



# The Beacon Online

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

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## **SELCA 2025 District Convention**

The 2025 SELC District Convention is being held January 16 - 19, 2025 at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Lake Mary, Florida. The Convention begins with Opening Worship on Thursday evening at 7 PM, followed by a reception. Convention business will be conducted on Friday and Saturday. The Convention ends following worship on Sunday, January 19, 2025 at Holy Cross Lutheran Church. Registration information will be sent out soon. Look for more information next week.



We are looking for pictures from earlier conventions to feature in upcoming issues of the Beacon. If you have information about who is in the pictures, please include this information when sending the photos. Please email the photos to the District Office at [selc.lcms@gmail.com](mailto:selc.lcms@gmail.com). Pictured on the left is a picture from the 1937 SELC Convention held in Cudahy, WI.



## Rev. Allen Dass Ordained and Installed Zion Lutheran Church, Clark, NJ

Rev. Allen Dass was ordained into the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and installed as the Pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Clark, New Jersey on June 29, 2024.

SELC District President Vinovskis ordained Pastor Dass. Atlantic District President Dien Taylor was also present for the installation service. Rev. Josh Hollmann preached at the service. Several members of both the SELC District and the Atlantic District, where Pastor Dass' home church is located, participated in the service.

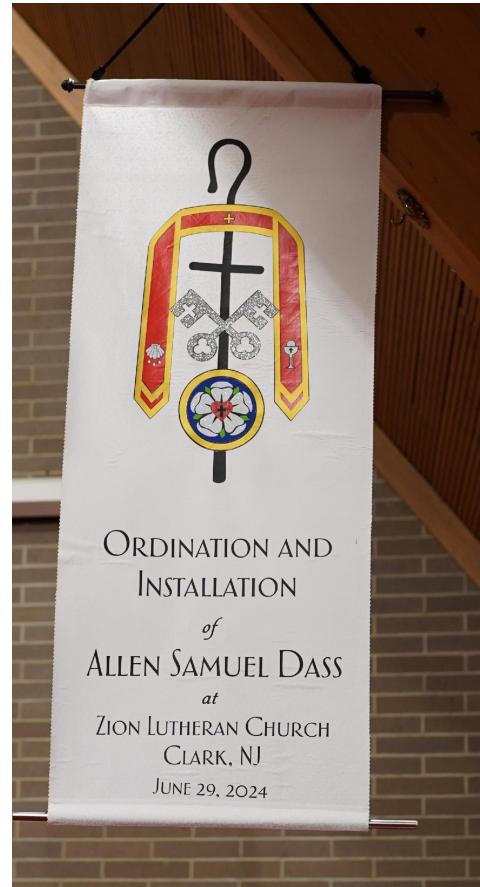


Pictured above left are President Vinovskis, Pastor Allen Dass, and Atlantic District President Dien Taylor. Pictured on the right above and the photo below is Pastor Dass being ordained by President Vinovskis.





Pictured above **Back row** left to right: Chaplain Greg Jans, Rev. Josh Hollmann, Rev. Andy Dzurovcik, Rev. Desmond Sulehdeo, Rev. Matthew Gonzalez, and Rev. Alan Mercer. **Front row** left to right: Rev. Derek Taylor, Rev. Chris Knepper, District President Vinovskis, Rev. Allen Dass, District President Dien Taylor, Rev. Johnson Rethinasamy, and Rev. Dan Berteau





Pictured above left is Rev. Josh Hollmann who preached at the service. Pictured above on the right is the Zion handbell choir.

**Welcome Pastor Dass!**



## **Biruk Chiksa Inducted as Vicar at St. Lucas St. Louis, MO**

St. Lucas welcomed Biruk Chiksa, wife Netsi, and children Soniel, Shalom and two-week-old Mary on Sunday June 30 as Biruk was inducted as vicar there. Biruk's family, originally from Ethiopia, were joined by members of the African community at the seminary—and even a guest that Biruk had invited, who had provided him a "Lyft," a number of months ago.

Pictured below is Biruk being inducted by Rev. Dr. Mark Larson as the Vicar at St. Lucas.





Pictured above is Biruk Chiksa and his family (right) and joined by guests from the seminary community.

**Welcome Vicar Chiksa!**



**Rev. Brett Witmer Installed  
Permanent Vacancy Pastor at Holy Cross  
Lutheran Church  
Johnstown, PA**

Rev. Brett Witmer was installed as Pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Lutheran Church, Central City, PA (Eastern District) and as the permanent Vacancy Pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Johnstown, PA (SELC District) on Sunday, June 30. Parishioners from both churches filled the sanctuary of Sts. Peter and Paul to receive His gifts and give thanks to the Lord of the Church for providing a shepherd to feed and care for them. Rev. Daniel Hahn, current First Vice President of the Eastern District and formerly Pastor of this dual parish and member of the SELC District, served as liturgist and officiant. Rev Christopher Antonelli, classmate of Rev. Witmer and Pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lockport, IL served as the preacher.

Pastor Witmer formerly served as Pastor of Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sutherland, IA and in addition to his seminary training has received the Certificate of Completion from the Apologetics Academy in Strasbourg, France. He is very glad to be back in Pennsylvania (only a few hours from his home church) and also excited about the ministry opportunities in that area.

