



# The Beacon Online

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## SELC Mission Committee Meeting

The SELC Mission Committee held their meeting in early May at Wellspring Church in Deland, Florida. The group, including District President Vinovskis, met with Vince Parks, a mission developer from Houston, Texas. He is CEO of LINC Ministries, Int'l.

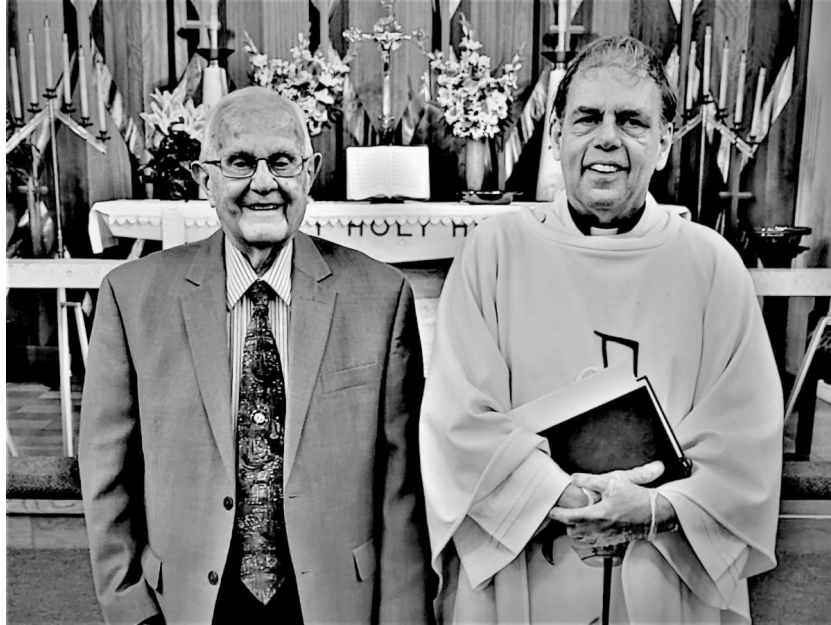


Pictured left to right: Rev. Paul Hoyer, Rev. Ron Meyr, Vince Parks, and Rev. Jacob Hoyer



## 90th Birthday Celebration

The 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of Rev. Thomas Soltis, EM, was acknowledged during worship at Holy Trinity, Parma, Ohio, by Rev. John Milligan. Pastor Soltis was born May 16, 1931, in Larksville, PA, the son of George and Anna (Hricko) Soltis and born again into the Family of Christ through Baptism on May 30, 1931, at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Wilkes Barre, PA, Rev. Stephen Tuhy, Sr., Pastor.



## Ruth Wiedenmann honored by District President Vinovskis at Chapel Service

St. Luke's 4th grade teacher, Ruth Wiedenmann was honored by District President Vinovskis at their Chapel Service on May 5, 2021. Ruth received the Distinguished Elementary Teacher Award from the Lutheran Education Association. President Vinovskis presented Ruth with an award from the District honoring her award and her service to St. Luke's and all the children she touched in her career. She directs the hand bell ministry of the church and school and serves as an organist and developer of the school's Advent services.

Among her joys in ministry, Ruth said, "Some of my greatest joys in working with students come from watching the Lord develop their servant hearts and love for others."

Ruth's personal mission statement is based on Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." She commented, "When you are rooted in Christ, He is constantly changing and empowering you for new avenues of service."





## Online Greek course open for registration Renowned Greek scholar Voelz to teach

**Concordia Seminary, St. Louis** is offering **Online Greek: Part I** for the fall semester of the 2021-22 academic year. The registration fee is \$1,200, and the deadline to register is Aug. 6. The class size is limited to 15 students.

The course is designed to serve three groups of prospective students: those who have completed the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Program and are continuing on with the Specific Ministry Pastor to General Pastor Certification (SMP-GPC) Program, and those who have applied for the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) or for the Residential Alternate Route (RAR) programs. The course prepares these students to take the Entry Level Competency Exam (ELCE) in Greek, an entry-level requirement. If space is available in the course after SMP-GPC, M.Div. and RAR students have enrolled, anyone wishing to learn Greek may also enroll. The course has no prerequisites and is not for credit, but a solid understanding of English grammar is essential to success.

