



# The Lutheran Beacon



*Let your light shine . . .*

[WWW.SELC.LCMS.ORG](http://WWW.SELC.LCMS.ORG)

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**February 2018**

## **LCMS Information Support Network**

### **Rosters & Statistics Implementing Additional Tools & Features**

submitted by Patti Smith, Asst. to SELC President, Rev. Waldemar Vinovskis

Rosters and Statistics (RS) is continuing to implement additional tools and features in association with the new LCMS Information Support Network (LISN). The Congregation Online Entry System is scheduled for release to all LCMS Member Congregations and New Church Starts later this month. Initially, only the statistics module will be available for congregations to submit their 2018 year-end statistics (see timeline below). Enhancements to the new statistics entry tool include the following:

- Submitted data is instantly available via District Access to LISN
- Congregations may access and download submitted records year-round
- Field-level edits assist the user with proper data entry
- Instant feedback to users regarding statistics that may need reviewed due to extreme changes from prior reports, with options to correct and/or verify
- Every field includes a definition of the data being requested
- Video tutorials that demonstrate how to use the features of the system and submit data

As additional modules are added during 2019, congregations will also be able to update demographic and contact information, lay leaders, worship times, ministries, satellite worship sites, and youth.

### **Statistics Timeline**

#### **Jan. 28-Feb. 1**

RS will mail login information to congregations.

#### **Feb. 1-Mar. 29**

Congregations submit statistics.

RS provides bi-monthly files to LCMS Districts (reports received so far; congregations yet to report).

#### **Apr. 1-30**

Close data entry (with COP approval)

Finalize and report the 2018 statistics

*If you have any questions, please contact Rosters and Statistics*

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Strategic|Intellection|Relator|Input|Ideation

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# Valentine Love Reflections

by Rev. Thomas Soltis, SELC Stewardship Director

## Valentine's Day

According to legend, Valentine's Day is historically associated with *Valentinus*, a 3<sup>rd</sup> century Christian martyr. One legend contends he was executed in Rome by Emperor Claudius II. When Claudius decided that single men without family responsibilities made better soldiers, he outlawed military marriages.



Valentine by  
Walter A. Buczak, Age 6  
Great-Grandson

Valentinus, a Christian clergyman, defied the edict and conducted secret marriages for soldiers. Other legends suggest Valentinus also helped Christians escape from the cruel, harsh Roman prisons.

According to one legend, when Valentinus was imprisoned awaiting death, he fell in love with the jailer's daughter and, prior to his death, sent her a letter signed, "From Your Valentine".

Some claim that the Christian Church may have chosen the middle of February for the feast day of St. Valentinus in an effort to *Christianize* the pagan celebration of *Lupercalla*, a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the god of agriculture. It was not until the Middle Ages that Valentine's Day was associated with romantic love when it was commonly believed in France that February 14<sup>th</sup> was the beginning of the mating season of birds.

The oldest known Valentine message in existence today was a poem written in 1415 by Charles, Duke of Orleans, to his wife when he was imprisoned in the Tower of London.

## Love Reflections

A couple in love! What a mystifying, delectable, heavenly experience! ***I love you.*** The words melt two hearts into one. It's easy to spot a couple in love. You can see it in their eyes and smiles as they walk along together holding hands and cheerfully chatting. There is an eagerness to do and say things to make each other happy. Love is a beautiful, grand bond of giving and sharing. Both are willing to pay the restaurant bill, fill the gas tank, exchange endearing gifts, etc. It's called *romantic* love and should hopefully find its culmination in a three way marriage commitment involving God, bride and groom.

## Keeping Love Alive

The saying, "Love is blind but marriage is an eye opener", rings true. Pre-marital counselors alert couples planning marriage to expect pre-marital romantic love to be replaced with a more enduring, stable, down-to-earth, solid, realistic love. Such a solid, mature bond of togetherness will continue to do for each other whatever needs to be done till death them do part. However, the treacherous enemy, *selfishness*, is ever lurking in the shadows ready to shatter the love bond. A "me-me-me" attitude destroys relationships. The guiding light of God's word will suffocate selfishness to keep the love light glowing. No one is perfect. No marriage is perfect. The Christian virtue of forgiveness is essential to break down the separating walls of sin and selfishness. Col.3:13 is a preservation, restoration dynamic: "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against each other. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." The N.T. word for God's love is *agapay*. Defined, it forgives and forgets unconditionally and does good to those who don't deserve it. John 3:16 epitomizes it with a love proclamation of Christ's redemption.

