



# The Beacon Online

November 23, 2020 Volume 1,  
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## **The Beacon Online is the communication source for the SELC District.**

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## **Year Round Reasons for Thanksgiving**

Rev. Kenneth Ballas, EM

When asked one of the first things he did upon arising each morning, a venerable seminary professor responded, "I get dressed!" by which he also meant thanking God daily for the ongoing blessings of Christian Baptism (Rom. 6:3-4).

Free in Christ to forgive (and be forgiven), reasons abound for saying  
**"Thank You!" or "I love you!"**

Thank God by taking time to observe and enjoy His creative handiwork in your own yard or neighborhood. Beyond serving as mere "background filler," pause to appreciate the Creator's gift of music. Short of actually "singing your prayers," consider *reading aloud printed words* from our church hymnals.

Next to trusting God, within reason risk learning to trust one another (1 John 2:15a; 4:7-21). Ask God to help you regard *other people* as more important than things or fleeting pleasures (Phil. 2:4).

Resist at every turn allowing mammon or worldly possessions to become "the tail that wags the dog" (1 Tim. 6:10). Restrain every impulse to consider money solely as "my money" or even "the Church's money."

Don't wait for others to make "the first move" in reflecting the **agapee** love of Christ. Note St. Paul's principle of the *stronger and weaker* (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8) regarding the sin of giving (*or taking*) offense when never intended.

Tell deserving workers in the healing arts or "service personnel" their employer is fortunate to have them.

As it is healthy to laugh a lot *with* (never at) one another, strive to cultivate a harmlessly gentle sense of humor.

In considering "not sweating the small stuff," never totally ignore the seemingly insignificant (Eccles. 9:10a; Lk. 16:10a). The only reason our sinless ascended King Jesus has not returned yet is that our God is waiting to save more people for whom He came to live, die and rise again (2 Pet. 3:9; 15a)!

Do not risk *assuming* "everyone" actually knows Jesus as the world's only Brother-Savior. (Genuine born again Christians never tire of hearing the needed Gospel message that many still have never heard clearly articulated).

Though God forces no one to believe in His Son, prayerfully trust His promises that straying sheep not resist the Spirit's promptings.

Be thankful that there remains a sense in which God's very best gifts are yet to come! Just because the person we see in the mirror may think youth is past, know God still has further gifts to give.

Not only is there "life after golf" or some other \*favorite pastime; because of Jesus, there is also "**life after death!**" \*(Though vegetable gardening is a predicted necessity for the majority of this world's population, our helping feed the hungry and homeless shouldn't preclude our enjoying God's gracious daily provision).

Because it is understandably difficult for us fallen mortals to imagine *anyone* (even Jesus!) as being completely *without sin*, to say "anyone can die on a cross" is in no way intended to diminish the central teaching of our most holy faith that only **HIS** self-giving death saves eternally. That thought is also meant to highlight the importance of an unfortunately neglected pan-biblical doctrine, namely, the absolute prior necessity that our *sinless* Brother-Savior Jesus Christ came to planet earth to **live for us** before also *innocently* dying for us and, yes, rising again. Christian pastors, fathers, other family members or friends need clearly teach as inseparably seamless both the **active as well as passive obedience** of God's incarnate Son who, though severely tempted, single-handedly kept in our behalf the entire Law of God (with which this side of heaven we all continue to struggle) before also paying the penalty for the world's sin (see Phil. 2:8ff.). Dozens of additional relevant Scripture passages support the foregoing assertions a partial listing of which includes: Gen. 22:7-8; Ex. 12:5; Deut. 18:15; Psalm 16:10; 40:7-8; Is. 53:9; 63:3; 64:6; Matt. 3:15; 5:6, 17, 20; 6:33; 21:28-32; Mark 1:4; Luke 23:41; John 1:29; 7:18; 8:7; Acts 2:27; 3:14; 7:51; 10:34; 22:14; Rom. 5:18-19; 8:3-4; 10:4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 4:4-5; Eph. 1:4; Heb. 2:18; 4:15; 7:25-26; 10:5-6; 1 Peter 1:1-2; 18-20; 2:22; 2 Peter 3:9, 15a; 1 John. 3:3, 5.

As perfect God and perfect Man, **everything** Jesus ever did was in keeping with our Triune God's master plan to save a once sinless but later tragically fallen world. Born under the Law including His enduring in our behalf "a sinner's baptism" necessarily to fulfill for us the original required complete obedience of our just and holy God (who had every right to demand just that of His creation both in His written and unwritten commandments) before also paying in full the penalty of our disobedience or law-breaking. Christ alone restored for us every strand of the woven tapestry of our woefully shabby robe of **unrighteousness** washed clean by the pure *innocently* shed blood of the uniquely *spotless* sacrificial and victorious Lamb of God.

