



The Beacon Online

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

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Submit Your District Mission Goal Today

Your offerings support the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ here and throughout the world

As you congregation sets its mission goal to support the work of the district and Synod, please be sure to let us know as soon as possible, but before January 15, 2024. Here are three easy ways to do so:

- Online at [this link](#).
- Email Stewardship Committee member Rev. Bill Hale at william.e.hale@gmail.com with the amount per month or year.
- If you can find it, *mail* the form sent to your congregation in October to the address indicated.

If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Bill Hale at the above email or Rev. Dr. Mark Larson, Stewardship Chair at markclarson0341@gmail.com. We value your partnership in the Gospel and look forward to another year of proclaiming the saving message of Christ to a lost and hurting world.



St. Lucas, St. Louis, Youth Invite Neighborhood to Christmas Worship



On December 17, the St. Lucas Youth assembled invitations to Christmas worship to share with the neighborhood, consisting of a door hanger with delicious cookies. They visited about 35 homes around the church, knocking on the doors, visiting with residents when possible and sharing the invitation. Youth Leader Tyler Simmons reports, "The kids were not hesitant at all to knock on the doors and talk to our neighbors." Indeed, sharing the love of Christ is joyful!

It's not too soon to plan outreach activities for Easter. Don't forget that the district has limited number of [Evangelism Grants](#) available to facilitate your project! Make you plans and apply soon!



Vicarage and Seminary Student Call Documents deadline is Set

The deadline for all **vicarage and call docs for Spring 2024** placements must be sent to the District Office no later than **February 23, 2024** so we can be sure to meet the Synod deadlines. If you need assistance or access to complete the call documents for a Vicar or Seminary graduate, please contact the District Office at selc.lcms@gmail.com or 610-965-3265, press 6.



Artificial Intelligence and Real Ministry

Register now for new online continuing education course

Understanding the significance and implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming increasingly necessary for today's pastors. A new six-week online continuing education course, "**Artificial Intelligence and Real Ministry**," aims to provide a comprehensive overview of AI, highlighting its key facets and its potential implications in ministry. Offered in partnership by Concordia Seminary and Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor, the course will be held weekly from 4-5 p.m. (CT) Tuesday, April 9, through May 14, 2024, via Zoom. Register by April 2!

Register here!



Family Bible Journey Daily Podcasts

Pastor Lepley, who serves the SELC as LCEF District Vice President, is releasing a daily devotional podcast for those who would like to listen or journal through the Bible over the next two years. Are you interested in journaling through the Bible, either for yourself or to leave the legacy of faith for a loved-one? If so, check out the Family Bible Journey podcast. New episodes drop daily as we work our way through the Bible over the next two years.

If you'd like to listen to the podcast, check out familybiblejourney.com.

Thanks for listening!



St. John Lutheran Church Emporia, VA

St. John Lutheran Church in Emporia, Virginia has been very active. This fall they focused on helping elementary school children. The members collected backpacks for elementary students (photo below left). They also collected clothing for students in the elementary school who needed clothing (photo below right).



Concordia University Irvine's Servant Leadership Institute



Concordia University Irvine's Servant Leadership Institute proudly presents two excellent leadership development opportunities. This week they are featuring opportunities for Education Professionals at the Educator Leadership Academy.

- 14 Interactive seminars led by prominent leaders in education and business.
- A personal leadership coach for the entire academic year
- Teams of three or more encouraged
- All meals
- University SWAG

Visit CUI.edu/ELA for more information

**Check out next week's Beacon Online for opportunities for
10th - 12th grade students.**



Seminary Receives 'Family Discipleship' Grant from Lilly Endowment

New initiative to support Christian families in LCMS

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL) has received a \$1.25 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to work in partnership with the Concordia Center for the Family (CCF) to establish the Family Discipleship Initiative (FDI).

The project is being funded through Lilly Endowment's Christian Parenting and Caregiving Initiative. The aim of the initiative is to help parents and caregivers share their faith and values with their children.

The purpose of the Family Discipleship Initiative is to support Christian families in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) as they pass on the biblical faith. The phrase "family discipleship" refers to Christ's gifts creating faith in and through families with church support. The FDI includes educating and motivating present and future pastors, church workers and other church leaders with biblical theology, knowledge, competence and attitudes for family discipleship. The overarching goal is to encourage and equip parents in passing on faith in Jesus Christ to their children and future generations.

FDI has two major features. First, Seminary education will equip future pastoral and deaconess students and their families with family discipleship formation to benefit their own households and the congregations they will serve. Second, in cooperation with CCF, it will support families, congregations and districts of the LCMS to provide home-centered models and resources for raising children as disciples of Jesus Christ.

"I am grateful that Lilly Endowment is providing this generous grant to address the critical need to support homes and congregations in raising children in the Christian faith," said **Dr. W. Mart Thompson**, associate professor of Practical Theology and FDI program director. "This grant makes possible a unique and impactful partnership with our friends at CCF, a Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS specializing in home-centered discipleship. The Seminary will provide formation for pastors and deaconesses to equip congregations to support families for this work. CCF will supply hands-on resources and training to empower parents, church workers and congregations for family discipleship."

