



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.



Holy Trinity and Grace Lutheran Churches Form a Dual Parish

Rev. John Milligan called to serve the Dual Parish

Installation scheduled for February 3, 2024

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Parma, Ohio and Grace Lutheran Church in Lakewood, Ohio have formed a dual parish. They voted to call Rev. John Milligan to serve both parishes. Pastor Milligan will be installed at Grace Lakewood on Saturday, February 3rd at 10 AM. LCMS Clergy are asked to wear red vestments.

A reception will follow. Please RSVP to Vicki at Grace Lutheran by emailing her at graceluthlake1@att.net or call her at 216-221-4959 by **January 29, 2024**.



Rev. Brady Retzlaff to be Installed at Pentecost Lutheran Church on February 4, 2024

Pastor Brady Retzlaff will be installed as the Pastor at Pentecost Lutheran Church in Racine, Wisconsin on February 4, 2024 at 2 pm. A reception will immediately follow the service. LCMS clergy are asked to wear red vestments.



Vicarage and Seminary Student Call Documents deadline is Set

Deadline to submit to the District Office is February 23, 2024

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.



National Lutheran Schools Week January 21 - 27, 2024

The theme for this year's week is connected. National Lutheran Schools Week provides more than 1,800 preschools, elementary schools and high schools with the public opportunity to proclaim and celebrate God's work among us in schools of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The schools in the Synod touch over 180,000 students, families and their communities and share the message of Jesus' love with them.

The Bible verse for this year's Lutheran Schools Week is John 15:1 - 5. I am the vine

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing".

Please send us write-ups and pictures about how your schools celebrated National Lutheran Schools Week! Please email them to selc.lcms@gmail.com.



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!



'God's Mission Here' New, combined newsletter from LCMS National Mission

God's mission is all around us, and the various ministries of LCMS National Mission work to bring the Gospel in various circumstances across our country. In the past, you subscribed to receive the TimeLine newsletter from LCMS Black Ministry.

As we strive to walk together in our mission, we are happy to announce God's Mission Here, one new, combined monthly newsletter from LCMS National Mission. Beginning this January, you will receive this new newsletter with important updates about the

national work of our Synod, all in one place.

You may continue to receive occasional emails with special news and announcements from Black Ministry. We pray that this newsletter is helpful to you as you work alongside us to carry out "God's mission here.



Prayer Requests

Rev. Brian Roberts, St. Luke's in Oviedo, FL is continuing to gain weight and his energy level continues to increase. 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. Panzgrau, 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.



Mark Your Calendars

February 16-17, 2024 - Higher Things Conference for Youth Pittsburgh, PA

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



Higher Things Conference February 16 and 17, 2024

The upcoming Higher Things retreat is co-hosted by First Trinity Evangelical-Lutheran Church and the Pittsburgh Area Lutheran Ministries. This retreat will take place on February 16th and 17th at First Trinity located at 531 N. Neville St. Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

This retreat is intended for communicate members of our LCMS congregations in youth group and/ or high school and will include plenary lectures on Baptism by Rev. Eric Andrae and different breakout sessions by laity from the Pittsburgh region and LCMS clergy.

Regular Registration ends Monday, January 15th and is \$50 per attendee. This includes two meals and a t-shirt. All registrations received after January 15th will cost \$60 and will not include a t-shirt.

All aspects of the retreat (including sleeping) will take place at First Trinity. Students will need to bring sleeping bags, pillows, toiletries, one change of clothing, etc. Boys and Girls will not be allowed to sleep together, and the building will remain locked and secured by chaperones during the event.

Registration for the event can be accessed here: [Retreats – Higher Things](#)

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.**



Closing Thoughts

Ongoing Reflections on Our Lord's Prayer and His Continual Praying for Us!

Rev. Ken Ballas, EM

*Heavenly Father, holy be Your Name;
Your kingdom come;
Your heavenly saving will also be done here on earth.
Give us this day our daily bread;
AND forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us;
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One. Amen
(Matthew 6:9-15; Luke 11:1-4)*

Scripture teaches us to love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves (Leviticus 19:18). Knowing there is a proper and also *improper* love of self, one of our biggest challenges as baptized believing children of a *merciful Heavenly Father* is foolishly to regard ourselves *instead of our almighty forgiving Creator-Redeemer God* as being nearly invincible (almost brazenly immortal) as we all too often likely tend to take *ourselves far too seriously* – ample reason for adding the words **For THINE be the Kingdom and the Power and the GLORY FOREVER! AMEN!**

Despite knowing that “the Gospel heartbeat” of our powerfully caring and loving Lord “goes on and on,” merely emphasizing the unlikelihood this side of heaven of us mortals ever being able to recite the “Our Father” without having our minds wander even if but a little would only be to embark upon a senseless “*guilt trip*” of sorts. We privileged Christians can do far better than vainly engage in any kind of such purely mechanical robotic perfection (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 2:16; 1 Peter 5:7).

By the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, hopefully, confirmed baptized believers of every age will in proportion to their allowing their faith to be nourished by a steady spiritual diet of God's enriching Word and Sacrament be led to realize that the Old Evil Foe (who only desires our eternal destruction) is not the only entity wishing to vie for our attention, devotion and implementation of seemingly vastly conflicting ideas (Genesis 50:20; John 8:44; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Ephesians 6:10ff.).

Here is one proven helpfully simple suggestion for prayerful consideration on the part of those desiring a positive boost in their earthly “faith-walk” many of us may have once learned but perhaps nearly (but thankfully not irreparably) forgotten. 500 years ago Martin Luther prepared an illustrated family-friendly Small Catechism copies of which are conveniently found in our synod's two latest hymnal editions. Meant to be used, no one should have second thoughts about “borrowing” from his chosen church building a pew Bible or hymnal for home use between worship services (Psalm 98:1).

You, too, may find useful a visual image suggested by Dr. Luther's brilliantly astute literary *explanations* of the earlier petitions of Our Lord's Prayer reminiscent of raking fallen leaves or, more recently, sweeping (or shoveling) winter snow from one's porch steps or walkways during which process it becomes necessary to “go back” and retrieve what inevitably has fallen off to either side of the broom or shovel. That's what brother Martin is doing with his keen mind and feathered pen – as ultimately *all doctrines of Scripture are inseparably intertwined* with our perfectly spotless ascended incarnate Brother-Savior as the focal point beautifully holding everything together not

only in this grandest of all intercessory prayers but all biblical teaching (Romans 8:26ff.; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 5:15ff.; Colossians 1:8-20).

+ + +

Untold millions of families or individuals have yet to learn as intended why one of the Eastern magi's gifts to the messianic Christ-Child was the mysterious gift of *myrrh* (an Oriental spice also used for burial). Will *you* help tell them?



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

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