



The Beacon Online

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

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Rev. Dr. Wally Arp Retires from St. Luke's Lutheran Church

Rev. Dr. Wally Arp retired from Active service on Sunday, March 2, 2025. He preached at the Sunday services. Following the 11 AM service, there was a celebration of Pastor Arp with his family, friends, Church members and Lutheran Haven residents.

Pastor Arp served at St. Luke's as a Vicar from 1986 - 1987. He then served in Davenport, Iowa for 10 years prior to returning to St. Luke's for 27 years as a Pastor in both the Associate and Senior Pastor roles. He was instrumental in growing the congregation at St. Luke's and also is active on Lutheran Haven Board of Directors. He is the SELC District's First Vice President. We congratulate Pastor Arp and pray for a safe and healthy retirement for the Arp family as they begin the next phase of their life's journey. Pictured on the right are Pastor Arp and his wife Lois.





Pictured above from left to right: Vicar Edward Krez, Rev. Scott Coerber, Senior Pastor Rev. Dr. Tige Culbertson, Rev. Dr. Wally Arp, Rev. Brian Roberts, President Wally Vinovskis, Rev. John Elliott, and Rev. Sam Shick.

President Vinovskis spoke at the ceremony honoring Pastor Arp. As the celebration was on the same day at the Academy Awards, President Vinovskis honored Pastor Arp with the ***Academy of Motion Pastor Arp and Sciences Award for Best Pastor***. The award included:

Best Sermon Delivery

Recognizing the pastor who delivers a sermon with exceptional clarity, passion, and engagement, effectively communicating the Gospel message to the congregation.

Outstanding Leadership in Ministry

Awarded to the pastor who demonstrates exemplary leadership, fostering spiritual growth and unity within their church and community.

Best Use of Scripture

Honoring the pastor who artfully incorporates Scripture into their teachings and sermons, providing deep theological insight while making it applicable to everyday life.

Excellence in Teaching the Faith

Celebrating the pastor who goes above and beyond to use images, wooden blocks and other innovative instructional aids in teaching the faith to youth and adults.

Outstanding Supervision of Vicars, Interns and Staff

Acknowledging the pastor who effectively teaches, leads, models and inspires student pastors, toward faithful, effective and long-term service to the church.

Best Pastoral Care/Counseling

Awarded to the pastor who exemplifies compassionate pastoral care, offering support and counseling guidance to individuals and families during times of crisis.

Mission Promotion Award

Recognizing the pastor who recognizes that mission happens outside of the doors of the church, and equips and engages staff and volunteers to embrace mission challenges throughout their community and around the world.

Champion of the Church-at-Large

This award honors the pastor who effectively balances their parish ministry with service to the District and Synod including fostering Synod-wide communication and cooperation, preparing a New Catechism, serving the SELC District and the Lutheran Haven.

Lifetime Achievement in Ministry

Celebrating a pastor with a long and impactful ministry, leaving a lasting legacy through their dedication to serving God and the church over the years.

Pictured below is President Vinovskis reading the award to Pastor Arp with two of Pastor Arp's grandchildren, Grace and Joshua who announced his win and presented him the award.





Coming Together as One – February 23, 2025

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in Unity!" Psalm 133:1

It was a great day! Pastor Brady Retzlaff chose the theme – *Unity*. After several years of working together, Pentecost Lutheran Church and Living Hope Lutheran Church officially became one congregation. The Living Hope congregation had been worshipping at Racine Lutheran High School. Pastor Brady Retzlaff and Pastor Karl Luchterhand had been sharing vacancy duties after Pentecost's pastor, Rev. Luke Jacob, took a call to Kansas. As Pastor and Karen Luchterhand were preparing to move to Tennessee, Pentecost extended an invitation for Living Hope to begin worshipping at Pentecost in September 2022. This was a good fit, as the Living Hope service was later in the morning and was a more contemporary style of worship. At this time Pastor Brady became Pentecost's full-time vacancy pastor, and he would not have to go back and forth between two sites on Sunday mornings.

In December 2022, Pentecost voted to put their traditional call process on hold, and instead, pursue the possibility of working together with Living Hope. Pentecost changed their service time from 9:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. beginning in January 2023 in order to provide more time for Sunday School and Bible Class between services. The two congregations' boards met for several months to share information and identify the things that were most important to them if they were to combine.

In October 2023, Pentecost officially extended a call to Pastor Brady to become their next pastor. He was installed in February of 2024, but the two congregations still needed to wait to officially combine due to a land contract coming due in January of 2025.



On February 23, 2025, we celebrated the two congregations becoming one in a combined service featuring both styles of worship. The choir sang "Walk with us Lord", and the service included many instrumentalists including organ, keyboard, trumpets, trombone, clarinets, and flutes. The service was live-streamed for those who could not attend. A congregational photo was taken (photo above), and we enjoyed cake and coffee in the fellowship hall after the service.