The course will be taught by **Dr. James W. Voelz**, the Dr. Jack Dean Kingsbury Professor of New Testament Theology. Voelz is a preeminent Greek scholar who has taught the language for more than 45 years. He is author of **What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World, Fundamental Greek Grammar**, and **Mark 1:1–8:26** and **Mark 8:27–16:8** in the Concordia Commentary series.

"I am very glad to be able to teach this course once again. It is very rewarding to see the students grow in their understanding of the New Testament as a result of being able to use the Greek original," Voelz said. "I invite all who wish to increase the depth of their study of the Scriptures to sign up."

The schedule for the course consists of live online tutoring sessions from 6-8 p.m. (CT) Thursdays. The first class will be Sept. 2. Students should plan to commit eight hours in study each week for the course. Registration for Part II, which will be taught during the spring semester, will be available in October.

Students are required to use the following textbooks:

- **Fundamental Greek Grammar, 4th Revised Edition** (Concordia Publishing House, 2019)
- **Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th Edition** (German Bible Society, 2012)

In addition to the online course, residential Greek courses are offered in the summer term and fall semester. RAR students are encouraged to enroll in either the summer residential course or the fall online course because they are ineligible to take the fall residential course.

For more information about the Seminary's Greek courses, contact Rev. Bill Wrede, director of ministerial admissions, at 314-505-7200 or [wredew@csl.edu](mailto:wredew@csl.edu). To request an application, contact Gina Matzenbacher, administrative assistant in the Registrar's office, at 314-505-7107 or [matzenbacherg@csl.edu](mailto:matzenbacherg@csl.edu).

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## A Few Thoughts on the First Christian Pentecost

"Let none but Christ our Master be!" (Martin Luther's Pentecost hymn, "Komm, Heiliger Geist," LSB, 497, st. 2)  
by Pastor Ken Ballas, EM

With the approach of Pentecost and Trinity Sunday we draw near the close of the "festival half" of the blessed arrangement known as the Christian Church Year. Thumbing through a Bible concordance of any size quickly reveals **the person and work of the Holy Spirit** (without whom there would obviously be no Holy Trinity!). Stories abound reflecting wrongfully thinking that the Holy Spirit has at times sadly been characterized as "the forgotten person of the Holy Trinity" while remaining prominently mentioned throughout both testaments of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.\*

In informing Theophilus (and us) in Acts 2:1 of the arrival of the "Day of Pentecost" (literally "day of the 50th"), the evangelist Luke calls to mind the Old Testament "Feast of Weeks" certainly familiar to Peter's geographically diverse audience on that occasion. Originally intended as a day to thank God at the beginning of the barley harvest ("winter wheat"?) 50 days after Passover, Pentecost also marked the conclusion of festive northern hemisphere spring "holy days" observed by devout Jewish pilgrims in Jerusalem.

By the time our ascended Brother-Savior walked this earth, a second reason for observing "the Feast of Weeks" was the giving of the Mosaic Law or Ten Commandments just 50 days after Yahweh's liberating exodus of His covenant people, Israel, after 400+ years of Egyptian bondage superseded by the **special outpouring of the Holy Spirit** which providentially also took place exactly 50 days after Resurrection Sunday.

With the addition of as many as 613 (**50+ times** more than the number of God's original written "Ten Commandments"! ) man-made eventual "traditions of the elders" most of which were extremely negative and oppressively burdensome to God's people. To the minds of some God's good Law given to Moses was deemed inadequate or insufficient by the growing ultra-legalistic tenets of the emerging party of the Pharisees especially during the inter-testamental period descendants of whom were hostile toward the world's only perfect Man and messianic Lord as also to Jesus' chosen student-disciples (cf. 2 Cor. 3:6).

Thus the number 50 calls to mind at least two dramatically different "points of view" between many unbelieving Jews and believing Christians. Especially for early Jewish Christians Pentecost rather than merely signifying a harvest of grain or even giving of the Mosaic Law came to commemorate the promised special outpouring of the Holy Spirit and graciously impressive "harvest of souls" in response to Peter's (and fellow-apostles') clear proclamation of Law and especially Gospel of the sinless crucified and exalted Lord and messianic Christ whereby **the Holy Spirit powerfully "jump-started" the Christian Church** as the global worshiping and witnessing body of Christ to the entire fallen world.

