



SELC DISTRICT
Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod

The Lutheran Beacon

Let your light shine . . .



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August-September 2019

Ordinations & Installations

Pastor Tige Culbertson was installed at St. Luke's in Oviedo, Florida on July 28, 2019. We welcome Pastor Culbertson back to the SELC District. He served as a Vicar at St. Luke's.



Front Row, Left to right – Revs. Les Kimbel, retired, Lutheran Haven; Wally Arp, St. Luke's; Tige Culbertson, John Elliott, St. Luke's; and Lyle Muller, retired Lutheran Haven.

Back Row, Left to right – Dan Howe, SMP Vicar, Wellspring Deland, Rev. Wally Vinovskis, SELC District President, and Rev. Mark Kapels, Faith Eustis, FL.



Ordination and Installation of Pastor Jacob Baumann and Pastor Mark Crossman at theCross Apopka

July 21st, 2019

From left to right – Rev. Paul Hoyer, Rev. Jacob Baumann,
Rev. Mark Crossman, and Rev. Zachary Zehnder

ASTRONOMY

A GUIDELINE TO GOD'S GLORY

by Rev. Thomas Soltis, SELC Stewardship Director

The Universe

The powerful, concise statement of Genesis 1:1 is overwhelming: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The word, "heavens" (Hebrew: "shamayim") is a plural of intensity indicating "the all", "the universe". I could picture the O.T. shepherd, David, lying on his back at night in a meadow gazing at the stars. Overwhelmed, he proclaimed, "The heavens (universe) declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the works of His hands!" (Psalm 19:1)

Astronomy



Astronomy has revealed the mind challenging vastness of time and space. Distances are calculated in "light years". A light year is the distance light travels in one year, approximately 6 trillion miles. Galaxy NGC 253 (photo above) for example, is 13 million light years away. The constellation Virgo is 50 million light years away. Mind boggling! Three theories are offered regarding the origin of the universe: "Steady State"; "Big Bang"; "Pulsating Universe". Each theory challenges the others. In astronomy, the origin of the universe is theoretic; a guess. Genesis 1:1 removes guessing. God is the Creator.

A Christian Astronomer

Years ago, while strolling the pebbly shore of Salton Sea in Southern California, my wife, Carolyn, and I met an astronomer, Harry Guenter, and his wife. Harry worked at the Flagstaff, AZ, Observatory. In conversation, he revealed his belief in the existence of God. The vastness, harmony, structure and design of the universe necessitated God as Creator. It just couldn't create itself. He went on to say that God is vastly greater than the universe He created. In comparison, human beings are so insignificantly small, a pipeline is needed to God. Christ is the pipeline. His redemption is our connection.

Infinity

Infinity is something getting larger and larger or smaller and smaller without end. Metaphysics has a symbol for it which looks like the figure 8 on its side. Is space infinite? Does it keep going on galaxy after galaxy without end? Is matter infinite? Is its structure smaller

and smaller without end? Matter is made of molecules; molecules of atoms; atoms of quarks. What smaller structure will be discovered next? One thing for sure. God is infinite without beginning or end. Time in the present universe is finite with beginning and end. The present universe will come to an end. "The heavens (universe) will disappear with a roar." (2 Peter 3:10) Matter disappearing? It's disappearing now in cyclotrons where opposite charged atoms collide and disappear (The Law of Antimatter). Rev. 21:1 predicts the creation of a "new heaven (universe) and a new earth." Finite time will cease. Redeemed Christians will live on a perfect earth to glorify God forever.

Astronomy's Guideline to God

Only the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, can create faith. Astronomy, as well as all the other sciences, however, can serve to illustrate the power of God revealed in nature. When astronomy informs us about the sun, its structure, light and what it does, we are moved to proclaim, "Glory be to God!" and indicate our worship of God with acts of adoration and love. Years ago, Andrew Spisak, a member of my first parish, Sts. Peter & Paul, Lorain, OH, owned a chain of five restaurants. He was very busy, of course, rarely having time for church worship. Suddenly, he was in church every Sunday. When I asked what happened, he replied, "I bought a telescope and read up on astronomy. God is great and deserves first place." Christian stewardship begins with the acknowledgment that God is the creator/owner of all things and we the manager/stewards of His possessions. Andrew, realizing this, purchased an organ for our newly built church. A generous regular contributor, he also willed a bequest of over \$20,000 to Lutheran Children's Aid & Family Services, Cleveland, OH. For him astronomy was a guideline to glorify God.

