



# The Beacon Online

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## **The Beacon Online is the communication source for the SELC District.**

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A printed version of the newsletter is available on our website at [selc.lcms.org](http://selc.lcms.org) Please use the printed version from our website to post and/or share the newsletter with others.



## **2022 SELC District Convention Registration is open**

We are pleased to announce that registration has opened for the SELC District Convention that is being held from May 12 - 15, 2022 at St. Lucas Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Missouri. **Please share this information with your delegates.**

The Opening Worship Service begins at 7 PM on Thursday, May 12, 2022. We are honored to have the LCMS Synod President, Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, at the Opening Worship Service. The Convention ends after the 9 am worship service and brunch on Sunday.

The Convention brochure and registration forms are located on the SELC District website. The overnight rooms are located at the River City Casino and Hotel in St. Louis. You must book your room no later than April 25, 2022 to be included in the room block.

Convention registration is online and can be completed on the SELC District website at this link - [www.selc.lcms.org/convention](http://www.selc.lcms.org/convention)

You can reserve your overnight room at this link - [River City Reservation Website](#) and refer to the promo code **SELD22A**.

The Convention Workbook will be posted online no later than April 1, 2022. There will be a link that you can click on to download the Workbook.

If you have any questions, please either call the SELC District Office at 610-966-3265 or email us at [selc.lcms@gmail.com](mailto:selc.lcms@gmail.com)

**Please note that at this time, face masks are required for the entire**

**Convention except when eating. This is in compliance with the St. Louis ordinances. If this changes, we will let you know.**



## **Resolutions for the 2022 SELC District Convention due March 11, 2022**

We are requesting that any resolutions you would like to be discussed at the District Convention be sent to the SELC District Office. You can submit them by email to [selc.lcms@gmail.com](mailto:selc.lcms@gmail.com) in Word. Please do not submit them in PDF format. They are due no later than **March 11, 2022** for inclusion in the Convention workbook,

If you prefer to submit a topic for consideration without it being in resolution format, please send your topic for discussion to the District Office.



## **"Angel in a Pick-Up?"**

by Pastor K. M. Ballas, EM

Far removed from "Michaelmas" (September 29), the afterglow of another celebration of CHRISTmas during the current Epiphany season remains for us redeemed children a pivotal opportunity also to reflect on seemingly lesser biblical teachings including the *providential angelic presence* of our loving Triune God. To that end, we share this true two-part story from nearly a half century ago.

With Lois having completed her duties as camp nurse in central Illinois and being the inveterate travelers we once were, with the Lord God helping us (and did He ever!), we decided to squeeze in before summer's end an undeniably "packed" motor trip to three of the four Maritime Provinces of Eastern Canada prior to the beginning of a new school year for Michael, 12, Kirsten, 5 and my own privileged 8th year of teaching at our synodical seminary still located in Springfield, IL.

After paying an overnight visit to my parents and our children's Grandpa and Grandma Ballas in Ohio, the first half of our story began to unfold on August 16, 1973 in the coastal town of Brielle, New Jersey after experiencing the Christian hospitality of Dick and Bernice Mitchell, whom we had met a decade earlier during our first pastorate at a wonderfully nurturing Slovak-English speaking parish, Ascension Lutheran Church, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

With AAA travel guides in hand, we eagerly drove up the Garden State Parkway to New York City where we wisely availed ourselves of the opportunity of taking the popular 2½ hour "Circle Tour" boat ride around Manhattan Island. This was followed by brief stops at our synod's then Concordia College in suburban Bronxville, NY and

our SELC District St. Paul Lutheran Church just over the New York/Connecticut state line in the Byram section of Greenwich, CT. Only the Lord then knew that two years later both of these sites would be our new church home or geographic base of Gospel ministry for the next 27 years.

With nightfall fast approaching and still a full day's drive from the Canadian border, we made time traversing the seemingly endless chain of southern Connecticut communities along Long Island Sound's north shore with the result that (the distance between NYC and Boston being but slightly more than 200 miles) we were surprised to find ourselves crossing into *West Greenwich, Rhode Island*.

Blessed with children capable of sleeping through the night even in the back seat of a car, the thought of where we might spend the night was nevertheless on our mind long before bypassing the greater Boston area. Entering Interstate 95's modest 18-mile long coastal stretch of the Granite State of New Hampshire, little did we realize that the familiar biblical phrase "no room in the inn" would be applicable to us also that night – a primary reason being the unexpected local presence of England's then young Prince Charles in observance of the 350th anniversary of the founding of the former *British colony* of Portsmouth, NH.

