Take a deep breath. Now, another.

Life is busy, and sometimes overwhelming. And we often don’t feel like we have, or can take, time to take a break to breath. Some of you are better at this than me, I mean others. 😊 But if we can’t learn to slow our minds and bodies down on occasion, we miss beautiful moments. Breathtaking cloud formations. Caring acts by our kids. Subtle yet genuine acts of love by our spouses. Deep, belly laughter. Slowing down is SO worth it. You deserve to feel thankful and joyous about your day, so take the time to identify those moments.

I spent time this last year listening to Dr. Brene Brown. I’ve learned so much from her about living a wholehearted life, practicing empathy and its value in combating shame, being courageous, being present, and taking deep breaths to manage my mental state...among other things. If you haven’t seen her TED Talk or read/listened to her writings, I highly encourage you to check them out. I believe I’m a better friend, mom, wife, colleague, and person because of the tips Brene shares. I hope you find her work inspiring and insightful as well.

Part of living a wholehearted life is being in relationship or community with others. So at this time it feel appropriate for me to ask two things of each of you now about being with your classmates. First, please put Homecoming 2020 (October 2-4) on your calendar so you (and your family) can join the class of 2000 in celebrating our 20th class reunion. I’m giving you over a full year to plan accordingly. 😊 Second, we need a team to work together to plan our reunion weekend. Please email eepearce@gmail.com with (1) ideas for what you want to do that weekend, including suggestions for locations and types of events (like how much family friendly activities you want) and (2) if you’d like to help plan or contribute to the weekend. I look forward to creating a special weekend for all of us to reconnect, reminisce, and make new memories.

In all seriousness, email me. I want our reunion to feel like it’s for all of us, planned by all of us. So please email me.

RECONNECTING CLASSMATES

In preparation for next year, please help us get the following individuals reconnected with Concordia. Share the following link with them so they can get updated contact information on record - https://www.concordiacollege.edu/alumni/class-notes/. Thanks!!!

- Jennifer Anderson
- Crystal Annette
- Chad Bertram
- Shawn Birch
- Tasha Boehland
- Kyle Borchert
- Jessica Crance (Zaleski)
- Laurie Derickson (Jobman)
- Ruth Erickson
- Tonya Frazier
- Karla Hang
- Amanda Harstad (Bush)
- Sara Hazer
- Jason Hearn
- Joseph Hoagland
- Michelle Hoheisel (Elliason)
- Crystal Hoppe
- Jacob Juta
- Lori Kehrwald (Anderson)
- Anita Krystofiak
- Phinapha Latgnotha
- Elisa Maul (Schnabel)
- Brent Moon
- Steffi Neiman (Backer)
- Deborah Neitzell (Balk)
- Meghan Perry
- Theresa Rennick
- Michelle Shaw (Rupp)
- Wade Sirny
- Sonya Smith
- Sean Swanson
- Christopher Swenson
- Bridgette Turner (Earnest)

**CLASS NOTES**

- We lost a classmate early last fall. Pastor Stephanie Joy Coltvet Erdmann, beloved child of God, died September 6, 2018. Preceded in death by her father, Sherman Coltvet and brother, Jonathan Coltvet. Loved by husband, Paul; children, Madeline, August and Miles. Her service filled a large church downtown and was a beautiful tribute to a life well lived.

- Jennifer Schreiber ’00 married the love of her life, Andy Kempski on August 19, 2018, and was lucky enough to have these life-long friends there to celebrate with them! (Laura Boyle (Lundell ’00), Mari Willie (Kadow ’01), Jenny Kempski (Schreiber ’00), Susie Dahline (’00), Megan Nyquist (Bodley ’00), Blake Nyquist (’00), Liz Cruz (Tepe ’00)
  Congratulations!

- Melanie (Knaak) ’00 and Sam Guyer had a baby girl, Emilia, on May 22. Gus has been a good big brother and helper.

- Thomas Rosengren (pictured) was named Mr. Minneapolis Eagle. He will be working with LGBTQ+ community to combat bullying and discrimination across the state of Minnesota.

- Tashia (Weisenburger) ’00 Fred Pomroy along with daughter Willa welcomed little Gus (pictured) to their family on July 22.
Dr. Kristen (Hetland) and Joe Ford welcomed Soren Joseph and Bennett David on May 14. All are happy and healthy after a short mini-vacay in the NICU.

NEWS FROM CONCORDIA

CONCORDIA LANGUAGE VILLAGES

Summer 2018 was a busy one for Concordia Language Villages. We had over 4700 villagers and families from all over the world attend immersion programs at our Turtle River Lake sites just north of Bemidji and at other leased camps in northern Minnesota. This strong enrollment demonstrates the value families are placing on world language and culture education.

MUSIC

Dr. René Clausen announced that he will retire following the 2019-20 academic year, concluding his service as professor of music and conductor of The Concordia Choir. Clausen is a leader in choral music as both a conductor and a composer. He is the artistic director of the Concordia Christmas Concerts. President William Craft noted in an announcement to the Concordia community that throughout his work at the college Clausen has lived the mission of The Concordia Choir “to uphold a sacred choral tradition through the uncompromising and unrelenting collaborative pursuit of musical integrity and spiritual expression.”

The Concordia Choir completed a highly successful tour through the Pacific Northwest in March. The tour featured concerts in Washington, Oregon, Montana, North Dakota, and Minnesota. The Choir also had engagements with ten high school choirs, as well as The Choir of the West at Pacific Lutheran University and a collaboration concert with The Singers - Minnesota Choral Artists at the Ordway in St. Paul. Work is now being done to plan the Choir’s 2020 tour to the Southeast United States. Updates and more information can be found at www.TheConcordiaChoir.org.