We are thankful for the patience and perseverance of the members of Pentecost and Living Hope, and for the guidance our districts provided through this process, especially

circuit visitor Pastor Carl Krueger, District President Pastor Wally Vinovskis, and former English District President Bishop Jamison Hardy. We look forward to reaching even more members of our community now that we have an early and a late service on Sunday, and two different styles of worship.



Pictured above on the left is the post worship celebration. Pictured above right is Katy Wagner preparing to cut the cake.

Pictured below is the choir preparing to sing "Walk With Us Lord".





Youth Worship Night at Zion Lutheran Church

Zion Lutheran Church in Clark New Jersey will be hosting our youth worship night in collaboration with "The Disciples Band" (band of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Whitestone- Atlantic District). This will include contemporary music, devotional, prayer and fellowship. You are welcome to attend. Please see below for more information.

THE DISCIPLES

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH & PRESCHOOL

YOUTH WORSHIP NIGHT

THEME : FRIENDSHIP

Friday, March 21 2025 @ 7pm EST
Zion Lutheran Church
559 Raritan Rd, Clark, NJ 07066
Open to all Junior High and up
Refreshments & Fellowship after!

IF YOU CANNOT MAKE IT, WATCH US LIVE !!
WWW.YOUTUBE.COM - ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH CLARK

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ZIONLUTHERANCLARKNJ
WWW. ZIONLUTHERANCLARK.ORG

@THEDISCIPLES7
@THE_DISCIPLES7
@THEDISCIPLES7
@THEDISCIPLESBAND7



Rev. Jon Carpenter Installation March 8, 2025

Rev. Jon Carpenter has accepted a call to be the Pastor at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Norton, Ohio. Pastor Carpenter will be installed at 11:00 AM on March 8th at St. Matthew Lutheran Church.



St. Luke's Middle School Service Day Oviedo, Florida

Middle School Service Day at St. Luke's was more than just a day of volunteering—it was a powerful experience of living out God's love through action. We are so proud of our students for their servant hearts and willingness to step up and serve others with compassion and kindness.

Pictured on the top right are the students at **Second Harvest Food Bank** where they packed **Snack Packs** for food-insecure children.

Pictured below on the right at **United Against Poverty** – the students stocked and cleaned shelves to support families in need at the Grocery & Thrift Store.





Pictured above on the top are students at **Lutheran Haven** where they played games, created sidewalk chalk art, and brightened residents' day.

Preschool Buddies – The students had so much fun as they helped our littlest learners with activities and classroom fun.

The students also visited the **GO Baby Project** – Built a custom ride-on car for a young child with disabilities.

We are so proud of our students for serving with joy, compassion, and faith. Together, we are making a difference—one act of kindness at a time!



Monthly Zoom Bible Study to be Held March 20th at 10:30 AM Eastern

The third Thursday of each month
10:30 am EST

Zoom or in person at Christ the King Lutheran Church of Lodi, 8080 Lafayette Road,
Lodi, OH 44254

LWML Woman's Bible Study - Thursday, March 20th at 10:30 am EST and this month is
"God Sees Our Story - Therefore Rejoice!" the second one in the Winter edition of the
LWQ on pages 18-19.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/>

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

Greece 2025 Trip June 21 - 28, 2025 Optional cruise June 27 - July 1

Want to go to Greece this summer on a
Journeys of Saint Paul tour? It's not too late to
register for our trip! Feel free to join our Zoom
on [March 31st at 8:00 PM EST](#) to learn more.
You can also check out our brochure at [https://
www.eo.travelwithus.com/tours/
pa25062125a52755#eotours](https://www.eo.travelwithus.com/tours/pa25062125a52755#eotours)
Email pastorlepley@gmail.com if you'd like to
be added to our mailing list for future meetings,
or for help registering for our trip!

The link to the call on March 31st is [https://
zoom.us/j/94251886443](https://zoom.us/j/94251886443)

www.EO.travel Trip: Tour = PA25 Date = 062125 Code = A ID = 52755

Join Rev. Daniel and Wendi Lepley
**JOURNEYS OF PAUL IN
GREECE**
June 21 - 28, 2025

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St. Luke's Travel Group 2025

The St. Luke's travel group led by the Lois and Pastor Wally Arp, is excited to announce "Highlights of Norway and Sweden" *including visits to* Bergen, Sognefjord Cruise, Lillehammer, Oslo, Stockholm and more! Twelve days, July 5-16, 2025. [View the brochure](#). Email tour or travel questions to: Travel@SLLCS.org



Highlights of Norway and Sweden

including visits to: Bergen, Sognefjord Cruise, Lillehammer, Oslo, Stockholm and more!

