



The Lutheran Beacon



Let your light shine . . .

WWW.SELC.LCMS.ORG

Published by the SELC District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

March 2019



A statement from the Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in response to recent gubernatorial actions expanding abortion in New York and Illinois.

“In him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4)

On Jan. 22, 2019, the 46th anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion on demand, the governors of both New York and Illinois signed laws to extend and promote abortion.

As he signed the Reproductive Health Act into law, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo described it as the “evolution” of humankind in America. In Illinois, Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed an executive order to ensure taxpayer funding of abortions, saying that it would make his state “the most progressive ... in terms of women’s reproductive rights.”

Life, not death, is the goal of humanity. History testifies that death is never the means through which justice and human rights prevail. We do not advance on the graves of our children. Germany, which sought eugenics as the solution to problems, now has strict abortion laws. To defend and support life is the goal of every just government, and the right to life is the hallmark of a good society.

Yet abortion laws have allowed the abortion of more than 61,000,000 children since *Roe v. Wade*. That’s nearly 50 times the number of American soldiers killed in all wars. The abortion industry and its proponents take great lengths to avoid facing the fact that abortion dismembers a living child in a horrid pool of its own blood. This is barbaric.

Abortion is a lie. Science is on the side of life. We shall stand against the barbarism of abortion until our dying breath. Abortion is illogical, as we slaughter babies in the womb while developing ever-better care for other unborn children. Abortion contradicts the natural law written on human hearts that teaches us it is wrong to kill.

Lawmakers and bureaucrats in our country have become emboldened to force citizens to go against their conscience. People publicly celebrate laws that lead to the deaths of children.

How long, O Lord, how long?

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 2]

[Harrison-cont. from Page 1]

Our Christian faith teaches us to value life and to love each and every person as our neighbor. Love is life, and life is the great gift of love. Death is our natural enemy. This can be seen in our lives and in our world each day. Even the birds that seek food in winter testify that life is the goal of their movements and their work. The flowers that grow toward the sun seek the light that enlivens them. We all live under God, who grants life to His whole creation.

And in the giving of His Son to be the Savior, God shows that He is the Lord of life. Jesus came to love. He taught us to love all people, including those whom we consider our enemies. He taught us to unconditionally love every person, even those whom this world considers unworthy of love.

Jesus not only taught us to love. He brought healing and wholeness to the broken. He proclaimed peace to those who were troubled. He sat with those who were excluded. He lifted up those who were beaten down. But most of all, He loved through the sacrifice of His own life on the cross. He died to forgive the sins of all humanity. His forgiveness is a free gift for all who trust in Him, including those who suffer from guilt for aborting their child. He rose on the third day.

The resurrection of Jesus is God's grand statement that life is the goal of this creation. The resurrection of Jesus proclaims that all creatures find the goal of their existence in life. Just as God raised Jesus from the dead, so we learn that God treasures life over death.

We live as citizens in this world, and we seek to be obedient to our nation's laws. We thank God for our leaders and for this great land He has given to us and for its precious freedoms and opportunities. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod advocates strong citizenship and active participation in government. We obey the laws of our land and encourage those around us to do so.

We are, however, bound by our conscience to speak against those laws that are unjust and, especially, those laws that violate God's law and the natural law that binds all mankind. Abortion and other means through which humans kill

humans violate these natural and moral laws that form the foundation of society.

Therefore, we stand against these actions and against all laws that sanction abortion or the taking of innocent life. We cannot stand silent when people elected to positions in which they are to protect citizens continue to pass laws and advocate for legislation that undermines the sanctity of human life. Our conscience is bound by both the Word of God and reason to speak for life as a precious gift of God and to speak against any and all who promote the killing of unborn children. We cannot hide the evil of these laws under the banner of "rights" or "privilege." Children's lives are at stake. They cannot speak for themselves. We will speak for them, and we will work to protect their lives.

And we will continue to work to love and support the women who face difficult choices or suffer from the consequences of abortion. We support young mothers who have chosen life for their children. We work to provide adoption and other opportunities to care for children in need. And we continue to show God's mercy to all, just as He, in Jesus, has mercy on all.

