



# The Beacon Online

April 5, 2024 / Vol. 5 / No. 14

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

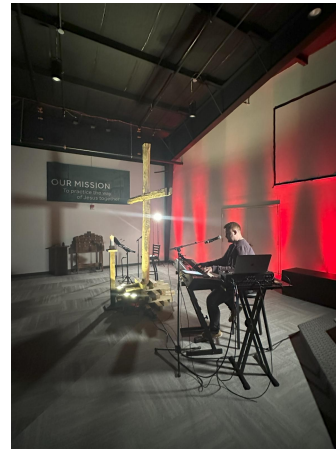
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## **The Way Church holds its first Good Friday Walk Through Experience**

On Good Friday, The Way Church in Columbia, IL held its first Good Friday Walk-Through Experience. Attendees interacted with the seven last words of Jesus and the hope that they bring to those who live the forgiven and new life that Jesus' death and resurrection bring. Those who walked through tasted vinegar, drew a picture or wrote words about paradise, saw their sins dissolved, ate together as One Big Family in Jesus, spent time in complete darkness, smelled wine mixed with vinegar, nailed what Jesus finished to the cross, and worshiped the One True Crucified King. These stations helped visitors experience, the hope of being forgiven, the hope of heaven, the hope of being part of God's family, the hope of never being forsaken, the hope of God's provision, the hope of the finality of the cross, and the hope of our new identity in Christ. This was truly an all-church effort as volunteers facilitated each station and helped attendees navigate the walk-through experience. As attendees exited and enjoyed fellowship and food, many shared that it was an eye-opening and impactful experience and enhanced their appreciation and awe for what Christ did on the cross.

See the next page for pictures from the Good Friday Walk Through.



## Registration Opens for Fall Online Greek Course

Renowned Greek scholar Voelz to teach

Registration is now open for **Online Greek: Part I** for the fall semester of **Concordia Seminary, St. Louis'** 2024-25 academic year. The registration fee is \$1,200 and the deadline to register is Aug. 2. The class size is limited to 15 students.

The course is designed to serve three groups of prospective students: those who have completed the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Program and are continuing on with the Specific Ministry Pastor to General Pastor Certification (SMP-GPC) Program, and those who have applied for the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) or for the Residential Alternate Route (RAR) programs. The course prepares these students to take the Entry Level Competency Exam (ELCE) in Greek, an entrance requirement.

If space is available in the course after SMP-GPC, M.Div. and RAR students have enrolled, anyone wishing to learn Greek also may register. The course has no prerequisites and is not for credit, but a solid understanding of English grammar is essential to success.

The course will be taught by **Dr. James W. Voelz**, the Dr. Jack Dean Kingsbury Professor of New Testament Theology. This is his ninth time teaching the online Greek course. Voelz is a preeminent Greek scholar who has taught the language for more than 45 years. He is the author of **What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World**, **Fundamental Greek Grammar**, and **Mark 1:1–8:26** and **Mark 8:27–16:8** in the Concordia Commentary series, all from Concordia Publishing House.

“It is satisfying to say that, while we continue to serve applicants to the Seminary M.Div. Program, as well as interested laity, more and more of the students for this online experience are SMP pastors who want to move toward General Pastor Certification (GPC), and it seems to work extremely well for all involved,” Voelz said. “While no credit is given, the course provides a full Greek experience, so that the pass rate of students taking an Entry Level Competency Examination after completing the entire set of sessions is quite remarkable. The 2024-25 iteration will meet for one hour twice a week, rather than for two hours once a week, which should enhance the educational experience.”

The schedule for the course consists of live online tutoring sessions from 4-5 p.m. (CT) Mondays and Thursdays. The first class is slated to begin Aug. 26. Students should plan to commit eight hours of study each week for the course. Registration for Part II, which will be taught during the spring semester of 2025, will be available in October.

- Students are required to use the following textbooks: **Fundamental Greek Grammar, 4th Revised Edition** (Concordia Publishing House, 2019)
- **Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th Edition (German Bible Society, 2012)**

In addition to the online course, residential Greek courses are offered in the summer term and fall semester. RAR students are encouraged to enroll in either the summer residential course or the fall online course because they are ineligible to take the fall residential course.

For more information about the Seminary’s Greek courses, contact Rev. Tom Schlund, admissions officer, at 314-505-7221 or [schlundt@csi.edu](mailto:schlundt@csi.edu). To request an application for online Greek, contact Gina Matzenbacher, administrative assistant in the Registrar’s office, at 314-505-7107 or [matzenbacherg@csi.edu](mailto:matzenbacherg@csi.edu).