RELATED RESOURCES

"The Universe"

by David Bergamini; Time Life Books
www.selc.lcms.org - Personal Stewardship
Definitions: "**God's Sovereignty**"
Culture - "**Environmental Stewards**"
Definitions - God's Sovereignty"

Celebration of Rev. Edward Kucera's 60th Anniversary of his Ordination

Pastor Edward A. Kucera was born December 13, 1928, in St. Louis, Missouri, the son of Adam and Katherine Slavik Kucera. He was baptized and confirmed at St. Lucas Lutheran Church in St. Louis where he attended two Lutheran grade schools and public high school. Following his graduation from McKinley High School in St. Louis, he served in the U. S. Marine Corps. He later attended Southeast Missouri State College and, in May 1953, graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Marketing for the School of Business Administration. While at FSU, he earned four letters in track and served as President of Gamma Delta, the Association of Lutheran College and University Students. After attending St. John's College in Winfield, Kansas, for a year where he sang the solo male lead in the operetta "Meet Arizona", Pastor Kucera enrolled in Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and graduated in May 1959. During this time, he spent one year as a vicar at Sts. Peter & Paul LC, Lakewood, Ohio.

Pastor Kucera was ordained into the holy ministry and installed at Ascension LC, Montreal, Quebec, July 19, 1959, by Dr. Paul Rafaj, President of the Slovak Synod. He served in this location until 1962.

In June 1962, Rev. Kucera became Pastor of Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, where he served until his retirement in August, 1994. He served during the construction of the new church which was dedicated to the Glory of God on February 14, 1971. During his years of service, Pastor Kucera conducted services in both English and Slovak and actively served his congregation and the SELC District. Included in the positions he held were SELC District Chairman and Secretary of the General Pastoral Conference; Chairman, Treasurer, and Program Chairman of the Central Circuit Pastoral Conference; Lutheran Laymen's League Pastoral Advisor for the Youngstown Zone and Central District; Editor of the "Luther League Courier"; member of the SELC District Annuity Board; and CoChairman of "Alive in Christ".

On June 9, 1957, Pastor Kucera married Irene Elizabeth Janovic of St. Louis. Their marriage was blessed with two daughters, Karen Irene Kolnik and Jayne Irene Reichard (deceased). Their family includes two sons-in-law, Wil Kolnik and John Reichard, and three grandchildren, Courtney Kolnik, Kate Kolnik, and Evan Reichard.

During retirement, Pastor Kucera served as interim pastor at various congregations in Pennsylvania and Ohio. He also accepted preaching assignments in Dallas, TX and St. Louis, MO. He and Irene currently reside at 2442 Romar Dr., Hermitage, PA 16148 and remain active members of Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sharon, PA.

The 60th anniversary of Pastor Kucera's ordination was celebrated during the Divine Service July 14, 2019, Sts. Peter & Paul's with Rev. Vinovskis, SELC District President, preaching and a potluck luncheon followed.



What's Happening at the Haven

by Dianne Leining

Like most of the country, this summer has been especially hot, so we go to events that are inside.

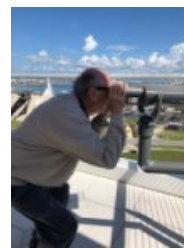
Several "crazy cat" residents went to the Wayne Densch Theatre in Sanford to see the New York Rockabilly Rockets. A great cover band for the music of the Rockin' 50's. Lots of singing and even some dancing in the aisles. Those Havenites know how to have fun! Cool!!

We celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Moon Landing with memorabilia donated by some of the residents: a 331/3 RPM recording of Walter Cronkite's reporting of the landing, several newspaper articles, an autographed picture of Astronaut Buzz Aldrin, "Life" magazines from that time, pictures and articles from a few of the residents that worked at the Space Center during that era. We were honored to have Physicist Walter Nelson, a friend of residents Johann & Anita Bergh, talk to us about how the trajectory of everything had to be just right for these flights to work perfectly. He worked there during many of the Apollo missions. Some of the refreshments served were Oreo Moon Cookies, available for the 50th Anniversary, Orbit gum, Spacey Brownies, Milky Ways and Tang, the official drink of the Astronauts. We then watched the film "Apollo 11" to top off our out-of-this-world event!

On a beautiful Tuesday morning, two (2) buses filled with residents went to visit Exploration Tower in Port Canaveral. A unique building with 7 floors of interactive exhibits with indoor and outdoor observation decks. A constant procession of ships and boats pass through Port Canaveral: Mega Ship Cargo vessels, fishing boats bring their daily catch ashore, Submarines visiting the Navy Port. The Tower provides a never before seen panoramic view of not only Port Canaveral and popular cruise ships but of Kennedy Space Center, the surrounding beach and river and the spectacular wildlife located in Brevard County. After exploring, we went across the canal to eat at Fish Lips Restaurant.

Several residents wanted to see the remake of Disney's "The Lion King". Going to just a regular boring movie theater was not going to do, so they went to the Aloma Cinema & Grill where you can order lunch from a fairly large menu, sit at tables in comfortable seats and watch the movie. You knew food had to be involved!! Admission was only \$6.00 and they loved the film.

These are just some of the activity highlights, so you can see the Havenites are quite active and enjoy a fun life. We hope you've had a fun-filled summer too!





REV. DR. MARK C. LARSON

ASSISTANT SELC STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR

Rev. Dr. Mark C. Larson, pastor of St. Lucas Lutheran Church, St. Louis, Mo, has been appointed Assistant SELC District Stewardship Director. He will assist Rev. Thomas Soltis, Director, in the solicitation of congregational district budget goals. Goal forms for the year 2020 will be mailed this Fall. Completed forms indicating goals and communicant memberships should be reported by January 15, 2020. Forms may be mailed or emailed to:

Rev. Dr. Mark C. Larson
SELC District Budget Goal
7100 Morganford Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63116
markclarson0341@gmail.com
(cell) 1-314-623-2410 (church)
1-314-351-2628

Larson previously served as Mission Executive for the LCMS Rocky Mountain District and was responsible for the promotion of missions, stewardship and evangelism. He is also a trained, certified leader for the LCMS "Consecrated Stewards" program, an effective six week effort to inform congregational members regarding the principles of Biblical giving and increasing annual congregational member giving. We heartily welcome his recent arrival into the SELC District and appreciate his willingness to serve in the realm of Christian stewardship.



SELC Missions Executive, Rev. Paul Hoyer, reports that Prince Rajamony is back in India and working in North India small villages, with people who never knew Jesus.

Summer is almost over - we're back to monthly publication!

This is your newsletter . . . Articles & Photos are welcome!

The Lutheran Beacon - Gail Peterson

email: gailmail37-beacon@yahoo.com

**DEADLINE FOR THE NOVEMBER ISSUE
IS OCTOBER 12TH**

Holy Cross Lutheran Academy—

Congratulations to Holy Cross Lutheran Academy and their staff, led by Betty Hoyer, for being awarded Accreditation in Good Standing from the National Lutheran School Accreditation, National Accreditation Commission. The accreditation is for a five year approval term.

Meet our 2019 Luther League Scholarship Recipients!

by Tim Hasko

The Luther League, the official youth organization of the SELC District, began a scholarship fund in 1953. Since that time, the Luther League has awarded between one to four scholarships per year, and over 150 young people have been recipients of the Luther League Scholarship. We'd like to introduce our recipients for 2019:

Hannah Balla, Zion Lutheran Church – Clark NJ: Hannah graduated from Watchung Hills Regional High School in June, and plans to continue her education at The College of New Jersey in Ewing, NJ. She will be pursuing a degree in Elementary Education with a concentration in Mathematics. Hannah has been a leader in her church and the Luther League. She has coordinated church youth events, fundraisers, and meetings. She is active in the bell choir and playing French horn for worship. Hannah hopes to become a teacher and educate students to become impactful citizens and help make a difference in their community and the world.

