



The Beacon Online

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

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SELC 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.

The due date for your congregation to submit your delegate information is **September 15, 2024** It is important that your Church Council or Church Board of Directors meet to identify potential people to fill the Lay Delegate role in your congregation. Once this is done, you will need to schedule a Voter's meeting ***in August, no later than September 8th***, to elect your lay delegate and lay alternate delegate and to get the paperwork submitted to Secretary Telloni by the due date of **September 15th**. At the Convention, the SELC District delegates to the National Convention in 2026 will be elected.

The delegate information will be in the mail by July 25, 2024.

It is important that before this meeting each congregation prayerfully seeks God's guidance in identifying individuals who might be asked to be your Lay Delegate and Alternate to our SELC District Convention in Florida in January 2025.

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

Pictured below is a picture from the 2004 National Convention with SELC delegates and friends of the SELC.



*Please continue to share pictures from previous Conventions
Thank You!*



**What is it Like Working at
Such a Large Church?
Vicar Rob Choate
St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Oviedo, FL**

"What is it like working at such a large church?" Early on in my vicarage this question was asked repeatedly by my classmates from the seminary who were all assigned various vicarages around our synod. In truth, I had nothing to compare it to because I had never worked at any other church before. The answer I always seemed to give back was, "Oh, it's just like any other church, just more volume of the same work." In every way it was a blessing to be able to do the work of a pastor with great scale, but

one task that I got to do a particularly large amount of was hospital visits and deathbed ministry. No other task shaped my vicarage more than bringing God's word and sacrament to His people who were ill and dying.

Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way they should go; even when they are old, they will not depart from it." You might be wondering how this verse ties together with my previous paragraph at all. Let me explain. When a vicar or pastor walks into a hospital or hospice room to give communion or commendation of the dying it is very common to encounter great sadness, anxiety, fear, dismay, or hopelessness. We see Dementia, Alzheimer's, or even in some cases an inability to do simple tasks like open your eyes and speak. It can be daunting to know that with the help of the Lord, you are competing with sin, death, and the devil's trump card every time you walk into those rooms. Typically these visits begin with some kind of a conversation with the person to see where they are mentally, but eventually we move into an abridged liturgy either to give communion or to begin commendation of the dying. In either case, faces are sometimes looking down and sullen. Sometimes there is great confusion as to who I am and what I am saying [either through the forces of mental disease or hearing loss from old age.] Other times I am simply speaking Scripture and prayers over an unresponsive person near death. It is generally an emotional task for a vicar or pastor, and it is never an easy one.

While these visits are difficult both for the pastor and the patient, I found a particular sense of wonder and amazement in the Lord every time we arrived at one particular part of the liturgy: The Lord's Prayer. Without fail, there was a physical and visual change in the person to whom I was speaking. Heads would rise, frowns would turn to smiles, confusion would return to order, and for a brief half a minute or so, the prayer that these patients had learned 70, 80, 90, or even 100 years earlier came to their mind. I had always heard that in cases of mental illness such as Alzheimer's that the last information to go is the first information put in. You would think eventually there would be a case where this did not happen, or that my wonder at the phenomenon would end, but neither happened. As the two of us sit together speaking God's perfect will for creation, in that moment, we were living in a small piece of eternal paradise. The concern over what is happening to their body flows away and is replaced by trust in our risen Savior and Lord. The confusion and lack of understanding quickly changes to perfect knowledge and understanding. The hearing loss that stood as a barrier between us evaporates as the patients know full well what the next lines are without my help. It is as if this prayer that they learned as children shook them from their slumber and gave their dry bones life.

The only time I walked into a room assuming this would not be the case was on a deathbed visit back in January. I had been told the woman I was visiting had not opened her eyes or spoken for a few days. That led me to believe she would not know anything of my presence in the room with her.. I couldn't have been more wrong or been delivered a greater joy than at that visit. As my wife, Alyssa (Deaconess Intern), and I spoke the commendation over this woman, we held her hand just to let her know she was loved even if she could not see us or hear us. We went through absolution, prayers, Psalms, all the while she lay listlessly and short of breath. Finally we got to the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father.." Suddenly I felt a jolt of life in the form of a tight squeeze on my hand that had not been there at any other point. Her mouth began to move, not speaking, but trying to pronounce the words she knew from her youth. This woman, even in her last moments, knew this prayer from when she was young, and now that she was as old as she would ever be, she knew that she was about to live out this prayer in perfection. God's kingdom had come for her, and she was about to be fully delivered from the forces of evil.