We will work, love and pray that all might know the love of Jesus and trust in Him for salvation. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

**Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod**

Updated Feb. 12, 2019

At its meeting on Feb. 7, the LCMS Council of Presidents and the LCMS Praesidium unanimously voted to sign their names to President Harrison's statement.

The names and districts/regions are listed on the following [page 3].

Printed with permission from the LC-MS

Council of Presidents

Rev. Derek G. Lecakes

Atlantic District

Rev. Dr. Anthony J. Steinbronn

New Jersey District

Rev. Michael R. Lange

California/Nevada/Hawaii District

Rev. Arie Bertsch

North Dakota District

Rev. Mark A. Miller

Central Illinois District

Rev. Dwayne M. Lueck

North Wisconsin District

Rev. Dr. Chris C. Wicher

Eastern District

Rev. Dr. Allan R. Buss

Northern Illinois District

Rev. Dr. Jamison J. Hardy

English District

Rev. Dr. Paul A. Linnemann

Northwest District

Rev. Dr. Gregory S. Walton

Florida-Georgia District

Rev. Dr. Kevin A. Wilson

Ohio District

Rev. Dr. Daniel J. Brege

Indiana District

Rev. Barrie E. Henke

Oklahoma District

Rev. Dr. Brian S. Saunders

Iowa District East

Rev. Dr. Michael E. Gibson

Pacific Southwest District

Rev. Dr. Steven D. Turner

Iowa District West

Rev. Roger E. Schlechte

Rocky Mountain District

Rev. Peter K. Lange

Kansas District

Rev. Waldemar R. Vinovskis

SELC District

Rev. Dr. David P. E. Maier

Michigan District

Rev. Scott C. Sailer

South Dakota District

Rev. Dr. Roger C. Paavola

Mid-South District

Rev. Dr. John C. Wille

South Wisconsin District

Rev. Donald J. Fondow

Minnesota North District

Rev. Dr. John R. Denninger

Southeastern District

Rev. Dr. Lucas V. Woodford

Minnesota South District

Rev. Eric C. Johnson

Southern District

Rev. Dr. Robert Lee Hagan

Missouri District

Rev. Timothy J. Scharr

Southern Illinois District

Rev. Terry R. Forke

Montana District

Rev. Michael W. Newman

Texas District

Rev. Richard L. Snow

Nebraska District

Rev. John E. Hill

Wyoming District

Rev. Timothy Yeadon

New England District

Praesidium

Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller

First Vice-President

Rev. Dr. John C. Wohlrabe, Jr.

Fourth Vice-President

Great Lakes Region

Rev. Dr. Scott R. Murray

Second Vice-President

West-Southwest Region

Rev. Dr. Daniel Preus

Fifth Vice-President

Central Region

Rev. Nabil S. Nour

Third Vice-President

Great Plains Region

Rev. Christopher Esget

Sixth Vice-President

East–Southeast Region

Finances & Statistics

by Rev. Thomas Soltis, SELC Stewardship Director

2018 SELC FINANCES

Budget Goals & Receipts

Congregational Budget Goals	517,698
Congregational Goal Remittances	<u>474,585</u>
91.67% Goal Performance	43,113

Goals & Other Receipts

Congregational Goal Remittances	474,585
Receipts from Other Sources	115,302
Non-budgetary Designated Gifts	<u>112,166</u>
Total Receipts	702,053

Average per Communicant

2016 - \$40.34 2017 - \$40.48 2018 - \$40.26

Communicants

2016 - 12,393 (+131) 2017 - 12,179 (-214)
2018 - 11,788 (-391)

2019 SELC FINANCES

Goal Performance (Jan. 2019)

3 % Increase Suggested

1 increased +4.7%	
10 increased +3%	Decreases 7,393
6 same as last year	Increases <u>2,238</u>
<u>3</u> decreased	Negative 5,155

20 reported goals

31 did not report goals

51 congregations

2019 Budget

SELC District Missions	189,500
LCMS Missions & Ministries	123,000
Seminaries: Ft. Wayne & St. Louis	5,000
Lutheran Haven	30,000
SELC District Programs	78,300
SELC District Services	<u>194,100</u>
	619,900