## St. John the Baptist Welcomes Two Children Through Baptism



Two new Christians were received into faith on Palm Sunday at Saint John the Baptist Lutheran Church in Emporia VA. These young children were baptized into faith on Palm Sunday by Rev. Dennis Rhoads.

 Lutheran Church Extension Fund

## LCEF Announces Scholarship Opportunities



### Take Heart Scholarship



WIN A \$3,000 Scholarship



ENTER HERE  
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HURRY ENTER!  
By May 1, 2024

The Take Heart Scholarship was developed for Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) Y.I. Club World Changers, who are high school seniors and will soon advance to your next level of higher education. As you begin your new journey, LCEF's Young Investors Club wants to assist your transition by offering financial support through the Take Heart Scholarship with up to three awards \$3,000, \$1,000 and \$500. Visit [lcef.org/scholarship](https://lcef.org/scholarship) to learn more.



Lutheran Church Extension Fund  
> where investments build ministry



## Congregational Statistics Deadline Extended to

**April 30, 2024**

Your annual congregational statistics are due! The synod has extended the deadline to April 30, 2024.

We thank those in our District who have submitted their statistics - **over 40% of our Churches have submitted your statistics!** This is above the general Synod return rate.

The Synod is requesting 100% participation for the following reasons:

1. Because it is useful, especially now. We want to know how our congregations are doing and how best to work for their benefit and on their behalf.
2. Because we need to be able to contact leadership by up-to-date emails to facilitate their governance of their Synod. This was **demonstrated** to be of key importance in the recent congregational referendum and will be increasingly so as we move toward and through convention.
3. Because the Bylaws expect it (1.3.4.3) and require the Secretary (3.3.3.2 [e]), district presidents (4.4.8), and circuit visitors (5.2.3 [h]) to urge it, consistent with an objective of the original 1847 Constitution of the Synod (Ch. IV 13).
4. Because the practice goes hand in hand with good pastoral / congregational record-keeping in general. If this is being done, filing statistics shouldn't be hard. We are aware of serious shortcomings in this area in many parishes of the Synod. This needs to be addressed, and this is a start.



## Family Bible Journey Daily Podcasts

**The Family Bible Journey is a daily devotional podcast where listeners will learn how the real-life stories of God's relationship with His people encourage us today. We will be journaling through the Bible. For those willing to commit to leaving a legacy of faith by journaling through the Bible for themselves or a loved one, you will be equipped to journal through the Bible! Family Bible Journey notes will be highlighted. Prayers and blessings will be shared.**



Join the journey  
of journaling through the Bible.

If you would like to listen to the podcasts, go to

**[familybiblejourney.com](https://familybiblejourney.com)**

Thanks for listening!



## LWML SELC Convention

**Overnight room reservations must be made  
by Monday, April 8th**

The LWML SELC biennial convention is being held May 3 - 5, 2024 at Concordia Lutheran Church in Macungie, PA. The theme of the convention is **"Let Our Light Shine!"**. Please go to <https://lwmlselc.mystrikingly.com/> and click on Convention Central for more information and registration information.

The registration information is below. Please send in your registration form and fee by April 22nd to avoid late fees. The hotel for the Convention is the

Homewood Suites Allentown West, 7696 Industrial Blvd, Allentown, PA  
Call hotel directly at 610-336-4860 our group name is Lutheran Missionary or Group  
Code: 90S (NINE ZERO SIERRA)

Cutoff date is **April 8<sup>th</sup>** to receive the group rate of \$139 which includes breakfast.

## LWML Convention Ingathering

The LWML SELC Convention is supporting BrightHope through its ingathering efforts for the 2024 Convention. Below is information about BrightHope and the items they are asking for to support the work they are doing in the Lehigh Valley.



### Bright Hope Pregnancy Support Centers

Empowering women to choose life for their unborn children and an abundant life for their families. Our mission is to honor life and offer hope by providing pregnancy support services, resources and life skills education to women, men and youth.

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

John 10:10

Bright Hope has many things that they work on to support pregnant mothers and their babies. One of those is the Baby Boutique. They collect the following items.

**Top Needs** – wipes that are sensitive and unscented and **Diapers** – all sizes except 1 and 2. Size 6 are the biggest need.

