



# The Beacon Online

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

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### Rev. Jaroslav Vajda

#### Part 2

by Rev. John Telloni

We continue our reflections regarding former SELC District pastor, Rev. Jaroslav Vajda (1919-2008), eminent poet and hymnist whose contributions of hymns and choral pieces have greatly enhanced the life of Christian worship beyond the Lutheran denomination. According to the sainted Carl Schalk, a frequent collaborator with Vajda in providing music for his texts, and a well known composer in his own right, remembers when Vajda first came to public attention with the publication of *Worship Supplement*, an LCMS worship resource published in 1969. Four texts found their way into this compendium of liturgical settings and hymns, two translations from the Slovak language ("*Greet, Man, the Swiftly Changing Year*" and "*God, My Lord, My Strength, My Place of Hiding*"), and two original texts ("*Thank the Lord, for He Is Good*" and "*Now the Silence*").

The texts of these hymns were characteristic of the unique style of his future work. Again, Schalk refers to 1) a continuing interest in translating texts, especially from the great repertoire of Slovak hymns, and 2) the gradual development of a creativity which expressed itself in a flood of significant, newly-written hymn texts which would find wide acceptance in the coming years. In the Lutheran Service Book, there are ten hymns written by Vajda, which are regularly sung in our synod's congregations.

Despite his musical background and being an accomplished violinist, to my knowledge he never wrote any tunes to any of his hymns. Through the years Vajda worked with other composers to provide tunes and arrangements, and also married some of his original texts to Slovak or German or other familiar hymn tunes.

Vajda was a true poet and a lover of language. He spent his years from 18 on translating Slovak hymns into English while at the same time serving as an editor at Concordia Publishing House. He did not write any original hymns until the age of 50. In the Book, *Sing Peace, Sing Gift of Peace*, which is his comprehensive hymnary, he said: *"Why do I write hymns and how do I come up with what approximates my ideal hymn? I write hymns for two reasons: because I'm inspired to write this type of sacred verse, and because I am asked to provide a text for a certain occasion or to fill a gap in worship resources."*

This writer once asked Vajda what constitutes good writing, and he answered, *"Try to use fresh language, avoid clichés, be clear in what you write, and with hymns be faithful to the inspired texts and be Christ-centered."*

Let us take a look at what is considered his masterpiece, *"Now the Silence,"* which he said was the first original hymn that he wrote. *"While shaving [one morning], I was haunted by questions that had been troubling me for most of my lifetime as a worshiper and worship leader. Why did David say, 'I was glad when they said to me, 'let us go to the House of the Lord'?" Reviewing the features of a liturgical service, I composed a free verse, "Now the Silence" and entitled it "An Entrance Hymn." It all came together within half an hour, in an unusual poetic form without rhyme or punctuation."* The text of this brief but stately and majestic hymn can be found in the Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 910.

Carl Schalk provided the music for this unique hymn. Vajda was convinced that hymns could take on new forms and yet be appropriate for liturgical worship. This particular hymn was meant to be a Processional Hymn at the beginning of the service, although many congregations sing it just prior to the distribution of the Holy Sacrament. Vajda explained that *"the reverse order of the Doxology/Benediction not only expressed the order in which I pictured the Holy Trinity coming to us in worship, but also the order in which the Incarnation took place: the visitation of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit, then the Son's epiphany as the Incarnate Word, followed by the universal blessing that is bestowed upon all in whom this same process occurs."*

Next Week: Part 3 - Final thoughts about worship and music, and two Vajda tributes.



## **Saints Peter and Paul Celebrate the 25 Year Anniversary of Rev. Edgar Anthony's Installation**

On Sunday, October 29, the congregation of Saints Peter and Paul Lutheran Church in Lorain, Ohio, celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Installation of Rev. Ed Anthony as their Pastor. Rev. John Milligan, Pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (SELC) in Parma, Ohio, was the liturgist. Rev. Dr. Chris Cahill, Pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Lodi, Ohio, and SELC Second Vice President, was the preacher. The service was marked by a re-affirmation of Pastor Anthony's ordination/installation vows.

Congregation members and guests gathered after the service for a celebration meal. Congregation President Holly Mihok presented Pastor Anthony with a gift from

the congregation, a picture of "Jesus Laughing," and other cards.

Included below is a portion of the sermon Pastor Cahill delivered at the service. You can read his full sermon [here](#).

"It was the Holy Spirit that has been working for twenty-five years in every magic trick Pastor Anthony did that caused you to sit up a little more, to open your eyes and say "Aha! I never thought about Jesus that way before!" It was the Holy Spirit that has been working for twenty-five years in every joke that caused your ears to perk up a little more and be just that more ready to hear the Gospel (it's probably fair to say that not every joke Pastor Anthony has told for 25 years had that effect, but I'm sure that some did.)