Pictured above is Vicar Rob Choate and his wife, Alyssa, who is a Deaconess Intern at St. Luke's. They both participated in the VBS program last month at St. Luke's.



As we as Christians go about teaching our children, the work can seem grueling and at times perhaps even fruitless. There are many DCE's, Pastors, Parents, Teachers, and Baptismal Sponsors who have toiled away with children they love, desperately trying to teach uninterested or rambunctious children God's promises and His will for our world. Let me tell you resoundingly that your work is never without fruit. Your steadfast work makes all the difference in Heaven and on Earth. By the promise of the Holy Spirit working in us through baptism, and by your training up of the saints in the way they should go, one day your beloved child or student will be blessed enough to suddenly squeeze the hand of some vicar who walks into their room to commend them to the Lord. And even greater than that, due to your training and the Holy Spirit, we will all be together in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come in perfection with Jesus.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. On earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever, Amen.



Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod and Lutheran Church-Canada Meet

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) and the Lutheran Church-Canada (LCC) met in late June in Toronto, Canada. The two non-geographical districts of the LCMS, the SELC and the English District, both attended the meeting along with leaders of both the Missouri Synod and Canada. President Vinovskis and Pastor Charles St-Onge (second from the right photo next page), Pastor at Ascension Lutheran Church in Montreal, represented the SELC District.



Resurrection Lutheran Church Celebrates and Give Thanks for Rev. Pflughoeft

Crown Point, IN

Resurrection, Crown Point, IN celebrated the 4th Retirement of Rev. Mark Pflughoeft and his wife Susie on Sunday, June 30th. Pastor Pflughoeft has served the congregation for 7 months, six of those months as Vacancy Pastor. After prayerful consideration Pastor declined our Call but offered to serve as Vacancy Pastor through June - just after his birthday. He had promised Susie that after his 80th birthday they would travel in retirement visiting family and friends across the US and Canada!

We give thanks to God for Pastor Pflughoeft's extended ministry with us, his excellent references to Biblical translations from Greek to English throughout the Service and Bible study, as well as his leadership in developing our prayer and outreach programs.



The Fellowship luncheon allowed all to express their thanks and to share stories and vacation plans. Council President Larry Ladner (right) expressed our thanks to Pastor Pflughoeft and Susie, presented a gift from the congregation, and read a letter from one of their three sons, a Pastor in Wyoming. The family laughs and doubts that their parents are capable of retiring, expressed their love, and concluded with a heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving for their parents love and their blessed extended ministry in so many places as Pastor, Interim Pastor, and Vacancy Pastor. All in attendance joined in a rousing "Amen!"





Although “retired again!” Pastor Pflughoeft has committed to serve Resurrection as Visitation Pastor after keeping his promise to Susie. Like our Lord, Susie and Pastor Pflughoeft (above right) have become our Friend(s) for Life and we will welcome them home.



Redeeming Life's Maternity House HOME Opens!

We joyfully announce that Redeeming Life’s new maternity house in East Dundee, IL welcomed our first resident this week! Our direct care ministry to moms in crisis pregnancies has officially begun, and with that, our maternity house has truly become a HOME.

Thanks to you and your prayers, your support and your hands-on help, we are now able to impact lives here in Illinois. Praise God for your partnership!

Throughout the past few years, from the inception of this dream to open a maternity home in the Northern Illinois District to today, we have met challenges. The Life Task Force first envisioned having a maternity home ministry, then partnered with Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries. After the first two locations didn't work out, the East Dundee site was secured! Delays and renovation surprises presented many challenges. Through it all, God’s people prayed for this mission, that God would grant us faith despite the obstacles.