Previous Budgets

2016 - 653,490 2017 - 606,700 2018 - 593,800

2019 Projected Receipts

Congregational Goal Remittances	495,777
Non-budgetary Receipts	24,160
Lutheran Church Extension Fund	37,063
Interest Income	<u>8,000</u>
	565,000

2019 Projected Deficit - \$54,900

District Assets (12-31-18) - \$750,634

MONTHLY REMITTANCES URGED

In December, 15 congregations, considerably behind in remittances, were contacted. \$34,783 was solicited. Congregations should consider district payments a priority and remit monthly.

SYNODICAL STATISTICS

Congregations -	6,046
Baptized Members -	1,968,641
Confirmed Members -	1,545,124
Average Sunday Worship Attendance -	133.2
Ordained Clergy - Active	6,055
Emeritus	3,204
Candidates	421
Commissioned Church Workers -	12,703
Teachers -	10,346
Deaconesses -	302
Directors Christian Education -	1,079
Lay Ministers -	149; Other -197
Finances - Year	Revenues Expenditures
2017	\$71,374,000 \$74,447,000
2018	\$74,582,000 \$65,142,000
World Relief & Human Care Grants	
91 - Mercy Work & Missions -	\$1,285,697
60 - Church Workers in Crisis -	\$148,018
79 - Disaster Relief -	\$2,776,867

Synod engages More

Efficient Corporate Stewardship

Efforts have been made to increase the efficiencies of synod's corporate finances for greater cost effectiveness. LCMS Information Technology (IT) and Facilities Management (FM) will result in more than \$800,000 in annual savings. It is refreshing that the SELC District has been cost effective conscious over the years to make the most out of dollars received.

MONEY MATTERS



Financially help yourself and the Church. Consider investing in the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. The LCEF, a Missouri Synod organization, lends money to churches, missions, schools and institutions, etc., at affordable rates of interest for construction, expansion, refurbishing purposes, etc. In addition LCEF earnings are shared with the church for various ministry/mission endeavors. The SELC District receives Over \$30,000 annually from the LCEF. Funds are obtained from individual investors who lend money to the LCEF at a reasonable rate of interest. For detailed information contact: david.thiele@lcef.org or 1-517-980-2857.

Walt Miklas Retires, Leaving an Organ Bench Hard to Fulfill

Submitted by Lin Miklas Drennen and Pastor Nathan Grewe

It was the summer of 1946...Harry Truman was president, the Frazer automobile was introduced and Walt Miklas played his first church service as organist.

Fast forward to today! After a 72-year career — most of it at Zion Lutheran Church in Clark, New Jersey — Walt Miklas, 86 is leaving the organ bench. Some quick math reveals that Walt was a teenager of 14 when he began his lengthy journey as church organist.

How did Walt's career as an organist begin? In the summer of 1946 Walt, his parents and older brother Paul were members at Zion Evangelical Slovak Church in Newark, New Jersey. Walt's brother Paul was the church organist and he decided to enlist in the U.S. Army. As Paul slid off the organ bench to serve his country, Walt slid onto the organ bench to serve the congregation. And Walt continued to serve since that day. Born to immigrant parents who valued musical skills, Walt began to take piano lessons at the age of eleven. After he stepped in for Paul, he studied organ for four years.

Over the years his skills were reinforced through structured practice times and a consistent role as organist for two or more services a week. In the early years, Pastor Tuhy of Zion in Newark, would ask Walt to join him at the Alms House where he conducted services for the residents. There, Walt used a portable foot-pumped organ. Through the years, Walt mastered three additional organ types: reed, pipe and electronic.

His talents weren't limited to church services though. He also played at a roller rink, dinner clubs, and entertained guests and family at parties. While Walt served in the U.S. Army in Frederick, Maryland, he worked as organist for congregations surrounding the military base. The same was true when he attended college at General Motors Institute in Flint, Michigan.