Our seeking a place to lay our heads did not improve as minutes later we drove into York Beach, Maine (our 7th state in a single day!) where the decision of refusing to spend close to \$100 for a few hours of sleep in the one remaining available *suite of rooms* (as compared to the \$6.00 nightly charge the Lord kindly led us to discover in the laid back Town of Inverness on Nova Scotia's Cape Breton Island a few days later) was to our way of thinking a "no brainer." With a light rain beginning to fall and having all but abandoned the idea of securing a room well after midnight, we motored past Portland toward Maine's smaller capital city of Augusta after which I finally pulled into what was then the very last I-95 rest area and fell soundly asleep at ca. 2:30 a.m.

Awaking scarcely an hour later surprisingly refreshed, I announced to my extraordinarily patient, yes, *saintly* wife my intention of our resuming driving east on State Route 9, my thinking now being to get as close as possible to the border for entry into Canada early the fast approaching morning after which my first and only priority was to book comfortable lodging for our dear family at any cost which is exactly what we did.

Driving along SR 9 resulted in passing through heavily forested or sparsely populated farm land with literally little or no vehicular traffic (I confess to having possibly witnessed one or more foraging owl species!) -- a notable exception being the sudden appearance of a small solitary pick-up truck that essentially remained at least 50–100 yards behind our car for the rest of the night. When I decided to slow down to give the mysterious vehicle a chance to pass, it also slowed down; whenever I accelerated to what I thought to be the speed limit, so did the driver of the pick-up without, however, ever giving the slightest indication of intending to pass us along that open stretch of highway (at no point did Lois or I seriously believe the truck to have been an unmarked police vehicle). Moreover, to the driver's credit, never did the truck's dimly reflected headlights come close to giving the impression of "tail-gating" us all of which only seemed to add to the pick-up's mysterious presence.

And so things continued, mile after mile. With my sleepless spouse and me both feeling as though we were on an "emotional roller coaster" of sorts, sensing a dubious degree of comfort at not being alone, on the one hand (even wondering perhaps if the distant reflection in our rear-view mirror was that of a harmless fellow-traveler who might conceivably even stop to aid total strangers with a flat tire – thankfully, car trouble as never was an issue our entire trip) to, God forbid, wildly imagined moments of near-terror, on the other at the thought of possibly being followed by an extremely patient, quirky nocturnal stalker bent on high-jacking seemingly vulnerable out-of-state tourists in such a desolate area – surely more than ample food for thought for keeping any reasonably sane person awake at night until – finally, with the first perceptible signs of dawn's early light and brightening eastern sky announcing the arrival of a new day (and almost exactly as had unexpectedly happened nearly two hours earlier), the mysterious pick-up turned off the highway on an unnoticed by-road never to be seen again.

With a prayerful sigh of relief and seeing ahead of us twinkling lights of the border

community of Calais, ME (local pronunciation "KAL-us" strangely rhyming with another vaguely familiar proper name?), we found an open diner for some welcome needed physical sustenance (breakfast at the Mitchell's seven states away in New Jersey less than 24 hours earlier seeming a distant memory). I felt particularly grateful to be sitting on a seat without a steering wheel in front of me!).

Quickly clearing customs minutes later, we entered the Canadian Province of New Brunswick for *morning* check-in at the historic Algonquin resort hotel in picturesque St. Andrew's by-the-Sea after which we experienced firsthand some of the planet's highest ocean tides (35' to 40'!), welcoming bag-pipes, a historic golf course, warm water jellyfish and so much more the next few days. That, however, is but half of our story the remainder, mercifully, more quickly narrated!

As you, dear reader, will soon discover, it was indeed with good reason that we never found a motel that night in light of what transpired exactly five days later. Deliberately omitting left untold stories especially from Nova Scotia's Cape Breton Island, after ferrying our car back from a half-day visit to Canada's smallest province of Prince Edward Island, completely unbeknownst to us, our particular return ferry was also the very last boat off the island before an announced nationwide 1973 10-day union railway strike! Well over 1500 miles from home, the Lord graciously enabled us (and our car!) to avoid remaining stranded or unavoidably yet embarrassingly "late for school." To end here, however, without a final word of explanation or application would be a disservice to our loving God.