"We at CCF share a common goal with CSL in desiring to impact the LCMS to see more and more children raised to be lifelong disciples of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ," said Dr. Todd Biermann, executive director of CCF. "Continuing the work begun by founder Dr. Ben Freudenburg, we are committed to listening and attending to the needs of families, congregations and districts to provide a trustworthy biblical framework for family discipleship. The important position of the home for handing down the faith is clearly demonstrated by research. But even more significantly, God's Word teaches that the family is specially called to raise up succeeding generations in the Christian faith, as Martin Luther boldly taught. We, therefore, are profoundly grateful for Lilly Endowment's vision and generosity in providing this grant and to Concordia Seminary for its leadership and partnership in supporting the biblical paradigm of family discipleship."

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis is one of 125 organizations that have received grants through the Christian Parenting initiative. Reflecting the diversity of Christianity in the United States, the organizations are affiliated with mainline Protestant, evangelical, Catholic, Orthodox Christian and Pentecostal faith communities. Many of the

organizations are rooted in Black church, Hispanic and Asian Christian traditions.

"We've heard from many parents who are seeking to nurture the spiritual lives of their children, especially in their daily activities, and looking to churches and other faith-based organizations for support," said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment's vice president for religion. "These thoughtful, creative and collaborative organizations embrace the important role that families have in shaping the religious development of children and are launching programs to assist parents and caregivers with this task."

Lilly Endowment launched the Christian Parenting and Caregiving Initiative in 2022 because of its interest in supporting efforts to help individuals and families from diverse Christian communities draw more fully on the wisdom of Christian practices to live out their faith fully and well passing on a vibrant faith to a new generation.



Israel Trip Monthly Bible Study January 8, 2024

The January session Bible Study for the Israel trip is scheduled for January 8, 2024 at 8:00 PM Eastern. The topic of January's session is Upper Jordan.

The link to the Zoom session is <https://lcef.zoom.us/j/83541843549>



Three Worship and Music Events Offered During Symposia Week

January 16 - 9, 2024

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), will host three late-afternoon worship and music events during its annual Symposia Week January 16–19. (Congregations, please share the information below with your members as you see fit.)

Evening Prayer with the CTSFW Kantorei will be held Tuesday, January 16, at 5 p.m. in Kramer Chapel. Evening Prayer brings together the people of God at the end of the day to laud and magnify His glorious name.

On Wednesday, January 17, at 5 p.m., come your hearts and voices raising for a special **Hymn Festival with the Schola Cantorum** in Kramer Chapel. The Schola Cantorum and local LCMS church choirs, directed by Jonathan Busarow and accompanied by Kantor Kevin Hildebrand, organist, and professional instrumentalists, will reprise highlights of the Good Shepherd Hymn Festival of November 2023.

The final special worship and music event is **Vespers and a short organ recital**, which will be held in Kramer Chapel Thursday, January 18, at 5 p.m.

All events are free and open to the public, regardless of whether or not you are attending Symposia. If you can't make it in person, catch the livestream at ctsfw.edu/daily-chapel



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 as he is working and continuing to regain 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. Please keep them in your prayers.

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 Please continue to pray for her healing, pain relief, and recovery.

Rev. Dennis Rhoads in Virginia who is serving as the Vacancy Pastor for St. John Lutheran Church in Emporia, VA. He is recovering from surgery and cannot put weight on his leg yet. Please pray for his continued healing and recovery.

Amanda Baumann in Mount Dora, FL, is Pastor Jacob Baumann's wife. She is pregnant with their fourth child. Please pray for a healthy and safe pregnancy.

Ardyne Kirn, in Crown Point, IN, please pray for her healing. Ardyne is a member of our District and serves on the Lutheran haven Board of Directors.

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.



LCMS LUTHERANS
YESTERDAY. TODAY. ALWAYS.

 **Lutheran Church Extension Fund**
> where investments build ministry

LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, LCEF investments are not FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. LCEF will offer and sell its securities only in states where authorized. The offer is made solely by LCEF's Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks.



Mark Your Calendars

January 8, 2024 at 8:00 PM - Israel Trip Bible Study

January 18, 2024 at 9:30 AM Eastern - LWML Monthly Bible Study

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

It's Time to Nominate Students for Lutheran Summer Music

Each year, the primary way that music students find their way to LSM is through the encouragement of their church musician! LSM offers opportunities for musicians of all

kinds: brass, winds, strings, percussion, piano, organ, voice, harp, guitar, handbells, and more! Students receive advanced musical instruction through large ensembles (Festival Choir, Band and Orchestra), chamber music, private lessons with collegiate-level faculty, and elective classes (such as conducting, composition, church music, intro to the pipe organ, jazz band, musical theatre, music therapy). In the evenings, students attend recitals and Evening Prayer services, and social events with their friends.

LSM 2024 takes place at Valparaiso University in Indiana from June 30-July 28 (Full Session) or June 30-July 14 (Half Session) and is open to students who have completed grades 8-12. **Know a musical young person who would thrive at LSM? Nominate them today at LSMacademy.org/nominate.**



**Nominate
a Student
for LSM**

LSMacademy.org/nominate

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SUMMER
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OF FESTIVAL

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