12 Days ~ July 5 - 16, 2025

Tour Coordinators -

Rev. Dr. Wally & Lois Arp / Debbie & John Shahinian

Email tour or travel questions to: travel@SLLCS.org

St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Oviedo, Florida



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Prayer Requests

The family of **Rev. Dr. Robert Kuhn**, who was called to glory on March 1, 2025. He was a resident at Lutheran Haven. His funeral service will be March 14th at 11 AM at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Oviedo, Florida where he was a member.

Rev. Brian Roberts, Orlando, FL. Please pray for him as he is working to regain the weight he has lost and to regain his strength as he faces continued health struggles.

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. Tom Soltis, Parma, OH for God's loving care.

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

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

Rev. Kevin Duff, Hilton Head, SC, who is recovering from brain surgery. Please pray for his wife, his young family, and his caregivers as they determine his plan of care.

Rev. Stephen Bocklage, Bel Air, MD, who is recovering from a fall. Please pray for his healing and recovery.

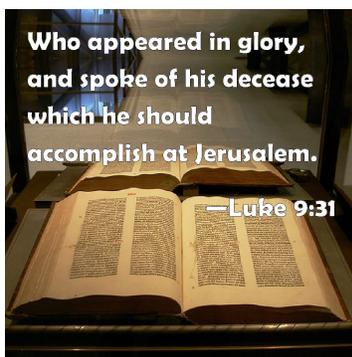
Megan Skelton in Oviedo, FL Please continue to pray for her and her doctors to find pain relief solutions for her jaw pain and severe headaches following her surgery.

Laura Bergmann, Munster, IN, please pray for her as she injured her knee and is receiving inpatient treatment to help with her recovery.

Nita Huffines, St. Louis, MO, wife of Rev. Warren Huffines who is five-year survivor of colon cancer, has begun a new round of treatments. Please pray for her as she receives her treatment.

Daniel McLean, Oviedo, FL, who has stage 4 cancer and is receiving treatment. Please keep him his wife Emily, Deaconess at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Oviedo, and their children in your prayers.

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.



Closing Thoughts A Few Things We May All Still Not Be Too Old To Learn

Rev. Ken Ballas, EM

Why Epiphany remains a "fitting bridge" between Christmas and the Lenten/Easter season

Wise indeed were framers of the Christian Church Year calendar in connecting the Advent-Christmas and Lenten-Easter seasons by noteworthy Epiphany "seasonal bookends" consisting of our perfectly holy Brother-Savior voluntarily chosen servant-baptism and brief but glorious transfiguration. Appointed three-year cycle readings for each of these hardly *insignificant* "minor festivals" feature the approving voice of God the Father prior to continuation of the **earthly redemptive mission** of His incarnate Son's *liberating exodus* at Calvary and beyond (Luke 9:31).

These words of Israel's priestly prophetic Law-giver Moses remain endlessly timeless:

Moses said, "The Lord your God will send you a prophet like me from your own people, and you are to obey Him." (Deuteronomy 18:15, TEV Good News Bible translation; also note Matthew 17; Mark 9; Luke 9; John 1:14-18; Acts 3:22f. 7:37; 2 Peter 1:15ff.)

Except perhaps for taking a few moments to pray for residents of Bible lands or any other part of today's tragically divided war-torn world, God's worshiping redeemed children need to maximize the precious gift of time we spend together by assiduously avoiding to speculate over peripheral textual considerations of our Lord's New

Testament transfiguration accounts (however "interesting" they may be) lest we become "side-tracked" from sharing what ought to be our Church's carefully prepared weekly public proclamation and core teaching.

Thus such matters as the precise identity of the designated mountain (Syria's often snow-capped Mt. Hermon range or Galilee's much smaller Mt. Tabor) site of Christ's transfiguration, Peter's divinely-interrupted suggestion about constructing three temporary shelters, or relating our own spiritual "mountain-top experiences" completely miss the point of obediently heeding the Father's crystal clear injunction to **KEEP ON LISTENING TO JESUS!**

Wise also was a seminary professor who consistently lovingly cautioned his students to resist the unfortunately common temptation of what was aptly termed "moralizing" on familiar Gospel texts by failing to engage in meaningfully pastoral study or scholarship that was not predominately soteriological Christological or people-centered.

Just as Jesus was not a Second Moses Law-giver (and Moses not a First Christ), Jesus is our representative Law-keeper! Because it remains essential that Christians obediently keep on listening to Jesus, what did Jesus say? To summarize numerous Gospel references: "I, the messianic Son of Man, must go to Jerusalem freely to offer My life as a Ransom or Atoning Sacrifice for *many* (meaning all) and rise again (not from a chair or sick bed but from the dead!)" Disciple. Baptize. Teach and preach. "Take, eat; this is My body; drink My blood for the forgiveness of all your sins!" Repent and believe! Forgive! Believe God's Good News! **Amen!**



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

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