



The Beacon Online

September 29, 2023 / Vol. 4 / No. 38

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

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2023 SELC District Professional Church Worker's Conference

One in Christ



The 2023 Professional Church Worker's Conference was held this week at Lake Williamson Christian Retreat Center in Carlinville, IL. The theme was *One in Christ*. We

received updates from the SELC Mission and Church Planting committees as well as LCEF, the Lutheran Haven, and the efforts of the Disaster Response team of the SELC - LERT - Lutheran Early Response Team. President Vinovskis updated everyone about the activities going on in the SELC District.

The featured speakers of the conference were Rev. Dr. Larry Vogel and Rev. Dr. Todd Biermann. Rev. Vogel spoke about the Royal Priesthood (first picture below). Rev. Biermann spoke about Family Discipleship and its Reformatory Powers. He also spoke about the Concordia Center for Family which offers training and resources. One of these tools is *Life in God's Way* series of materials to equip pastors, church workers, lay leaders, and families in the basic principles of family discipleship. (Second picture below)



There were fun events too. We had a dessert party that featured Madison cake and sweet butter cake, both are dessert traditions of the area. We had an evening of s'mores around the bonfire in the evening.

Dan Lepley relayed the activities of LCEF in the District and beyond. They are actively providing funds and support to build new churches or expand schools throughout the District and beyond. Look for an email about LCEF in the near future.

Chief Mission Officer Rev. Dr. Mark Larson spoke to the group about the work the Stewardship Committee is doing in the District. A video was shown that highlights what is the current and future focus of the committee. If you would be willing to join the Stewardship committee, please contact Pastor Larson at markclarson0341@gmail.com



Rev. Jacob Hoyer and Rev. Larson spoke about the District's efforts of church planting. (photo above) They showed a video about the efforts throughout the District. Pastor Hoyer talked about the training he has developed to work with congregations about church planting. Pastor Larson gave updates on the mission work including an update on activities in Florida and India.

Both the Stewardship and Church Planting will be shared individually in future issues of the Beacon.

Rev. Ray Malec, from Concordia Lutheran Church in Northampton, PA, led the conference in musical devotions on Thursday at noon focusing on hymns written by

Jaroslav Vajda, Dr. Vajda is a sainted SELC brother of the SELC. Dr. Vajda is viewed by many as one of the greatest hymn writers of the 20th century. Even though Pastor Vajda was one of our District Pastors, only a handful of those present had a personal acquaintance with him.

Rev. Vajda's hymns draw on powerful imagery of the sacraments and our adoption into God's family. Our hymn sing devotion began with our baptismal adoption in *See This Wonder in the Making*. We also sang *Now the Silence*, and the devotion ended with *Go My Children with My Blessing*.

We were blessed to have piano accompaniment provided by SELC District Board member Deb St-Onge throughout the PCWC.

Look in next week's issue for more from the 2023 Professional Church Worker's Conference.



School Statistics are due to the Synod by November 1, 2023

It is the time of year again when LCMS Rosters and Statistics and LCMS School Ministry request that you submit your statistics for the new school year (2023–24). To submit your statistics, log into the LCMS Information Support Network (LISN) for Schools website at:

lisn.lcms.org

Important login reminders:

- If you have trouble accessing the LISN website after clicking the link, type or copy/paste the full URL — <https://lisn.lcms.org> — in the address bar at the top of your web browser, not in the search field.
- Be sure to use the username previously provided to you by Rosters and Statistics, not your school's email address.
- Passwords are case sensitive.
- If you are having trouble logging in, try clearing your browser history and refreshing the page.
- This website will not work with Internet Explorer. Please use another browser.

Once you are logged in, select "School Statistics" from the navigation panel to enter your statistics. If you have not yet had a chance to update your school profile and list of current teachers, you may do so at this time or any time throughout the year.

Attention:

Beginning with the 2023–24 school year, LCMS School Ministry is collecting additional information. You may receive communications from the national LCMS office and/or your district education executive requesting that you complete an additional statistical survey. A link to submit this additional information will be provided upon submission of your annual report via the link above.

For assistance, or to receive a paper form, contact rosters.stats@lcms.org, or the LCMS

Church Information Center at [888-843-5267](tel:888-843-5267).

