She

said, “They have made me into the woman I am today and I am continually amazed by their strength and passion. One of my sisters and my brother are both healthcare workers that have sacrificed so much for the well being of others. My mother and my other sister are educators and my father and brother-in-law are creating beautiful homes to help our community grow. I am forever grateful for them!”

Freshman Rylie Rohr had a lot to say about what she was grateful for during this time. “I am extremely grateful for this group of girls and the opportunity to continue to play softball during this time. Coming in as a freshman in college is always a difficult transition, but this year has been an even bigger challenge due to the pandemic,” said Rohr. “Each one of these girls have gone out of their way to reach out to me

to make sure we are all adjusting well, or just asking to hang out. I cannot wait to grow together as a team and continue to play softball with them throughout the rest of the year. Go Eagles!”

Head Coach Crystal Rosenthal also wanted to have her turn in expressing her gratitude. “Long before I ever dreamed of coaching, I had the amazing pleasure of being

coached by these four people in my playing career, Bill Silva from California Cruisers, Eleanor Dykstra my high school coach, Rose Imbriano for teaching me what excellence looks like and truly being the driving force behind all of our success here at CUI, and lastly my first coach, my dad Roger Rosenthal for laying the foundation for me to follow your path,” Rosenthal said.



PICTURED ABOVE : Top Left: Bill Silva; Top Right: Eleanor Dykstra; Bottom Left: Roger Rosenthal; Bottom Right: Rose Imbriano. Photos Courtesy of: Crystal Rosenthal

## Newport Rib Company Eagle of the Week 10/14: Kobe Gall



PICTURED ABOVE: Kobe Gall performing breaststrokes down the lane. Photo courtesy of: CUI Athletics/ Minh Dang

BILLI DERLITH  
ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT

Since This week we highlight another member of the swimming and diving program for our Newport Rib Company Eagle of the Week. Kobe Gall, an Arizona native, is a senior this year on the CUI men’s swimming and diving team.

Gall hopes to use his bachelor’s degree in Data Analytics to pursue a career in data science. Gall recalled that he has “always had an interest in mathematics and business,” so he figured that, “this major seemed like the optimal combination of those two fields.”

Gall believes that it is important to have balance in life. If he were able to give an incoming freshman one piece of advice it would be, “While your goals should remain in focus, never take life too seriously.”

When Gall was asked to reflect on what being a CUI Eagle means to him, he responded thoughtfully, “Being an Eagle means that you belong to a community that wants to see you succeed in all aspects of your life while helping you along the way.”

One thing that you may not know about Gall is that he is a

“diehard” St. Louis sports fan. Gall also noted that he still claims the Rams even though they moved to LA.

Gall has shown to be a dependable leader on his team. When CUI head coach Bert Bergen was asked to give his thoughts on Gall he shared this sentiment. “Kobe is a very loyal person and dedicated teammate,” said Bergen. “He doesn’t say a lot, but his actions and character carry weight on this team. He’s an exceptionally versatile swimmer excelling in the difficult 500 free/400IM combo, but can drop down and sprint 100-200

freestyles and was an all-PCSC conference finalist in the 200 backstroke last February. He’s an invaluable member of this program and the coaches love what he represents for CUI!”

Gall was an integral part of his team’s win of the PCSC

championship last February. He placed first in the 800 yard Freestyle relay alongside his teammates Kyle Benjamin, Austin Barton and Taylor Steffen.

Lucky for us, Gall shared his pre-game secret which is eating a banana before an important race.

### Editor’s Correction:

In the November 13 issue of the Courier article “Concordia alum Case Bruton courts success,” CUI graduate Case Bruton is incorrectly identified as receiving a Masters of Education Bruton’s graduate degree is from the University of Nottingham (UK) with an MSc Masters of Business and Management.