Through the decades of his service, Walt has shared the bench at his current congregation, Zion Lutheran Church in Clark, New Jersey. Those who shared the bench include organists: Susan Dzurovcik, Jeesoo Kwon and the late Paul Miklas, Jr and Helen Kucharik. This sharing of the bench has allowed Walt to serve as substitute organist for other congregations in New Jersey; including different Christian denominations.

His years of experience enabled him to step into most service formats with ease. He has a way of understanding the rhythm of a pastor, the mood of a congregation and bringing it all together to create a meaningful and spirit-filled worship experience.

The love of music runs in the family with Walt's wife of 57 years, Mildred, his three children, two son-in-law and five grandchildren all being involved in music through voice and instrument.

When Walt was asked what he will miss after playing all these years, he shared, "I will miss the simple joy of playing on a regular basis."

"He's been such a fixture here for so long," Pastor Nathan Grewe, Pastor of Zion Lutheran said. "I looked forward to sitting in my office at 7:20 a.m., and hearing Walt warm the organ up. His presence as a leader in worship was welcoming and warm. The organ and hymnody has been and continues to be such a valuable piece of Lutheran worship. It brings the joy and high energy as we sing our Easter hymns. It brings us to our knees in confession in the minor key of Lenten hymns. It teaches us God's Word in a way that you sing it at Sunday brunch after worship. Walt Miklas is a part of the legacy of Zion Lutheran Church and has been an inspiration to us for many years.

With a twinkle in his eye, Walt said that he didn't plan for this "early" retirement and is not quite ready for a full retirement. He looks forward to filling in at church when needed. He also plans on firing up his personal electronic organ in his home for his personal enjoyment and to keep his fingers as limber as possible.

What's Happening at the Haven

by Diane Leining

Our newest venture at the Haven was dedicated on January 17th – **The Landings**, our new villa apartment homes. It was a beautiful sunny afternoon and over 400 residents and guests joined together in our newly renovated Fellowship Hall for a Service of Dedication officiated by Pastor Wally Arp, St. Luke's Senior Pastor, and SELC District President, Pastor Waldemar Vinovskis, both are also members of the Lutheran Haven Board of Trustees.

We all then processed to the Landings where Susan Hanas, Board of Trustees Chairperson cut the ribbon officially opening the building. Once inside, our guests were greeted by staff members for tours of the building and helped themselves to delicious food displays which were prepared by our Chef Joe Hokey and his staff. Upstairs, downstairs and outside on the lovely patios there was all kinds of goodies. Live music played inside and out for everyone's pleasure.

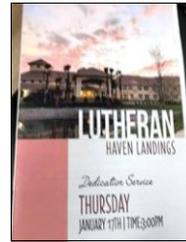
The spacious and lovely dining area is available for breakfast, lunch and dinner for our residents and guests. There is a Café which next to our Library, where you can grab a cup of coffee and read. The Styles & Smiles Beauty Shop is now located in the Landings, with an area for manicures and pedicures and a full massage table. We even have a putting green on the outside to get your game on!

Our Bee Well Clinic is on the first floor and is managed by our Lutheran Haven Home Healthcare Team. On the second floor, there is an area for residents to meet, play cards, work puzzles, read and there is even a fireplace to add to the warmth of this area.

There were already a couple of residents that had moved into the Landings as of the Dedication and since then many more have moved in to become our newest residents. There are a few units available in the Landings, so if you are interested, please contact our Sales Team at 407-542-1637 for more information or a tour of our campus.

The new residents have already joined in on many of our existing activities and fitness programs and the residents that have lived here for a while have made them feel welcome and a part of our community!

After all the construction and craziness throughout the Haven campus in the past year, 2019 is proving to be a bit more relaxed and back to "normal". It is such a blessing to have Lutheran Haven in our midst for 71 wonderful years and we look forward to at least 71 more years with new ventures like the Landings and God's grace!



Ribbon Cutting by Susan Hanas & Pastor Vinovskis



Dining Room



Pastor Les & Diane Kimball



Paella served at outside patio



Desserts

BITS & PIECES



Louise Margaret Vajda (nee Mastaglio)

April 30, 1923 - December 30, 2018
St. Louis, Missouri

Louise Margaret Mastaglio was born on April 30, 1923, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She was the youngest of four children born to Hugo and Mary Mastaglio, who immigrated here from Germany.