Mason Wagner, Pentecost Lutheran Church – Racine WI: Mason graduated from Racine Lutheran High School in 2018 and will be entering his sophomore year at the University of Wisconsin – Whitewater. He is pursuing a degree in Marketing. His dreams include starting his own business, and designing and marketing clothing professionally. Mason has attended Luther League summer gatherings, circuit ski trips, and NYG's for the last seven years. He also serves as the Social Media Director for the Luther League. Mason has participated in many activities in his home congregation including grass cutting, ushering, serving as a lector, youth Bible class, and many youth activities.

Luther League scholarships are funded through SELC youth gathering offerings and fundraisers, and donations from scholarship alumni and friends. If you would like to make a donation to the Luther League Scholarship Fund:

Checks can be made out to: "SELC District Luther League"

And mailed to: Pentecost Lutheran Church

Attn: Luther League Scholarship Fund

2213 Coolidge Avenue

Racine WI 53403

A special "Thank You" to everyone who contributed to the Luther League Scholarship Fund this past year!



**Our SELC groups at the
NYG in Minneapolis this past July**

BITS & PIECES



Our SELC District grieves with the pastors of the Easter Circuit at the passing of dear ones of two of our pastors.

On Sunday morning, 8/11, the mother of Pastor Dan Berteau of Manchester, NJ fell asleep in Jesus in Ohio.

Early this morning, Monday, 8/12, the father of Pastor Jim Douthwaite of Vienna, VA fell asleep in Jesus in Virginia.

Please keep the Berteau and Douthwaite families in your prayers as they grieve the passing of their loved ones. May God keep us all in Jesus as we await with them the great and glorious day of resurrection in Christ.

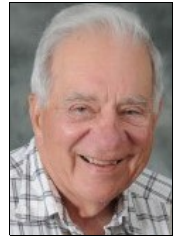
We grieve with the family of Rev. Dr. Joel Elowsky at the sudden death of his mother, Edna, on August 25th. Services were held at St. John LC in Royston, Michigan on August 29th.

Congratulations to Pastor Ron Stephens who has accepted a call to serve as pastor of St. John's LC in Aurora, IN. Please pray for him and his family during this time of transition. We are grateful for his time of service in the SELC.



the family of Clarence Cook, who was called home to the Lord on August 9th, 2019. He is survived by Mary, his wife of 32 years; sister, Sandy Sidelko; 6 children; 13 grandchildren; 6 great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

As a lifelong Lutheran and member of Faith Viera LC in Rockledge FL, he lived his life and served church and District with dependability, honesty, and respectability. He served in many leadership roles including the church building committee, president of the council, chair of the building committee for the Lutheran Home for Aged, and chair of the finance committee.



Clarence was the elected (by convention) as Financial Secretary of the SELC District. He handled all the budgeting, reporting, and financial advice to the District Board of Directors. As a member of the Board of Directors, he was intimately involved in the direction of the District and all of its mission work. His time frame (8 years) spanned not only President Carl Kreuger but also President Andrew Dzurovcik from 2007-2015.

Looking for a volunteer ...

The SELC District is looking for a layperson volunteer to serve as a Synod Reconciler. If someone in your congregation has the gifts and skills to fill this need, please contact the SELC District office at pjgsmith@ptd.net or selc.lcms@gmail.com with any recommendations or if you have any questions or need more information.

A Lutheran Christian

View of Biblical Inspiration (What it is and is not)

by Pastor Ken Ballas, EM

"The Word, the Word, Only the Word!" Martin Luther's printed Small Catechism and hymns alone are sufficient for making these few words an effective unofficial motto or slogan for the Protestant reformation.

The Bible asserts of itself: "No prophecy of Scripture is of one's own private interpretation because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men impelled by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Pet. 1:20-21) These words (in which the grammatical subject of v. 21 is indeed "men") encourage us to rely on the Spirit of God not only for the inspiration of the original words of Scripture ("verbal inspiration") but also for the proper interpretation of translated versions of its God-intended thoughts in an ever-growing list of written global languages ("plenary inspiration").