The deadline for submitting your 2023–24 School Statistics is Nov. 1, 2023.



SELC Board of Directors Meet at The Way in Columbia, IL

The SELC Board of Directors held their meeting prior to the PCWC at The Way Lutheran Church in Columbia, IL. The Way is the second newest church plant in the SELC District. Pastor Jon Palmer led the morning devotion session of the meeting and he also give the Board a tour of the Church. The Church is in a former car dealership building. Below is a picture of the SELC Board of Directors with Pastor Palmer.



Above President Vinovskis and Pastor Jon Palmer talk to the Board prior to the tour.

Below left: These are the five values that The Way uses to guide their strategies. They are authenticity, generosity, simplicity, elasticity, and curiosity. These values help them follow the way of Jesus.

Below right is a picture of the church.



LWML Central Circuit Zone Rally and Save the Date for the 2024 LWML District Convention

The Central Zone of the SELC LWML is holding its Fall Rally on September 30, 2023 at St. John Lutheran Church in Massillon, Ohio. It will begin at 9:30 am and will end at 2:00 PM. The cost is \$5.00 and includes lunch. They are collecting gifts for the Food Pantry. Please contact Mickey at 330-837-9915 or Milly at 216-398-7321 by September 28th if you are planning to attend.

The LWML SELC District Convention will be held May 3 - 5, 2024 at Concordia Lutheran Church in Macungie, PA. Look for more details in future issues of the Beacon Online.



LWML Eastern Circuit Fall Rally November 4, 2023

Saturday, November 4th 10:00am - 2:00pm

Zion Lutheran Church, 559 Raritan Road, Clark, NJ

We will have bible study, work on several mission projects and the New Jersey Comfort Dog will be visiting!

To register, please visit: <http://www.zionlutheranclark.org/fall-rally-registration.html> or email ZionClarkNJ@gmail.com or ziggyrn1@gmail.com



Know someone interested in full-time ministry?

Invite them to Vocatio: Retreat Oct. 22-24

Share the word about **Vocatio: Retreat**, a three-day opportunity geared especially for college students or second-career adults who are interested in serving as a pastor, deaconess, missionary or chaplain. But don't wait too long! Registration closes Oct. 6.

[Learn More](#)

Interested in a distinctively Lutheran retreat that provides the space to rest in God's Word, time to spend in prayer and the opportunity to learn from some of the brightest theologians in the church? Concordia Seminary, St. Louis invites you to attend Vocatio: Retreat — a three-day retreat geared toward college students and second-career men and women who are considering serving as a pastor, deaconess, missionary or chaplain. **Registration** is free and includes lodging and meals. To register, scan the QR code below, visit csl.edu/vocatio-retreat or Google "Vocatio: Retreat Concordia Seminary." Hurry! Registration closes Oct. 6.

Click the QR code below to register



Prayer Requests

Rev. Brian Roberts, St. Luke's in Oviedo, FL is continuing to gain weight (about 25 pounds) and his energy level continues to increase. He will be returning to work at St. Luke's in October. He and his family are grateful for your prayers.

Rev. John Telloni, St. John in Massillon, OH is continuing his recovery and is working on regaining his strength as he has returned to work.

Rev. and Mrs. Panzigrau, John Huss in Arnold, PA

Rev. and Mrs. Edgar Anthony, Sts. Peter and Paul in Lorain, OH

Rev. Tom Soltis, Parma, OH

Rev. and Mrs. Kenneth Ballas, Parma, OH, Mrs. Ballas has upcoming surgery scheduled.

Rev. and Mrs. Edgar Anthony and son George for their health needs, Lorain, OH. They give thanks for all the prayers as their son George met with his doctor who discussed healing options for his medical issue.

Rev. Peter Haentfling who is recovering from surgery.

Please include those listed below in your prayers.

Lutheran Haven President Jerry Griffing

Deaconess Emilie Stoller-Prozenko in Nova Scotia

St. Paul Christian School in Westport, CT

Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson

Thank you to everyone for all of your prayers!

If you have people you would like to be included in the prayer list, please send the information to selc.lcms@gmail.com or call the District Office at 610-965-3265 and press 6.