## Welcome Pastor Witmer!



Pictured above are the Pastors from the Eastern, SELC, and Southeastern Districts who were a part of Pastor Witmer's installation service.

Pictured below on the left is Pastor Witmer with Pastor Jim Douthwaite, Eastern Circuit Visitor. Pictured on the left is Pastor Witmer with his SELC shirt.





## Family Bible Journey Podcast

For our Fourth of July podcast, we consider the lasting value of faith. As Americans, we cherish our freedoms as the key to our happiness. What about the role of faith? Listen at [familybiblejourney.com](http://familybiblejourney.com)!



Join the journey  
of journaling through the Bible.



## Rev. Kenneth Estes Ordained

Kenneth Estes was ordained as a Pastor in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod on Sunday, June 30, 2024 at Faith Viera Lutheran Church in Rockledge, Florida.

SELC District President Vinovskis ordained Rev. Estes at his home church Faith Viera. Rev. Estes will be installed at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Carol Stream, Illinois, a church in the Northern Illinois District, on July 21, 2024.



Pictured left to right  
back row: Rev. James  
Fernandez -Southern  
Circuit Visitor, Rev.  
John Elliott, Rev.  
Steven Holtman, and  
Rev. Peter Deterding  
Front row left to right:  
Rev. Dr. Wally Arp -  
SELC District 1st Vice  
President, Rev. Ron  
Meyr, Rev. Ken Estes,  
President Vinovskis,  
and Rev. Troy  
Countryman.



Pictured above from left to right are Rev. Ron Meyr, Rev. Ken Estes, Jen Estes, Dave Timmerman, former DCE at Faith Viera, and Rev. Troy Countryman



## Peace Lutheran Preschool Galloway, NJ

On Thursday, June 13, 2024 the Preschool celebrated the culmination of our 22nd year of Christ centered education as our director Miss Patti Wythe directed their 22 graduates in praising God through song and dance.



The Peace Preschool families were also treated to a spirit-filled performance by the Peace Lutheran Preschool Hand-bell Choir under the direction of Deaconess Helen DeMario.



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## Prayer Requests

**Rev. Brian Roberts**, St. Luke's in Oviedo, FL is back on Florida. Please pray for him to regain the weight he has lost and to regain his strength.

**Rev. Gary Schuschke**, who was discharged from the hospital in Germany and is now in rehab in Florida. Please pray as he works to regain his strength back following his illness.

**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.

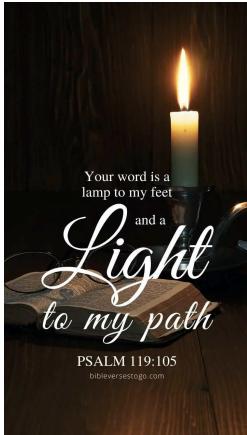
**Laura Bergmann**, Munster, IN, please pray for relief of her pain in her hands, feet, back, and legs.

**Deacon Jim Hurst**, Parma, OH who is recovering from foot surgery.

**Cheryl Poppe**, Grace Preschool in Lakewood, OH who is recovering from hip surgery.

**We ask for your prayers for the Mission trip that members of the SELC District are making to Latvia. There are people going from Concordia Macungie and St. Luke's in Oviedo, FL**

*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.*



## Closing Thoughts The 119th Psalm

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path

Rev. Ken Ballas, EM

These memorable words some of us may have learned already in Sunday School come from the longest chapter in the Bible, a remarkable *acrostic psalm* consisting of exactly 22 sets of 8 lines or verses, each set beginning with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Sadly, for whatever reason some of us rarely, if ever, spend God's gift of time in devotion reflecting on the poetic content of this inspired artistic gem (even if doing so entails more than one sitting!) thus missing out on possibly otherwise hidden scriptural blessings just waiting to be revealed especially to us Christian pilgrims during the second half of this fast fleeting year of grace 2024.

Those who *do* make an effort to pray **Psalm 119** in its entirety will immediately find a host of *synonyms* for the Hebrew term **Torah** or written Word of God or widely instructive law of God many of which also connote rich overtones of **Gospel comfort**. Speaking of God's Servant-Messiah as the "Word made flesh," the New Testament unavoidably *fixates* on our *singularly righteous Brother-Savior Jesus*. Because of Him Mosaic *commandments* and other obligatory *precepts* contextually converge with the Spirit's countless pan-biblical *assured promises* of needed forgiveness.

Thus our anonymous writer's repeated references to *statutes* and *testimonies* also call to mind for our gracious Lord's baptized believing *new covenant* Church familiar self-authenticating "**I AM's**" that the Messiah has indeed come in the person of His and Mary's Son. **Jesus Christ** is and forever remains this severely troubled world's only necessarily perfectly obedient "**Law-Keeper and Penalty-Payer**." As our innocently crucified and victoriously risen and, yes, also mercifully returning ever-living **Lord**, in the words of His post-ascension apostle Paul, He has become for each of us "our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption!" **To Him belongs the glory forever and ever!**



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

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2623 Brookside Road  
Macungie, PA 18062  
610-965-3265

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