## Love or Lust?

Proper sexual activity is highly recommended and condoned in Scripture. Sexual impulses are God-created and have every right to be fulfilled His way. Same-sex marriage is offensive to God. On the basis of established anthropological, historical and societal considerations, it is illogical and unrealistic. Lust, in its many perverted, abusive, sometimes violent forms, is self-serving gratification - the opposite of love which is self-giving. Pornography, a schoolroom for lust, stimulates illicit sexual behavior. The current rash of sexual harassment, rape and child abuse reflects a pornographic type psyche. The N.T. Greek word for lust is *epithumesai* indicating a desire to covet what is forbidden. Lust, condemned as sin by God, provides momentary illicit self-satisfaction. It lacks the enduring quality of love which seeks the pleasurable satisfaction of one's spouse.

## Related Resources

[www.history.com/topics/valentines-day](http://www.history.com/topics/valentines-day)

**"History of St. Valentine's Day"**

[www.selc.lcms.org](http://www.selc.lcms.org)

Stewardship - Personal Stewardship - Family

**"Rules for a Happy Marriage"**

**"Stewards of Scriptural Sexuality"**

**"Marital Stewardship"**

# The Tip of the Iceberg

by Dr. Barbara Lane Geistfeld,  
Lutherans For Life Regional Director of Texas  
submitted by Ziggy Rein

For many people, Christians (and me) included, the only life issue we ever really thought about was abortion. As we became more informed about life issues, we discovered that these issues, and the decisions we must make regarding them, really affect humans at all ages and stages of life. If you look carefully at the image below, you will see that abortion is only the tip of the iceberg. Life issues are many, complex, and varied. All of us will face some of these issues in our lifetimes, and as Christians we want to make decisions that are pleasing to God. How can we do that? Let me suggest one way that really does work.

Lutherans For Life has a new set of video-based Life Team Training Tools designed to help Lutheran congregations develop Life Teams made up of Gospel-motivated people who are trained and certified. A Life Team is the vehicle that helps guide a congregation to become Gospel-motivated voices for Life. Our pastors cannot do it alone. A congregation cannot do it alone. A Life Team cannot do it alone. If we allow God to teach us and expand our view of life issues, He will change our hearts and minds, He will open our eyes to the whole truth, and He will help us begin to minister to others in a whole new way. For those of you already leading the way in proclaiming the Gospel in these issues, may God bless you mightily!

Find out more by going to: [www.lutheransforlife.org/about/life-chapters-and-life-teams](http://www.lutheransforlife.org/about/life-chapters-and-life-teams)



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# Can You Be Joyful With All the Crazyiness? Yes You Can!

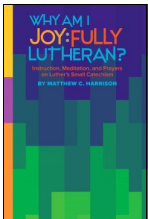
by Rev. John Telloni

***Learn more by attending a retreat or reading a new book***

On March 2, 2019 there will be a Spiritual Fellowship Retreat in beautiful Sugarcreek, Ohio.

*The theme for the retreat is*

With so many issues swirling about and what seems to be a constant stream of negative stories about culture and society, why am I joyfully Lutheran? At the retreat, you will be challenged and encouraged to engage joyfully in being Lutheran wherever and whenever God gives you the opportunity.



The retreat will be based largely on the new book by LC-MS President Matthew C. Harrison entitled, "Why Am I Joyfully Lutheran? Instruction, Meditation, and Prayers on Luther's Small Catechism." The book is available through Concordia Publishing House, Amazon, and several other websites. The book looks at a remedy for the troubled conscience and is centered on joy.

Presenters for the Annual Spring Fellowship Retreat are Rev. John Telloni of St. John Lutheran Church Massillon, Ohio and Rev. Dr. Chris Cahill of Christ the King Lutheran Church Lodi, Ohio.

For more information, contact St John's Massillon office at 330-837-4645.



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## BITS & PIECES

Many thanks for your prayers and positive thoughts for **Pastor & Ana Deal's daughter, Loretta**. Although still in serious condition, Loretta's health is making tiny improvements.