Although many naturally tend to identify the first Christian Pentecost as "the birthday of the Christian Church," Martin Luther preferred to believe that there was a very real sense in which the Church began already in the Garden of Eden with the initial messianic promise of Jesus as the "woman's Seed" (Genesis 3:15). Again, instead of merely being thankful for an early grain harvest, New Testament believers (Jews or Gentiles) have every reason to rejoice over being part of the **Holy Spirit's incarnate, blood-bought "harvest of people!"**

In light of St. Luke's inspired summary of the uniquely miraculous global demonstration of Spiritual blessing that first Christian Pentecost we are also led to experience the reversal or polar opposite *confusion* of tongues following building of the tower of Babel in Genesis 11. Textual evidence to the contrary, spoken and inadequate descriptions of what occurred on that Jewish day of Pentecost as a classic example of "glossolalia" or "speaking in tongues" fail to witness the uniquely likely never-to-be-duplicated event described in Acts chapter 2. Upon careful reexamination **the first Christian Pentecost** was unquestionably primarily a **"miracle of hearing"** and resultant matchless example of our **Triune God's clarity of communication perceived in existing global languages rather than the selective spiritual tongues of which the ascended Lord's apostle Paul's**

## spoke in 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14.

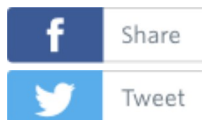
To be sure, Simon Peter and the other apostles spoke God's Good News of divine forgiveness and eternal life to the assembled throng of pilgrims that memorable day most likely in their native Hebrew dialect of Aramaic with the oft-stated response that **by the Spirit's guidance 3000 people "heard" and believed the preached Gospel message in their own mother tongue.** How important it remains also today for people to hear or read in their own native language **the inspired written Word of God.** Ever worthy of our much needed individual and corporate prayers and tangible assistance, organizations like LBT (Lutheran Bible Translators) or Wycliffe Bible Translator families who (like our synodical missionaries) are all required to raise 100% of their own financial support!

Also of interest with regard to any other parallels (and differences) are the opening verses of the apostle's first epistle to exiles of the dispersion in *three of the five* Roman provinces of Asia Minor indicated current places of residence of those Jewish pilgrims privileged to hear that apostle (and others) preach and teach on that first Christian Pentecost (cf. 1 Peter 1:1-12 and beyond where we also find interesting allusions to the OT Passover).

Although it is not unreasonable to assume that some of the original visiting 3000 baptized believers on that first Christian Pentecost may have been led to stay in Jerusalem, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that the majority would have eventually returned to their home country to spread the Gospel by word and deed first to their own children and families. At the same time, I find it exciting to suppose that some in Peter's original audience (or their descendants) were among the addressees of Peter's first letter written a few decades after that first Christian Pentecost and likely read out loud in 1<sup>st</sup> century house churches in sporadically persecuted portions of the Roman Empire like **Asia** (think Ephesus perhaps, **Cappadocia** and **Pontus!** In any event, then as now, **"the beat goes on!"** Note Matthew 16:18 as well as the closing line of poetic verse in stanza three of the metrical setting of the **Te Deum Laudamus** in the hymn, "Holy God, We Praise Your Name," (LSB, 940), and the following Trinitarian doxology from "Now Thank We All Our God" (LSB, 895, st. 3).

**All praise and thanks to God The Father** now be given,  
The **Son and Him who reigns** With them in highest heaven:  
The **one eternal God**, Whom **earth and heav'n adore!**  
For thus it **was, is now, And shall be ever more. AMEN.**

\*Passages noted for this brief study include Genesis 1:2; Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Leviticus 23:15-21; Deuteronomy 16:9-12; Psalm 51:11; 104:30; Isaiah 11:2; 61:1; Ezekiel 37:14; Joel 2:28-29; Zechariah 4:6; Matthew 1:18; 12:28; 28:19; Mark 1:8-12; 3:28-20; Luke 1:35; 24:49; John *chapters* 14-16; 20:22; Acts 2; 16:7; Romans 8; 14:17; 15:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 12:3b; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 13:14; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 1:3-14; 1 Peter 1:1-12; 2 Peter.1:20-21; 1 John 3:18; Revelation 22:17.



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