From an early age, Louise's life was music. She played the cello and sang coloratura soprano. The height of her singing career was performing as a soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the age of 18. In 1943, Louise moved to St. Louis to sing in KFUE Radio's Lutheran Hour Choir and write continuity for the station. It was at a Concordia Seminary choir concert that she spied a tall, handsome tenor with an unpronounceable name. In June of 1945, Jaroslav and Louise wed, and thus began a partnership that would marry worship, words, and music for 63 years.

Louise was always creating. She was known for the hundreds of Christmas cookies and pizzelles she baked and shared every year. In her 60s, her love of sewing led her to quilting. When Jaroslav began writing hymns, she became his sounding board, calling herself the "person in the pew." In her 90s, she learned the craft of screenwriting and co-wrote two screenplays based on her experiences growing up as the daughter of German immigrants during the Depression.

Louise considered her family her greatest blessing. She was devoted to her children, Susan (Hank), Jeremy (Paula), Timothy (Yupa), and Deborah. She was the proud grandmother of Daniel (Dionna), Joel (Heather), Jonathan (Erin), Rachel (John), Andrea (Brent), and August, and the proud great-grandmother of Gramm, Sam, Brynn, Elsa, Camille, Otto, Mary Louise, Vivian, and twin brothers Carson and Dustin.

Those who knew Louise were moved by her selflessness and sacrifice. In her role as a pastor's wife and as a 30-year survivor of breast cancer, Louise provided empathy, support, and comfort to anyone who needed it.



Upcoming RSTM

Events Don't forget that Rural & Small Town Mission provides free monthly webinars on topics important to congregations in town and country settings. Up

next is Reaching Young Women: LWML on Feb. 21. It will be followed by Raising Young Leaders and Lutheran Youth Corps on March 7. Find past webinars in our archive and watch for information on all our upcoming events!

Register for one our Engaging Your Community (EYC) or Engaging the Wandering (ETW) events at lcms.org/rstm. These partner events offer practical resources and communication skills for reaching out to our wandering members and our communities with Christ's love. Online registration is available for both types of events. Contact your district or our office if you are interested in holding an event near you. Look for upcoming announcements about the 2019 National RSTM Conference!

To see our calendar, visit lcms.org/rstm. Contact our office at 888-463-5127 or email rstm@lcms.org.

The Lutheran Beacon

This is your newsletter . . . Articles & Photos are welcome!
Send to:

gailpete37@yahoo.com

Deadline for the April issue is March 12th

Quotable Quoyotes

by Rev. Thomas Soltis

- ◆ Pride goeth before destruction and an haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18
- ◆ God grant me the serenity to accept people I cannot change - to change the one I can - and the wisdom to know it's me!
- ◆ He who rebukes a man will in the end gain more favor than he who has a flattering tongue Proverbs 28:23

“We Christians Have a Good Excuse for “Jumping the Gun”

Pastor Ken Ballas, EM

As I prepare this article this week of Valentine's Day, other Beacon readers may have also noticed that already during January and February three-year lectionary cycle readings for this year's longer than usual Epiphany season included excerpts from St. Paul's 1st Letter to the Corinthians which along with passages like John 3:16f. and Roman 8:32 reveal God as the “World's Greatest Lover!”

What may appear to some as “jumping the gun” in this year's annual sprint through Lent to Easter, 1 Corinthians begins with reference to what the unbelieving world tragically continues to regard as the “foolishness” of necessarily non-stop year-long preaching of Christ's Cross before concluding with the theology of Christ's (and our own) promised resurrection for us forgiven “Easter Christians.”

A local paper recently contained the obituary of an 111-year old woman (obituaries are solemn reminders that, regardless of age, every person listed in them has died). None of us likes to think about his or her own mortality. As Good Friday shows, God hates death even more than our collective dread of what St. Paul calls “the last great enemy” (1 Cor. 15:28). Because our Heavenly Father also experienced a death in His own immediate family, news of Resurrection Sunday's victory over death and grace reminds baptized believers that Good Friday was certainly not the end of the story.