Dear friends, our great God answered our prayers. Our first resident...*is named Faith*. This detail delights us and fills us with awe, along with a few tears of joy. God has answered the prayers of so many with the creation of this ministry. We trust He will continue to provide as we seek to share His love and grace with women and babies in crisis.

Please keep Faith and our residents and staff in your prayers as we share a home, help and hope in Jesus in partnership with you!

Praising God!
Sheryl DeWitt
Executive Director, Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries

[Your support keeps us strong to serve!](#)



Family Bible Journey Podcast

How does love fulfill the law? We reflect on this important question of faith this week.

Listen at familybiblejourney.com!



Join the journey
of journaling through the Bible.



Carol Martin - Called to Her Heavenly Home

Carol Martin, a member of Calvary Lutheran Church in Parma, Ohio passed away on June 26, 2024. She was preceded in death by her husband Dick in 2020. They were married for 63 years. She is survived by her daughters Katy Zetwick and Allison Eaton and son Rick Martin and her 5 grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at 10:00am on Thursday, July 18, 2024, at Calvary Lutheran Church, 6906 W. Pleasant Valley Rd., Parma, OH 44129. The link to her obituary can be found by [clicking here](#).



Registration Opens for October Lay Bible Institute Workshop Will Focus on Mental Health

Registration is now open for the **Oct. 5 Lay Bible Institute**, "Christian Caregiving for People Suffering with Depression and Anxiety."

Participants will come away with practical skills drawn from the Christian tradition of providing care and comfort to those in mental distress through the use of scriptural teachings and insights from Martin Luther.

"The struggle of mental illness, in its various forms, has been with us for centuries.

Christians are, of course, not immune from it, and many of us have known its suffering. Recent research is showing that wise teachers of the past knew something about this, which today has been largely forgotten: Mental illness involves more than just the mind. It is also physical and, very importantly, spiritual,” said **Dr. Stephen Pietsch**, associate professor of Practical Theology. “Christian soul care teachers of the past can help us cope with issues like depression and anxiety from within the counsel of God and His Word. Our whole life, including our mental health, is held in His care, and there is strength, joy and hope in Jesus Christ, the great physician and comforter of souls.”

Open to anyone interested in the study of Scripture and proclamation of the Gospel, the workshop will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 5 in Sieck Hall 202 on campus, 801 Seminary Place, St. Louis, MO 63105. The **registration** deadline is Sept. 23. Cost is \$20 per person (free for Seminary students) or \$35 with lunch.

The Seminary’s Lay Bible Institute, offered three times a year and led by faculty members, is an ongoing study of the Bible and how it relates to today’s life and events.

For more information or to register, visit csl.edu/lbi or contact Continuing Education at 314-505-7286 or ce@csl.edu.



Mission Trip to Latvia

Concordia Lutheran Church in Macungie, PA and St. Luke's Lutheran Church and School in Oviedo, FL have sent 13 missionaries to Latvia. They left the U.S. on July 4th and will return in mid-July. Six people are traveling from Concordia and 7 from St. Luke's. The mission is to work with the English camp for the members of the Sloka, Latvia community. The camp is hosted by our partner church, Sloka Lutheran.

We ask for your prayers for their protection and safety, their health, and for the families of the missionaries on this trip and around the world.

Pictured right is everyone at a dinner in Latvia.





Pictured above in the two pictures are the six team members from Concordia Macungie.



Pictured above from left to right is the team from St. Luke's: Michael and Pam Eatmon, Esther Edwards, John and Anita Glanzer, Becky (Roberts) Pelušķēvičs, Elizabeth Roberts and Ruth Roberts. St. Luke's has a decade long relationship with the Sloka congregation. Pastor Roberts' daughter, Becky, pictured with the team, is married to a member of the congregation and lives there with her husband.



SELC Youth Group on Facebook

The SELC Youth has a Facebook page. Join the group by [clicking here](#) This will help you keep up-to-date with the plans for the 2025 Youth Gathering in New Orleans, LA and much more!