Doing a thorough "fact check" did indeed reveal our barely miss being victimized by a 10-day strike beginning August 21, 1973, the very day and hour ending our Prince Edward Island visit during which (and five days earlier) we were again *providentially* led to catch the very last ferry enabling us to proceed safely to our central Illinois home in time for school in our own car instead of remaining helplessly marooned in an admittedly beautiful location yet with no reasonable means of immediate escape unless one were willing to fly off the island (I recently read that some local residents kindly took stranded tourists into their homes) it being of no comfort whatever to us that the Canadian government added the construction of the spectacular billion dollar eight mile-long Trans-Canada Highway Commonwealth toll Bridge connecting the province of New Brunswick with Prince Edward Island some 20 years later.

Reluctant to "write off" any incident in our lives as Christians as "mere coincidence," I shared this story orally years later with a small group of fellow-believers at a summer evening Bible study at our Connecticut church at which time nurse, Gayle Sajewicz, commented, "Pastor, don't you see that the Lord was not only giving you all that needed *extra* day to get home in time for school; He was also sending you His *guardian angel* to protect you and your family from your falling asleep at the wheel after so many hours of sight-seeing and driving!" (Duh)

How often have we all likely failed to see the bigger picture of what our all-powerful, ever-living God would teach us His often slow-to-learn children about His loving plan for every fraction of our earthly lives! Rather than merely berate ourselves, however, that Christian sister's words may have been exactly what her pastor had been rather slow fully to realize and needed to hear! The preceding true story perhaps also calls to mind a key feature in French novelist Jules Verne's "Around the World in 80 Days" in which eccentric protagonist, Phineas Fogg, serendipitously gains an entire calendar day as a result of having crossed the International Date Line from west to east. Whether or not you have a similar story to tell, it is our prayer that you also will see the hand of a loving God instead of what the children of this world may tend to regard as a series of ill-fortune or bad luck. Was that God's angel in that pick-up? You decide, but I think you know how I have cast my vote!

#### AFTERWORD

Dedicated to our dear children, Michael and Kirsten, who slept through much of the foregoing happenings of August 16, 1973 49 years ago. As a believing Christian not inclined to regard anything as being purely coincidental and contrary to the thinking of some "armchair quarterback," never once did I make use of the command "Mush!" given to the heroic animals in the grueling 1500 kilometer Ididerod Trail Dog-Sled Race from Anchorage to Nome, Alaska beginning exactly 49 years ago in the 49th State admitted to the Union! Hmm. amazing, isn't it, what one can "fact find" not only biblically but also online!



## Basic Training in Transitions for Intentional Interim Ministry

*Several pastors have expressed interest in starting training before next Fall.*

**It's Being Offered by LuTMA in the Spring 2022**

**Phase 1 - Virtual (after Easter)**

**Phase 2 - Residential (late Summer/September)**

**Cost: \$1,500 (\$400 scholarships available)**

More information at:  
**LuTMA Website**

Send an email indicating your interest to:  
**LutheranTMA@gmail.com**

12 participants minimum needed to organize a class

Questions? Contact  
Rev. Lois Van Orden  
Executive Director for LuTMA  
(same email as above)



## It's Not Too Late To Return Your 2022 District Budget Goal

Your response strengthens our partnership in the Gospel  
Rev. Mark C. Larson, Stewardship Chair

If you have not done so already, we kindly request that you send in the budget goal of your congregation in support of district missions. The district Board of Directors meets at the end of this month and considers the input of congregations as the plans for our work together in 2022 is adopted. Your congregation should have received a letter in October for you to indicate your plans to support district and Synod missions. However, you may simply indicate your budget goal by mail or email (preferred) to:

Rev. Dr. Mark Larson, Stewardship Chair  
7100 Morganford Rd, St. Louis, MO 63116  
**markclarson0341@gmail.com**

Please note that checks should be sent directly to the District Financial Secretary:  
Larry Schultz 1566 Bushkill Center Rd. Bath, PA 18014



Tonight

## St. Luke's Concert Series

Friday, January 21, 2022  
7 PM

Watch the Orlando Concert Band present the *Music of the American West*. Our Western frontier has been a focus of composers for 100 years, John Philip Sousa, Aaron Copeland, Morton Gould and even John Williams have captured musical portraits of the American West. [Watch online](#) & invite your friends and family!



### Year End Congregational Statistics are Due February 28, 2022

The LCMS Department of Rosters and Statistics sent out their annual request for the 2021 Congregational statistics. These statistics are to be filed by February 28th. If you do not have your congregation's login information, please contact [rosters.stats@lcms.org](mailto:rosters.stats@lcms.org) or the LCMS Church Information Center at 888-843-5267.