Please pray with me regarding a longstanding felt-need to share simply and accurately the catechetical relevance and other practical implications of the **total obedience** of God's Christ as essential Scriptural Christological

teaching. Support prayerfully and financially all missionaries, Bible translators and their families as well as the persecuted church all of whom are at "the cutting edge" of the Lord's ongoing mission. (Without seeking permission, some may consider remembering the widow of missionary David Schneider (+2/20/20) in recouping a portion of family printing costs from the last run of his freely distributed devotional literary gem *Arrows of Light*). "By *Your* baptism . . . temptation . . . and bloody sweat, Help us, good Lord!" (Litany prayer)

A concluding thought especially at Thanksgiving  
Taught us years ago by one of our wonderful seminary vicar-interns [Thank you, Joel L.!), **What is JESUS thankful for?** (Matt. 11:25; John 11:41)

**Our now glorified Christ remains most thankful whenever we take Him at His Word and trustingly believe in Him as our Heaven-Sent Brother-Savior Substitute!**

## District-Wide Lenten Initiative: Being Challenge

In the last Beacon, you heard about a district-wide opportunity for Lenten Season to dive deep into the habits of Jesus using our own SELC Pastor Zach Zehnder's newest 40-day challenge. Churches from all across the country will be participating and we are getting a really special offer of half off the workbooks (only \$10 each). If interested, join Pastor Zach Zehnder and Pastor Chris Cahill (his church was in the first wave of churches to complete Being Challenge just a few weeks ago) to hear more about this experience and why it could be perfect for your church this upcoming Lenten Season. It's December 2nd at 11AM EST and here's the Zoom link to hear more -

[Click here to join Zoom meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 894 3420 2284 Password: 020710 Dial by your location [+1 646 558 8656](#) US (New York) [+1 312 626 6799](#) US (Chicago)

*Being Challenge* is a turnkey 40-day experience that will help your people learn and practice the 5 keystone habits of Jesus. Along with the workbooks comes a load of FREE resources including sermon manuscripts, small group materials, weekly kids curriculum, and a graphics package.

We are asking churches to sing up before the New Year using this Google Form. If you know you want to be a part of it already go ahead and register using this form. [Click here for Google Form](#)

In the meantime, if you have any more questions about *Being Challenge* or what this is all about, you can email their team at [hello@redletterchallenge.com](mailto:hello@redletterchallenge.com) or ask Zach in the Zoom meeting. Your copy should address 3 key questions: Who am I writing for? (Audience) Why should they care? (Benefit) What do I want them to do here? (Call-to-Action)



## Setting Your 2021 SELC Budget Goal

*And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8*

Christ calls us to be witnesses of the Gospel throughout the whole world. One way we do this together is through our partnership with district and Synod missions, supported by the offerings of our congregations.

Your congregation should have received a letter for you to indicate your plans to support district and Synod missions. As your congregations completes its budgeting process, please return this information by mail or email (preferred) by January 15 to;

Rev. Dr. Mark Larson, Stewardship Chair  
7100 Morganford Rd, St. Louis, MO 63116  
[markclarson0341@gmail.com](mailto:markclarson0341@gmail.com)

Note that contributions should be sent directly to the District Financial Secretary: Larry Schultz, 1566 Bushkill Center Rd, Bath, PA 18014

## Full Tuition Opportunity at Valparaiso for Senior High School Students in your District

President Vinovskis can submit nominations of high school seniors, graduating in the Spring of 2021, for a full-tuition Lutheran Leader Scholarship and Intern Program at Valparaiso University. For the past 24 years, two Lutheran students have been chosen to receive this scholarship. The brochure is available through the link below.

[Lutheran Leader Brochure 2020](#)

The nomination must be made by President Vinovskis to Valparaiso University. If you

have students who you feel merit consideration for this scholarship, please send your nominations to President Vinovskis via email to our district email - [selc.lcms@gmail.com](mailto:selc.lcms@gmail.com) All nominations **MUST** be received in the SELC District office by **November 30, 2020** so President Vinovskis can submit the application. If you have any questions, please call the District Office at 610-965-3265 or via email at [selc.lcms@gmail.com](mailto:selc.lcms@gmail.com)

## Soldiers of the Cross Funding is Available

“If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together” (1 Cor. 12:26).

In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), Lutheran Church Extension Fund, the 35 districts of the LCMS including our SELC District, and other entities are providing an opportunity for concerned, caring people to help those serving full- or part-time in LCMS congregations, schools, universities, Recognized Service Organizations and other organizations who have been confronted with ministry-disrupting personal crises.

Through the Synod’s long-standing “Soldiers of the Cross” (Soldiers) grant assistance program, which is administered by the LCMS Office of National Mission, a worker in crisis can apply for help with short-term financial needs through their district office. Workers in crisis are encouraged to contact their district office for an application and guidance.

Unlike traditional Soldiers grants, lay workers who are not on the Synod’s roster of professional church workers are eligible for these “amplified” Soldiers of the Cross grants.

This response initiative isn’t just about taking care of pastors and rostered teachers — important as that is. Other church workers such as church and school secretaries, administrators, bookkeepers and janitors can also apply for a Soldiers of the Cross Amplified grant to get through this crisis.

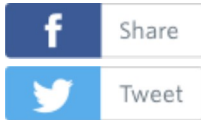
The application can be found at this link – <http://selc.lcms.org/mdocs-posts/soldiers-of-the-cross-application/> When you have completed the application, please submit it to the SELC District office at [selc.lcms@gmail.org](mailto:selc.lcms@gmail.org)

## Annual Submission of School Statistics

The Office of National Mission, School Ministry understands that this year is unlike any other in recent history for our Lutheran schools, and that the constantly changing situation is having a detrimental impact on our annual statistics reporting. Understanding that schools will need more time to complete their statistics submission this year, they will be leaving the online submission process open through **December 31, 2020**. At that time the online process will be closed and the data that has been collected up to that point will inform the annual statistics reports generated from the School Ministry office.

## New Call Documents

There will be new call documents to use beginning no later than December 1, 2020. Please contact the District Office at [selc.lcms@gmail.com](mailto:selc.lcms@gmail.com) if you will be starting the Call Process so that we can be sure to give you the correct documents. Please delete any blank copies of the call documents you have previously used.



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2623 Brookside Road  
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[selc.lcms@gmail.com](mailto:selc.lcms@gmail.com)

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