It was the Holy Spirit that was always bringing strengthening of faith, comfort, forgiveness, and reconnection to this body of Christ that is Saints Peter and Paul Lutheran Church whenever Pastor Anthony entered the room of a shut-in, a nursing home resident, a surgical patient. Whenever Pastor Anthony attended the family of someone who was dying, it was the Holy Spirit who was working to keep that person and family in the faith until life's end. It was always the Holy Spirit who was always working behind the scenes through every part of the ministry of Pastor Anthony – in weddings, in funerals, in every event of life in between."



Pictured above from left to right: Rev. John Milligan, Rev. Ed Anthony, and Rev. Dr. Chris Cahill

Pictured below on the left: Ryan Miller, a member of Sts. Peter and Paul and also an elder, with Pastors Milligan, Anthony, and Cahill. Pictured below on the right is congregational President Holly Mihok presenting a gift to Pastor Anthony.



## 2024 Congregational Support for the District



This *Mission of the Week* is the first in a series to highlight the work that we do together as a district through your mission offerings.

So you want to be in mission work. Well, you are!

You travel with your district mission offerings and prayers. You work in Montreal side-by-side with Pastor Charles St-Onge and his wife Deb, along with other workers there funded by the Mission of Christ Network.

Ascension Lutheran is planted in this city at a junction of international cultures, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Latin American, and Chinese make up about 15% of Montreal's population. Their congregation's neighborhood in Montreal has a large, non-Christian, immigrant population, especially South Asians.

Pastor St-Onge states in a newsletter that "Mission is about language because we are often speaking to people with a different mother tongue ... and people who don't understand God and his grace in Jesus Christ." So this mission station does a lot of work with language, especially teaching English.

Pastor Charles writes "Our fall beginners' English outreach ended this month, and our conversational English outreach will end in just a few more days. We had several dozen members of our community attend, many who were Sikh but others of different faiths and backgrounds. Once again, we taught the Gospel through the Lord's Prayer and helped new immigrants and refugees learn the language spoken by the rest of Canada. My "beginning" beginners' class varied from six to fourteen, including a few children who would occasionally attend with their mums. Through activities like this, we have built up a database of over 450 people who receive regular invitations to worship."

This ministry continues to reach out in a highly ethnic, non-Christian community in a challenging cultural milieu. In addition to preaching and teaching, the congregation engages the community in various activities that connect the congregation with their neighbors.

What a joy to see the Gospel bringing hope to those who had not known the way of salvation in Christ. Linger a few minutes over the photos on their website [ascensionlutheran.ca](http://ascensionlutheran.ca) - with more at Pastor Charles' newsletters at [intheway.org](http://intheway.org).

Check out the photos, the activities, the people that God loves – and remember that you are with them in Spirit through your support. Jesus said it and it is being done, "I will build my Church."--Rev. Warren Huffines, ret.

This Mission of the Week is the first in a series to highlight the work that we do together as a district through your mission offerings. Also, share this inspiring, three minute video in worship, church groups and council meetings.

[Stream](#) or [Download](#)



*Reformation service in French and English*



*Teaching ethnic neighbors about recycling*



## Theme of 2025 Youth Gathering Announced

The theme of the 2025 Youth Gathering has been announced - the theme is **Endure**. The 2025 Youth Gathering, set for July 19–23, 2025, in New Orleans. The theme Scripture is Hebrews 12:1–3:

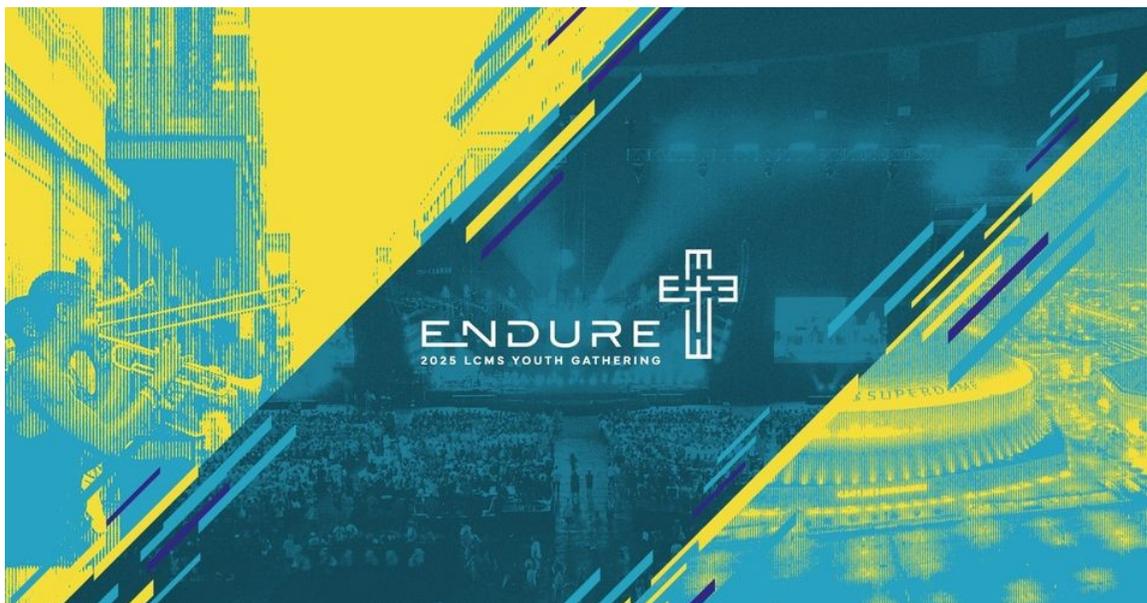
*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted."*

The four Es that surround the cross in the design symbolize the unfolding path of a Christian's life. The openings, twists and turns represent the challenges and choices of that life.

The colors of the Es evoke the vibrant hues of New Orleans, while the yellow cross in the center is a vivid reminder that Christ is the guiding light on our path. We look to Christ as both our example and our destination as we run our race with endurance."

You can get up-to-date information at these links:

- [facebook.com/lcmsgathering](https://facebook.com/lcmsgathering)
- [twitter.com/lcmsgathering](https://twitter.com/lcmsgathering)
- [instagram.com/lcmsgathering](https://instagram.com/lcmsgathering)





## SELC Board of Directors News

The SELC Board of Directors made several appointments this week.

Rev. James Fernandez, Pastor at Hope Melbourne, has been appointed the Circuit Visitor for the Southern District. We welcome Pastor Fernandez to the team of Circuit Visitors. The Board thanks Rev. Dave Haara for his service as the Southern Circuit Visitor over the past two years.

The Board has also appointed four people as District reconcilers. The two ordained reconcilers are Rev. James Fernandez from Florida and Rev. John Gutz from Illinois. The Commissioned and lay person representatives are Deaconess Emilie Stoller and Obed Gonzalez. We thank Pastor Gutz for his continued service in this role and welcome Pastor Fernandez, Emilie and Obed to the team of SELC reconcilers.



## Concordia Preschool Celebrates Fall in Macungie, PA

Concordia Preschool celebrated the fall season with many activities among the eight classes within the past two weeks. Classes traveled to the pumpkin patch and picked pumpkins, fed the animals, and went on a hayride. The classes also dressed up in costumes and had a parade for their parents.





## June 2024 Trip to Israel

Next call is November 13th

Do you want to go to Israel in June 2024? Learn more by attending the Israel trip ZOOM session, led by Pastor Dan Lepley, or email him [pastorlepley@gmail.com](mailto:pastorlepley@gmail.com) to learn more.

November's zoom session will be held on November 13th and will focus on Lower Galilee. To join the zoom session, please click here - [Click here](#) All sessions are held at 8 PM Eastern time, 7 PM Central time.



## SELC District LWML Announces Their New Website

To all our women, girls, and our churches, welcome to the new LWML SELC website where you can find information on events taking place, contact information for your Zone and see some of the fun things that have been happening in our churches and our LWML. Check us out, we'd love to have you join us at an upcoming event.

Please view the new website at <http://lwmlselc.mystrikingly.com/>



## LWML Eastern Circuit Fall Rally Saturday, 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](mailto:ZionClarkNJ@gmail.com) or [ziggyrn1@gmail.com](mailto:ziggyrn1@gmail.com)

One of the mission projects is gathering items for Orphan Grain Train. Please see below for information about what can be brought for the mission project.

### Health Kits:

- 1 Bath Towel dark colored (NOT FLUFFY) 1 Washcloth dark colored
- 1 4 oz bar of soap
- 1 Toothbrush (Dollar Tree has 3 in pkg with toothbrush holder) must be in sealed pkg.
- 1 nail clip
- 1 pkg of tissues (Dollar Tree has pkg of 8)
- 1 sturdy comb
- 1 Box of Band Aids (All same size)

### School Kits:

- 1 Backpack (can be string type which Dollar Tree sells)
- 2 Spiral notebooks
- 2 Pencils
- 2 Pens
- 10 Sheets of Construction Paper
- 1—24 Count box of Crayons
- 1 ruler with metric on one side
- 2 Glue Sticks
- 1 Child's scissor
- 1 Eraser
- 1 Pkg. 12 count colored pencils
- 1 Pencil sharpener

Please do not include items with religious, camouflage, patriotic or military symbols, No plastic bags, No additions or substitutions. Although well-meaning variations are tempting, please do not do this. It may result in heavy fine and/or the entire shipment being confiscated by custom officials. This information is from the Orphan Grain Train website.