The Concordia Orchestra completed a very successful fall domestic tour with performances in Appleton, Wausau and Chippewa Falls in Wisconsin and Roseville, Sartell and Brainerd in Minnesota. Also joining the tour was guest conductor Christoph Rehli-Fankhauser, professor of conducting at the Lucerne University of Music in Switzerland.

The Concordia Band was invited to perform at both the Minnesota Music Educators Association Mid-Winter Clinic in Minneapolis and the North Dakota Music Educators Association Conference in Bismarck. In addition, the band was also invited to be the featured collegiate band at the Westman Honour Band concert at Brandon University in Brandon, Manitoba. As part of their annual domestic tour, the band performed a joint concert with the Encore Wind Ensemble in St. Paul, MN as well as concerts in St. Anthony Village, Albany and Staples-Motley, all in Minnesota. The band is in the beginning stages of planning their international tour to Spain in May of 2020.
COBBER ATHLETICS

In the spring of 2018, Concordia had only one team - women's basketball - with a female head coach. Fast forward one year, and with the hiring of new volleyball head coach Faith Dooley, the Cobbers now have 5 additional female head coaches mentoring student/athletes. Dooley, who was an All-American at the University of North Dakota, joins women’s golf head coach Kari Weidner-Ceniceros, Maureen Greiner of women’s hockey, Rebecca O’Shurak from women’s soccer and NDSU All-American Laura Januszewski who coaches both the men’s and women’s cross country teams. The rise of female head coaches was recognized by University of Minnesota’s Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport in their 2018-19 coaching report card that cited Concordia as the top college in the MIAC for the increase in female head coaches over the past year.

Concordia men’s track and field junior Matt Bye, Moorhead, won the heptathlon at this winter’s MIAC Indoor Championship Meet and went on to finish 11th in the event at the NCAA National Indoor Meet held in Boston, Mass. Bye won the MIAC title with the second highest point total in school history.

The Cobber men’s hockey team earned its seventh consecutive berth in the MIAC playoffs this season. Concordia finished conference play with nine league wins which was the most since the 2013 season. Sophomore forward Tyler Bossert, Fargo, led the MIAC in scoring and went on to earn All-American Second Team honors to become the ninth All-American in program history.

OTHER NEWS

Concordia’s outstanding tradition of preparing students for medical school is now available to those who have completed an undergraduate degree. This intensive, 1-year program is designed for highly motivated individuals with excellent academic records, who have earned a bachelor’s degree from an accredited four-year institution, but lack most or all of the prerequisite science courses needed for admission to medical school. Our program is ideal for career changers, and individuals deciding later in their academic journey, to pursue a career in medicine.

Concordia sent 12 members to the American Forensic Association National Individual Events Tournament (AFA-NIET) at the University of Alabama, where 60 colleges and universities from across the United States competed for top honors. Concordia was one of only a few smaller colleges that placed in the top 15, which is dominated by larger research institutions.

ALUMNI AWARDS

The National Alumni Board voted on the 2019 Alumni Achievement, Sent Forth and Called to Serve Awards. To learn more about each award, visit www.concordiacollege.edu/alumni/awards-and-recognition/

**2019 Alumni Achievement Award Recipients**

**Dr. Paul Brandvik ’59**, professor emeritus of music at Bemidji State University, served as director of choral activities for 31 years. Brandvik received several awards, guest conducted more than 100 festivals and workshops in 16 states and abroad, and composed, edited or arranged more than 50 works.

**Dr. Kristi Ferguson ’71**, is professor emeritus of General Internal Medicine and served as director, Office of Consultation and Research in Medical Education at the University of Iowa Carver College of
Medicine. She spent her entire career at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine where she has greatly influenced the development, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum.

Dr. Thomas Samuelson ’81, a board-certified ophthalmologist, is a founding partner and attending surgeon at Minnesota Eye Consultants, P.A., Minneapolis. He’s also an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota and on the faculty of Hennepin County Medical Center. He has received several awards and has been named to America’s Top Doctors each year since 2002. He has written numerous articles and given more than 600 presentations around the world.

A 1977 Concordia graduate, the Rev. Ann Svennungsen is the bishop of the ELCA Minneapolis Area Synod, the first female bishop to serve in any of the ELCA’s six Minnesota synods. She served as a parish pastor prior to serving as president and CEO of The Fund for Theological Education and then as president of Texas Lutheran University. Svennungsen, a well-respected theologian and speaker, is published in numerous journals, and is invited to lecture, preach, and provide keynote and commencement addresses.

2019 Sent Forth Recipients

Betsy Grams ’98, co-founder and executive director of Cycle Health. CycleHealth was founded in 2014 to equip kids to power their own wellness. CycleHealth’s programs are based on adventure and self-directed goal attainment, and are prescribed by pediatricians in more than 50 Twin Cities clinics through an innovative platform called Sweat Rx.

Matthew Culloton ’98, founding Artistic Director of The Singers - Minnesota Choral Artists, is Concordia graduate and earned a master’s and a doctorate from the University of Minnesota. He is Choirmaster at The House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul, Minn., an adjunct faculty member at the University of Saint Thomas and composer. Culloton received the VocalEssence/ACDA of Minnesota Creative Programming Award (2003) and MN ACDA Outstanding Young Choral Conductor of the Year Award (2004).

I encourage you to use our FB page (https://www.facebook.com/ConcordiaCollegeClassOf2000) to share updates about your life, prayer requests, and interesting things that happen in your day as well as share ideas for our 20th class reunion. We are here for each other!

All my best,

Erin

Erin (Pearce) Thomas

“SOMETIMES THE BRAVEST AND MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO IS JUST SHOW UP.” (BRENE BROWN)