**Formula** - Similac Total Comfort, Similac Advance, Similac Sensitive, Similac ProSensitive

**Baby Care Items** - Baby Wash, Baby towels and washcloths, Diaper bags, Sippy cups, Large baby bottles, and Crib sheets

**Clothing** – Only new clothing please

Boys and girls 0 – 3 months are a big need

Other sizes up to 2T

Walmart and Target gift registry information can be found here –

Walmart - <https://www.walmart.com/registry/rr/417C7EEC-47E2-4426-B4EA-0AE08F8F2FC3?action=SignIn&rm=false>

Target - <https://www.target.com/gift-registry/gift-giver?registryId=2b3fe938-8943-11eb-83ef-584f1851c994&type=BABY>

## BrightHope



### Prayer Requests

**Rev. Brian Roberts**, St. Luke's in Oviedo, FL is returns from Minnesota this week after receiving a feeding tube to help supplement his diet and assist with weight gain. Please pray for him as he returns to Florida to begin this next step in his recovery.

**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. Tom Soltis**, Parma, OH

**Rev. and Mrs. Kenneth Ballas**, Parma, OH. Please keep them in your prayers.

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

**Megan Skelton** in Oviedo, FL Please continue to pray for her and her doctors to find pain relief solutions for her jaw pain and severe headaches following her surgery.

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

**Laura Bergmann**, in Munster, IN, please pray for relief of her pain in her hands, feet, back, and legs.

*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.*



## Mark Your Calendars

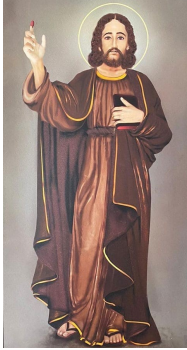
**April 23, 2024** - Call day at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis

**April 24, 2024** - Call day at Concordia Seminary in Fort Wayne

**April 30, 2024** - Annual Congregational Statistics are due

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





## Closing Thoughts

### Keeping the Feast Throughout the Easter Season and Beyond

Christ Is Still Risen! He Is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

Rev. Ken Ballas, EM

Why is it that on the octave (8<sup>th</sup> day) of Easter or annual "*Thomas Sunday*," this future apostle predictably either continues to get *bad press* or, believe it or not, become an almost *celebrated subject* of some oxymoronically fashionable *Christian doubt*? Prayerfully ponder with me a far more biblically probable *median position* regarding Thomas' having better than most *very good reason* for insisting on experiencing "up close and personal" his (and our) **WOUNDED AND, YES, RESURRECTED LORD**. Instead of only being known as "doubting Thomas," by the grace of God, history fondly remembers him especially in South India as courageously "**believing Thomas**" who was led to acknowledge by word and deed that "**without the shedding of innocent blood, there is no forgiveness of sins**" (Hebrews 9:22b).

In hearing anew the Gospel reading for this Easter 2 weekend (recorded only in John 20:19-31!), considering that because, ultimately, **it is only the Word of God that truly does the work of God** also in today's sin-sick, largely self-absorbed world, it naturally follows that a fundamental principal of biblical interpretation be that **Scripture is its own best interpreter**. Before listing a number of hopefully helpful passages for the mutual edification of those of us possessing sufficient spiritual stamina actually to look them up, some may find more conducive for meaningfully inductive self-discovery prior to any further individual or group devotional study to scan a Bible concordance for one's own conceivably relevant references to "**blood**."

Thus the elder apostle-evangelist, John (whose uniquely beautiful, sometimes enigmatic, Gospel narrative has convincingly been suggested as best being viewed "backwards" through the eyes of St. Thomas), mentions a number of strongly Christological citations or allusions to "water and blood" many of which arguably also reflect possible sacramental connotations in **John 1:29, 36; 2:19; 3:5; 6:55; 19:34; 1 John 1:1, 7b; 5:6, 8 and Revelation 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11**. Other passages worthy of consideration include Leviticus 17:14; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Isaiah 53:5d; Matthew 16:21; 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; John 1:14-**18**; 2:19-22; 3:16-17; 10:11-18; **11:25-26**; 14:5; 20:17; Acts 20:28; Romans 3:25; 5:9; **1 Corinthians 5:6-8**; 9:16-23; 10:16; 11:25-26; Ephesians 1:7; 2:13; Colossians 1:20; 2 Timothy 2:15; **Hebrews 9:12; 22b**; 10:22; 12:24; 13:12, 20-21; 1 Peter 1:2, 19. Of all our canonical biblical writings, none contains a more clearly stated purpose for its hearers/readers than these words from near the end of the fourth Gospel **of our mortally WOUNDED but now loving, ever-living omnipresent ascended LORD!**

Now Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of His student-disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may *continue to believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the messianic Son of God, and that, believing, you may have eternal life in His Name (John 20:30-31)



## **SELC District - A District Without Borders**

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

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Macungie, PA 18062  
610-965-3265

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