## Rev. Ryan Schnake Installed as Air Force Chaplain



Chaplain Rev. Ryan Schnake accepted a call to Active Duty in the United State Air Force and he was installed on October 29, 2023. District President Vinovskis installed Rev. Schnake as a full time Air Force Chaplain.

Chaplain Schnake and his family are awaiting orders regarding where he will be stationed. He will remain a member of the SELC District. We wish the Schnakes all the best and pray for God's guidance as they await the next step in their life's journey.



Pictured from left to right: Pastor Ron Yergey, Chaplain Ryan Schnake, President Vinovskis, and Rev James Kreft. Pastors Yergey and Kreft are members of Concordia Macungie and participated in Chaplain Schnake's installation service.



Chaplain Schnake signs his Diploma of Vocation for his new call to the United States Air Force, active Duty status.

Pictured below the three Concordia Pastors praying for Chaplain Schnake.



## Prayer Requests

**Rev. Brian Roberts**, St. Luke's in Oviedo, FL is continuing to gain weight (over 25 pounds) and his energy level continues to increase. He has returned 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 had successful surgery last week. Please keep her in your prayers for her recovery.

**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. Alan Mercer** in Galloway, NJ for his ongoing health struggles.

**Megan Skelton** in Oviedo, FL as she prepares for surgery on November 8th. Please pray for Megan, her family and her doctors and nurses.

Please include those listed below in your prayers.

**Rev. George Hansell, Lutheran Haven Board Secretary**

**The SELC Eastern Circuit Pastors and congregations**

**Deaconess Intern Anna Benter, Montreal, Canada**

**Mrs. Joyce Ongstad**

*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](mailto:selc.lcms@gmail.com) or call the District Office at 610-965-3265 and press 6.

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## Mark Your Calendars

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

**November 13, 2023** - Zoom call for Israel trip 8:00 PM Eastern time

**November 16, 2023** - 10:30 AM Eastern - LWML Mid-week Bible Study

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



## Closing Thoughts

### One Thing Needful

Rev. Ken Ballas. EM

Living in today's deeply troubled world, at times we all need something to evoke in us a chuckle if not good, healthy belly laugh. You may recall hearing or reading the following story.

Three sons left home, went off on their own and prospered. Getting back together, they discussed the gift they were able to give their elderly mother. The first said, "I built a big house for our mother." The second said, "I sent her a Mercedes with a driver." The third smiled and said, "I've got you both beat. You remember how Mom enjoyed reading the Bible? And you know she can't see very well. I sent her a remarkable parrot that recites the entire Bible. It took elders in the church 12 years to teach him. He's one of a kind. Mama just has to name the chapter and verse, and the parrot recites it."

Soon thereafter, Mom sent out her letters of thanks: "Milton," she wrote one son, "the house you built is so huge. I only live in one room, but I have to clean the whole house." "Gerald," she wrote to another, "I am too old to travel. I stay most of the time at home, so I rarely use the Mercedes. And the driver is so rude." Dearest Donald," she wrote to her third son, "you have the good sense to know what your mother likes. The chicken was delicious."

It's a sad commentary on today's society that even among us Christians seemingly "clean jokes" all too often hinge on another's misfortune or some sort of physical or emotional disability – in this case failing eyesight. Disabilities are rarely, if ever, "funny" especially to the person experiencing them!

What about our possible "spiritual disabilities?" The above admittedly outlandishly hilarious tale also somehow calls to mind a dear parish shut-in who during a regular home visit one day sincerely confided in her long-time friend and neighbor, "Pastor, one of my few regrets is that I didn't take advantage of our group Bible study opportunities that help prepare us for our Lord's promised eternal future blessings yet to come?"

Instead of leaving it to others (including the likes of that poor fictitious parrot!) to engage in some serious and honestly enjoyable study of the life-giving holy written Word of God, when will we learn to order aright our privileged but often fleeting priorities regarding what our blessed Lord Jesus mentioned at the home of His dear friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus of Bethany before it becomes too late for professing Christians like ourselves better to appreciate what our Lord with good reason referred to as "the **one thing**" everlastingly needful"? (See Luke 10:38-42)



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

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