Mark Your Calendars

October 19, 2023 - 10:30 AM Eastern - LWML Mid-week Bible Study

October 10, 2023 - Concordia Concert Series - Trombone performance by Owen Duncan, a fourth-year student at Concordia Seminary and graduate of the music program at Concordia University, Irvine, Calif.

November 4, 2023 - Eastern Zone LWML Rally 10 AM - 2 PM

November 17, 2023 - 7 PM - St. Luke's Concert Series - UCF Symphony Orchestra

May 3 - 5, 2024 - LWML Convention - Concordia Lutheran Church in Macungie, PA

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Closing Thoughts Understanding Last Week's OT Lesson

Cf. perhaps Francis Thompson's poem, "The Hound of Heaven"

by Pastor Ken Ballas, EM

*Seek the Lord while He may be found,
call upon Him while He is near;
let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
let him return to the Lord,
that He may have mercy on him,
and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.
For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are My ways higher than your ways
and My thoughts than your thoughts.
(Isaiah 55:6-9, RSV)*

"You've got that right, Isaiah! There are times when I can't begin to figure God out!" Aside from the fact that at least a few contemporary hearers/ readers of the Book of 8th Century BC prophet Isaiah would think twice before presuming to put the sovereign God of Israel on a psychiatric couch, we may be equally fearful having our supremely holy and righteous Creator-Redeemer analyze *us*!

Just as realtors are taught that, next to cost, potential clients inevitably consider a property's **location**, caring students of the written Word of God give prayerful thought to biblical **context**. Easily overlooked in the richly poetic language of the latter

portions of that has also been called a "5th Gospel," this lengthy Old Testament writing (especially the doubly comforting content of Isaiah chapters 40-55) are the words, **"For He will abundantly pardon!** In sharp contrast to our tendency to *hold grudges* against God or one another, **God forgives!**

Early pre-Christian Greek translations of Isaiah 55 afford us yet another seemingly seldom considered alternative interpretation of this past week's OT reading, namely, **"Seek the Lord as HE (the Lord) is in the process of finding you!"** (Bible translations of original Hebrew or Greek texts are also commentaries!). As evidenced by countless Christian young people who reportedly (hopefully only temporarily) "lose their baptismal faith" after attending the most prestigious (and expensive) "institutions of higher learning," both testaments of Scripture more than counterbalance incidents of abject failure in *finding* our Triune God without the powerfully needed aid of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3b).

Thus instead of our ever-finding God on our own, God relentlessly desires or seeks to find us however hard we try to resist His loving intentions. Scripture pictures God as a grieving *waiting father* of prodigal children (one of whom stayed home), or as a seemingly *frantic woman* in search of a single missing coin or, as is most common the case, a socially lowly but persistently faithful tender of far from bright sheep or equally stubborn goats as a solicitously caring, supremely *Good Shepherd* who *actively sought us out* to the point of voluntarily and sacrificially laying down His life for even the most wander-prone or rebelliously helpless sheep – realities well worth our "ruminating over" during the days or weeks to come (see Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34; Matthew 18; **Luke 15** and John 10 for but a relatively small sampling of contextually similar pastoral parallel contents.

Location and preceding or succeeding **context**. Biblical Christianity being a decidedly historic religion whose central teachings didn't take place on some mythical "Cloud 9" but rather on specifically designated points on earthly cartographers' maps with easily identifiable place names as Bethlehem, Nazareth or Jerusalem. Devoted Son of a chosen Jewish mother, our Servant-Messiah, Jesus Christ, is both a royal lineal descendant *and living Lord* of Israel's King David of the patriarchal tribe of Judah (see Psalm 110:1; Isaiah 55:3; Matthew 1; Luke 2:4, 11; Romans 1:3 Galatians 4:4).

Though wholly without sin, the incarnate Son of God ignominiously suffered for an otherwise dying world under a provincial Roman governor named Pontius Pilate. By His seamless obedience even to the point of His self-giving substitutionary death by crucifixion, bodily resurrection and ascension, the fruits of our being privileged pilgrim beneficiaries of our Brother-Savior's redemptive mission continue to redound to the glory of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit! **Amen.**



SELC District - A District Without Borders

Showing Everyone Life in Christ, by Showing Everyone Love in Christ

SELC District of LCMS

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