Saint Athanasius Youth Attend *Who Am I?* Higher Things Conference at Concordia University, Wisconsin

Two Divine Services. Two Matins. Two Vespers. Three Evening Prayers. Three Compline. Four Plenaries. Five Breakaways. And twelve Saint Athanasius youth joined over a thousand other youth from coast to coast and the northern border to the southern border to consider *Who Am I?* That I am not who the world says I am, nor who I say I am, but who God says I am! That I am His baptized child, chosen and precious. That's my identity.

In talking with the youth, highlights included Flame (pictured on the next page) as one of the plenary speakers, breakaways on topics of interest to them, free time activities in the evenings, but especially the worship in a jam packed Chapel of the Resurrection. One youth said, "It seemed like we were back there every two hours to gather for the Word of God! But it was great - especially singing the hymns." Of six first-time attendees, all six can't wait to go again next year, when the theme will be *All Things New*. There will be three conferences again next summer, including one out east, at UMass-Amherst. For more information, go to higherthings.org.

Below is the group from St. Athanasius who attended the Higher Things Conference.





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Scholarship Funds are Available

The Student Financial Aid Committee was organized by the SELC District to assist young men and women preparing for full-time professional ministry or church work within the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. This includes deaconess, lay ministry programs, as well as clergy preparation. Professional church workers who are working toward advanced degrees are not eligible for aid from the SELC District Student Aid Committee. Please see the SELC website for an application and more information by going to this link - <https://selc.lcms.org/docs/> and choose Resources, Documents, Student Aid.

To access the application, please [click here](#)



LWML Monthly Bible Study

The July monthly Bible study session is on July 18th at 10:30 AM. It will be based on "Giving and Receiving", the last article in the spring magazine.

Each month, the Bible Study is held on the third Thursday of each month at 10:30 AM Eastern time. You can Zoom or come in person at Christ the King Lutheran Church of Lodi, 8080 Lafayette Road, Lodi, OH 44254

Please click on the link below and then enter the password when prompted.

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84746607019?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84746607019?pwd=V2t5a1BPQjFnUzJGRzRiS1ZVVVJsQT09)

[pwd=V2t5a1BPQjFnUzJGRzRiS1ZVVVJsQT09](#)



Prayer Requests

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.

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.

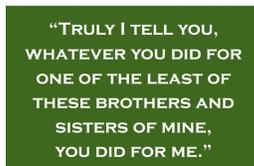
Megan Skelton in Oviedo, FL Please continue to pray for her and her doctors to find pain relief solutions for her jaw pain and severe headaches following her surgery.

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.



Closing Thoughts Understanding Our Blessed Savior's Final Judgment

Rev. Ken Ballas, EM

Week after week redeemed members of God's worshiping family of baptized believers confess that our living Lord Jesus Christ will come again as Judge. How are we forgiven sinner-saints to understand these sobering words of our victorious merciful Savior?

Still *surprising* at times, closing verses of **Matthew 25** (more than a "job description" for 21st century student-disciples) describe our privileged positive involvement with known or unknown needy neighbors regarded by our gracious Triune God as being no different from reflecting professed devotion to the Savior Himself saying in effect, "Inasmuch as you have shown tangible Christ-like compassion to the least of His hungry, clothe less, sick or even imprisoned brother-strangers, you have done it to God's incarnate Son!" (Matthew 25:40).

Moreover, one should not fail to notice the *strategic positioning* of this essential teaching by our sinless Brother-Savior immediately before the last chapters of that same evangelist's Gospel record of our Messianic Servant-Christ's intensely physical and spiritual passion, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection, ascension and promised glorious return.

May you also find it helpful prayerfully to consult the New Testament *epistles* (some of which were written even a few years *earlier than* our four canonical Gospels) including James 1:26-27; 2:1ff.; 4:17; 5:7-8 or Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15; 9:22b; 10:18; 13:14 and 20-21 as well as John 5:24, 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Romans 5:1 and 8:1ff. from which generations of believing sinners have been relieved to learn that there is a sense in which we have all **already been judged in mercy** as there is **no condemnation** or "guilty verdict" awaiting those whose baptismal faith is firmly grounded in Christ Jesus! Thank You, Jesus!



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

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