Consecrated lay people and even seminarians occasionally become seemingly "traumatized" when told that their Christian faith rests on the Triune God revealed to us in the verbally inspired original autographs (the writings themselves) of the canonical Scriptures all of which, likely irretrievably long lost, would probably never be recognizable with any degree of certainty even if ever found!

Contrary to the popular opinion of certain pious believers, as suggested by a picture of a balding elder, John, on the Aegean island of Patmos, a wasp-nest-like opening protruding from his forehead through which, seemingly hypnotically, he is receiving from the Holy Spirit the words of the Revelation of Jesus Christ (or some other New Testament writing). Such a "mechanical" view of inspiration is clearly not a biblically accurate portrayal of how the written Word came to be! Those of us privileged to have studied (and who happily continue to make use of) the biblical languages of koine Greek and Hebrew cannot help but gain at least a tiny insight as to differences in each writer's literary style. In other words, there is no "uniform biblical language of the Holy Spirit."

Under the umbrella of "plenary inspiration," even the most inferior sectarian published translations contain significant portions of the written Word of God. At the same time, no single translation including the venerable

King James or Authorized Version of 1611 is perfect in every detail (were such the case, that is the one we should all rush out to buy!).

While there always remains a need for loving informed Christian apologetics in today's Church and world as Scripture reminds us to "contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), the Bible never was the written (and heard) Word of God simply because WE say so; the inspired Scriptures were and are what they always claimed to be long before any of us was born.

Because passages like 2 Pet. 1:20-21 and 2 Tim. 3:16-17 teach us, the Holy Spirit was indeed vitally necessary not only for the original inspiration of Holy Scripture but also remains essentially important for its proper interpretation, Christians need not pray or endlessly debate about the authenticity of the inspired Word of God; they do, however, very much need to seek the same Spirit's help and guidance for the proper interpretation and application of the biblical text.

In our felt need at times perhaps to "defend" the written Word of God, there is an ever-present danger of exerting overly much time or energy disputing over the meaning of undeniably theologically "loaded" words at the expense of ever applying the Word to our own daily lives as we should also seek to encourage one another to focus on our once-crucified but now ever-living sinless ascended Brother Savior Jesus Christ who as the incarnate Alpha and Omega will have the final say on any often largely purely human discussion (Rev. 1:8; also see 1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 3:7; 4:12).

More often than we realize, we live "by faith" if only because of our dependence on current technologies, for example, in starting one's car or turning on a kitchen ceiling light. On those rare occasions when there may be a mechanical malfunction, we usually know how to remedy the situation. In spiritual matters, instead of "changing religions" at each bump in the road, we Christians hopefully also know how to allow the Spirit of our faithful God to "fix our mis-steps" by re-directing His inconsistent baptized believers to His ever reliable life-giving, faith-sustaining Word and sacraments.

Lord willing, at another time we will explore how we unwittingly confuse law and Gospel with our voice, facial expression or even tamper with or try to "improve" His Word.

LWML SELC News

submitted by Nona Schipull

Fall Rallies

Central Zone Fall Rally

Sept. 28, 2019

Location: Holy Trinity, Parma, OH

Theme: "Helping Others in Need"

Speaker: Mary Bates, HARP MISSION—Helping Appalachian Rural People

Gifts from the Heart: Christmas toys for HARP MISSION to give to kids and health kits

Western Zone Fall Rally

October 19, 2019

Time: 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Location: Zion, Norridge, IL

Theme: "Thy Kingdom Come" Mathew 6:10

Speaker: Deaconess Lori Wilbert, Statesville Correctional Center, Illinois

Gifts from the Heart: Monetary contributions for The Lutheran Haven Foundation for their Benevolent Fund for residents who need extra help.

Eastern Zone Fall Rally

plans to be announced later for a November date

Looking ahead: The LWML SELC District Biennial Convention will be May 1-3, 2020, at Holy Trinity, Parma, OH. More plans will be announced later. Officer candidates are needed for all positions: President, Treasurer, and Pastoral Counselor positions will be for 4 year terms. Vice President and Secretary positions will be for 2 year terms.

**Please consider "Serving the Lord with Gladness"
by volunteering to serve in these leadership positions
for LWML SELC.**