Please make certain to keep this family and the staff at Akron Children's Hospital in your prayers.

Also, please note that Sunday morning Bible Study and Wednesday evening Divine Worship are suspended until further notice.

Your understanding in this matter is greatly appreciated. God's blessings on you all and may He continue to strengthen sweet Loretta!

## Quotable Quotes

by Rev. Thomas Soltis

- ◆ Proud, egotistical self-centered individualism destroys relationships
- ◆ Happiness is walking an extra mile with someone who needs you
- ◆ Wise parents give their children what they need and not necessarily what they want



## A Few Thoughts about Epiphany Resolutions

Pastor Kenneth M. Ballas, EM

We Christians are not the only ones who may have given some thought to “New Year’s resolutions” as the secular world, too, talks about “making a fresh start” if only with reference to following a more sensible diet or engaging in a regular program of physical exercise etc.

Especially regarding our lives as Christians, the old evil foe has a distressing number of ways of twisting or perverting some of our seemingly best thoughts about “new beginnings” (the very idea of “new beginnings” could conceivably leave us focusing unduly on our past failures).

Regarding “new beginnings” during this year’s prolonged season of Epiphany, should we find ourselves only thinking about “pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps,” thoughts of trusting in Christ in our daily lives easily become left out in the cold with the result that we fail to rely solely on the ongoing blessings of our Christian Baptism into His sinless Brother-Savior’s death and resurrection. These thoughts, then, about resolutions which, in themselves, are neither good nor bad.

- ☞ First and foremost. prayerfully try to reflect what GOD resolved to do and DID successfully accomplish in sending to our sin-sick, troubled world His sinless incarnate Son to be our Brother-Savior from sin and everlasting death.
- ☞ Remember your Baptism on a daily basis also by making a concerted effort not to forget those nearest and dearest to us (see Galatians 6:10; as Christians of all people are easily tempted to ignore or perhaps even hurt most those in our own circle of friends or immediate family (including our congregational church family) those whom we love and who dearly love us).
- ☞ Conveniently forgetting perhaps that how we Christians are also to think or act at other times of the year and not just during the Christmas/Epiphany season by dismissing the whole idea of resolutions because of our inability to keep them perfectly is akin to our easily thinking or saying, “I don’t believe in telling other people about Jesus because the vast majority won’t believe our message anyway!”
- ☞ Because it is only the Word of God that effectively does the work of God, set aside prescribed blocks of time in your daily schedule, even if only briefly, to be increasingly “in the Word.” Prayerfully read (or listen to audio tapes) “fairly large chunks” of the sacred Scriptures.

Should you fail on occasion perfectly to keep your resolutions (as this side of heaven we all have done), Jesus is ever there to pick us up and keep us on His track and road that alone leads to eternal life (John 14:6) making it a point to remember also to do good to those who are of “the household of faith.”

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***This is your newsletter . . .***

***Articles & Photos are welcome! Send submissions to:***

email: [gailpete37@yahoo.com](mailto:gailpete37@yahoo.com)

Questions? 321-752-5519 or 954-401-8452

**Deadline for the March issue  
is February 12th**

***Looking forward to hearing from you . . . Gail Peterson, Ed.***

# ST. LUKE'S CONCERT SERIES 2018-19

Continuing the celebration of our 25th Anniversary Season!!



## UCF Symphony Orchestra

**Saturday | February 16, 2019 | 7:00pm\***

**PRE-CONCERT Program: UCF Chamber Orchestra 6:00-6:45 pm**

\* **OPEN DRESS REHEARSAL: Friday, Feb. 15th | 6pm**

**FREE ADMISSION ~ FREE PARKING for all events** *Arrive early for best selection!*



David Bjella, Cello



Ayako Yonetani, Violin  
UCF Faculty Members

*Featuring*

**Brahms: Concerto for Violin, Cello  
and Orchestra in A minor, Op.102**

**Borne: Carmen Fantasy for  
Flute and Orchestra**



Christopher Ludwig, Flute  
Concerto Competition Winner

## Constellation of Stars



Chung Park, Director



UCF Images courtesy of 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.

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Visit: [slcs.org/concert-series](http://slcs.org/concert-series) to be added to our Ebase and receive program updates during the 2018-19 season.