Simply believing in an after-life does not make a person a Christian. Being a Christian means daily confessing our sin by trusting solely in the only One who makes possible this life as well as God's promised gift of eternal life, our sinless Brother-Savior Jesus Christ. There is a huge difference between the scriptural creedal teaching of the resurrection of the body and purely human speculation about some sort of “reincarnation.”

Nowhere does the Bible teach that we keep “coming back” as some kind of non-human “animal of choice.” Horses are horses and dolphins are dolphins; we, however, remain blood-bought people who, solely because of Jesus, are now declared righteous before our just and perfectly holy yet also immeasurably loving God!

We have all likely heard it said following the loss of a loved one, “Well, at least our family member is now in a better place!” as if that “better place” were automatic (the only “requirement” being that WE have to die!). SOMEONE ELSE innocently had to die to assure us of the sure hope of forgiveness of sins before our Creator-Redeemer God and His wholly undeserved gift of eternal life. Hope for a blessed future demanded nothing less than the sinless sacrificial substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on Calvary's Cross! So great our sin! Greater still God's forgiving love!

Tucked away near the end of his masterful letter to the Church at Rome, our ever-living Lord's apostle Paul wrote to baptized believing Christians like ourselves, “None of lives only to himself, and none of dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord, So then whether we live or die, we are all the Lord's! For this reason CHRIST died and lived again that HE might be LIVING LORD both of the dead and of the living!” (Romans 14:7-9).

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews also says it so very well. “God's Son, our Brother-Savior Jesus, tasted death for every one of us (Heb. 2:9) “Without the shedding of (His innocent) blood, there can be no forgiveness of sins!” (Heb. 9:22b); “Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no further need for a sacrificial offering for sin” (Heb. 10:18); and, finally, “None of us has here a lasting city!” (Heb. 13:14).

Heavenly Father, by Your Holy Spirit, help each of us know and continue to believe that some of Your very best gifts are YET TO COME! For Jesus' sake. AMEN!

LBT – Our Mission

submitted by Pastor Jack Breznen



The “khon” people live mainly in the mountainous regions of northern Southeast Asia (here shown with the Mekong River)



We (Tim & Michelle) work with a team to develop “Khon” language curriculum and scripture media for churches and to train leaders in using them. Here we have lunch along the Mekong with “Malee”, one of our Sunday School trainers.



Tim works alongside a media team that’s begun to dub Gospel films into the “Khon” language. Our two media staff - “SP” and “D” - pose with the award they won in March for their work dubbing the God Provides film series into “Khon”. Church leaders and members alike have been deeply moved by the well-done short films and companion lesson handbook.



LUTHERAN
BIBLE
TRANSLATORS

Our Mission

... To help bring people to faith in Jesus Christ by making the Word of God available to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts.



Our work in promoting “Khon” Bible translation and related media brings us to church seminars where we help share “Khon” Bible Apps and resources we’ve helped develop. Michele is blue tooting our Gospel of Luke Lessons App onto a church leader’s smart phone during a seminar we attended in March.

ST. LUKE'S CONCERT SERIES 2018-19

Continuing the celebration of our 25th Anniversary Season!!



Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra

Saturday, March 16th at 7pm
Mozart's Symphony No. 33



Rimma Bergeron-Langlois, Violin

PROGRAM

JANÁČEK – Suite for String Orchestra
ZWILICH – Romance for Violin and
Chamber Orchestra
MYSLIVEČEK – Overture No. 2
MOZART – Symphony No. 33



Ruth Reinhardt, Guest Conductor



Photos courtesy of Orlando Phil and Oviedo Photo Club



FREE ADMISSION to St. Luke's Concert Series 2018-19 is made possible by the generous donations of individuals and corporate sponsors, as well as support provided by Seminole Cultural Arts Council, Inc.

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH – 2021 SR 426 – OVIEDO, FL 32765

Visit: silcs.org/concert-series to be added to our E-base and receive program updates during the 2018-19 season.