### Send in Your 2022 SELC District Convention Delegate Information Now

If your congregation has not registered your pastoral and lay delegates for the SELC District Convention in St. Louis this May, please do so as soon as possible. If you need credential forms, please contact Secretary John Telloni at [jlt3750@aol.com](mailto:jlt3750@aol.com), and he will forward the necessary forms to you.



### Virtual Workshop for Early Childhood Educators February 2, 2022 1 - 3 PM

Betty Hoyer, the SELC Education Executive announces a free, virtual workshop for Early Childhood Educators.

Our Preschools provide some of the best opportunities for sharing the Gospel message in our communities, so please join me in looking at ways we might increase our enrollment and retention of students. Specifics about the workshop are below. A zoom link to the meeting will be sent out closer to the event date.

To register, please email Betty Hoyer at [bhoyer@thehcla.org](mailto:bhoyer@thehcla.org)

**Recruitment and Retention Strategies and Practices in Early Childhood**

Helping early childhood centers more effectively deliver and adapt marketing strategies is critical to sustaining and growing enrollment during these unprecedented times.  
Learn common barriers and simple strategies that all early childhood centers can successfully employ.

This dynamic and interactive workshop will be led by Amy Knoepfel.

**Aimee Knoepfel** serves as the Director of Amazing Grace Early Learning Center (AGELC) in Oxford, FL. She also travels around the country speaking on various Early Childhood Education and School Recruitment topics to teachers, directors, administrators, pastors, and parents.

Before coming to AGELC, Aimee served as the Director of Concordia University Chicago Early Childhood Education Center in River Forest, IL. Aimee also began a third ministry site for Trinity Lutheran Church, Trinity Early Childhood Center in Naperville, IL and previously served as an Admissions Director and Preschool Teacher in the Chicagoland area.

Aimee has served on and led several accreditation teams in the Northern Illinois District and in the FL-GA District and led the Early Childhood team at Concordia's ECEC through the NAEYC accreditation process.

Aimee enjoys a lot of coffee in the morning, chocolate throughout the day, reading several books at once, collecting children's hardcover books, group exercise classes (where the instructor makes you exercise), traveling and lazy days on the beach. She is married to Jim, mother to Jack and Alex, and step-mother to Jordan, Jared and Tyler.

## CONNECTED BY CHRIST

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CALL 800-843-5233 TODAY!



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**DANIEL LEPLEY**  
LCEF District Vice President | English and SELC  
317-402-9401 | [Daniel.Lepley@lcef.org](mailto:Daniel.Lepley@lcef.org)

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## LCMS Secretary Calls for Nominations

Dr. John Sias, Secretary of the LCMS Board has issued the Call for Nominations for the appointments listed below.

- Request nominations for appointment on the **LCMS Board for International Mission (BIM)**. The vacant position is to be a **INDIVIDUAL** (*rostered, Minister of Religion—Ordained or Commissioned*) member representing the **Central region** and as such all nominees for this position must reside within the boundaries of the **Central region**. The Central region includes the following regions of our Country in the following LCMS Districts - Indiana, Central Illinois, Southern Illinois, Mid-South, Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma.
- **Call for Nominations** memorandum for the regular appointments to be made at the **May 2021** LCMS Board of Directors meeting. These regular appointments are for:
  - **Board of Trustees—Concordia Plans and Board of Directors —Concordia Plan Services (the boards)**
  - **LCEF Members-at-Large**

Please contact the SELC District office if you have people you would like to recommend for either of these opportunities at [selc.lcms@gmail.com](mailto:selc.lcms@gmail.com)

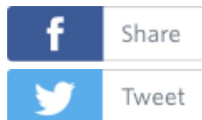
**The deadline to submit nominations is March 2, 2022.**



### Epiphany Hymn Festival 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 6 in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus

Featuring Dr. Stephen Starke, commentator,  
the St. Louis Lutheran Chorale and  
the Seminary String Ensemble

Celebrate our Lord Jesus Christ with us this Epiphany season! Join us in person or via livestream at [csl.edu/live](https://csl.edu/live). Find details on our **events calendar** and learn more about the **Concordia Seminary Concert Series**. **Watch here!**



#### **SELC District of LCMS**

2623 Brookside Road  
Macungie, PA 18062  
610-965-3265

Contact Us  
[selc.lcms@gmail.com](mailto:selc.lcms@gmail.com)

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