



The Beacon Online

March 21, 2025/ Vol. 6 / No. 11

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

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Rev. Jon Carpenter Installed on March 8, 2025

Rev. Jon Carpenter was installed as the Pastor at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Norton, Ohio. He previously served as the Associate Pastor at St. John Lutheran Church in Massillon, Ohio. He was installed by SELC District 2nd Vice President Rev. Dr. Christopher Cahill. Rev. John Telloni from St. John in Massillon gave the sermon at the service. After the installation the celebration continued with a luncheon.



Pictured above from left to right include Rev. Dan Esala, who served for 11 months as the Vacancy Pastor at St. Matthew, Rev. John Telloni, Rev. Jon Carpenter, Rev. Dr. Christopher Cahill, Rev. George Hansell, and Rev. Jacob Deal.



Pictured on the left is the Carpenter family.

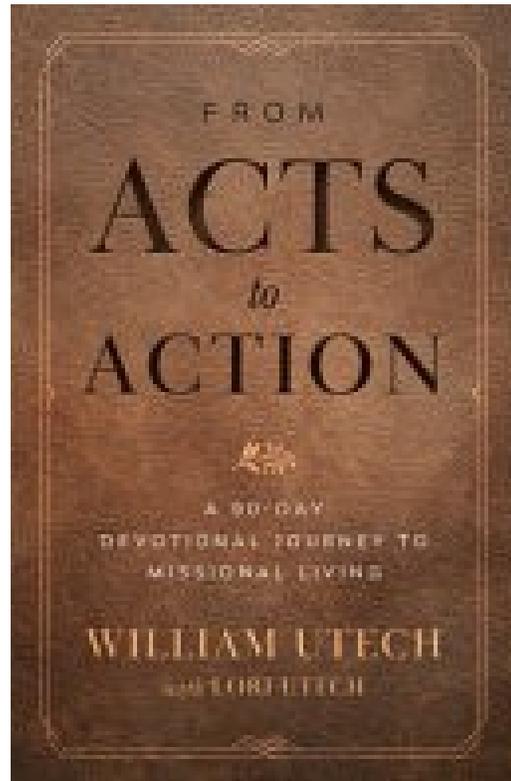


Rev. Dr. William Utech Authors "From Acts to Action"

Rev. Dr. William Utech has authored a book entitled "From Acts to Action". Dr. Utech was the speaker at our District convention this year.

Are my faith and my local church still relevant? The answer is a resounding, "YES!" But only the Word of God, and especially that Word as it come to us in the Acts of the Apostles, can make it so. This 90-Day devotional journey leads readers on a guided tour of the entire Book of Acts to see and learn anew how God is always working through His people, His leaders, and His local congregations to grow His kingdom. The first century church changed the world for the better. The Lord of the church wants to use you and your 21st century congregation to do the same.

The book is available on Amazon - [Click Here](#) to order the book.





Common Life

A Young Adult Apprenticeship Program

The Central Florida Cross Network (Holy Cross Lake Mary, Resurrection Church, The Cross Orlando) is looking to launch a young adult apprenticeship program called Common Life. This program is focused on high school graduates and college-aged students between the ages of 18-21. The desire is to help develop the skill of living a common life, which is built on Luther's theology of vocation and the approach to discipleship: *Meditatio, Oratio, Tentatio*. The program will include a weekly meal, congregational commitment, community service, a vocational mentor, and Biblical instruction. As the Network continues to develop this program, they would love to get some feedback from parents in your congregations. Please help them by sharing the parent survey that they have included [HERE](#).

Why?

High School Graduates deserve every resource the church can offer them as they set out on their own and begin to build a life under the Reign of God. There are a subset of High School Graduates who desire, whether during a gap year or early in their college life, to explore deeply the resources of the church to understand living vocationally in the world. Our Lutheran churches have a deep well of wisdom on vocational theology as well as a deep bench of saints who have learned from experience how to navigate the world's challenges faithfully.

How?

Experience processed alongside theological education in the context of committed community will be the best teacher. Common Life will endeavor to cultivate community amongst a select group of High School graduates over a nine-month period through weekly group study, structured volunteer expectations, curated mentor relationships, a retreat and a mission trip. Through this mix of theological/biblical study, real life experience and wisdom from experienced practitioners of everyday faith, Common Life will equip young people to live under the Reign of God in a world that doesn't recognize His authority.

What?

Common Life will be an apprenticeship program run in Central Florida for 8-12 high school graduates and college students aged 18-21 over the course of one school year. The graduates are apprenticing to develop the skill of living a common life, built on Luther's theology of vocation and the approach to discipleship: *Meditatio, Oratio, Tentatio*. Costs to the apprentices will be minimal, just enough to cover costs including a paid facilitator/leader. It will be facilitated by the Central Florida Cross Network, but could be executed in collaboration with the Circuit or District.

Weekly Meal/Study

Common Life will program a weekly meal. So much happens when people eat good food around the same table. It is anticipated this will be the most formative aspect of the experience. In addition, Common Life will curate a calendar of topics and expert teachers from local clergy and professionals teaching theological principles, spiritual practices and core exegetical concepts.

Congregational Commitment

In conversation with the apprentice Common Life will pair them with a congregation for

the year. The congregation will assign a point of contact and a specific volunteer responsibility for the apprentice for the length of their participation in the program. A large part of living under the Reign of God is connection to the church. With this connection each apprentice will learn habits of meaningful involvement with their local church.

Service Commitment

In conversation with the apprentice, Common Life will pair them with a local service organization. A large part of living under the Reign of God is meaningful service to their community. With specific volunteer expectations and responsibilities for the length of the program the apprentice will learn habits and challenges of volunteer work.

Vocational Mentor

As part of their application, apprentices will indicate a field of work to which they aspire. Utilizing networks from churches in Central Florida, Common Life will pair them with individuals of faith that are familiar with that field. Mentors and apprentices will determine the most helpful support together. It could be as formal as an internship, or as casual as regular coffee.

Topics for Instruction

Common Life apprentices will study different topics throughout their year. These topics will be foundational to their understanding of scripture and the growing of their faith. These topics include; Lutheran Theology 101, Applying Scripture to daily life, perception of the suffering servant, and living out faith in the world.



Lutheran Haven Ladies Create Beanies for Newborns and Kids with Cancer



It is truly amazing how many people at the Haven serve others in our community in the sweetest ways that will just make you smile! Sharon White (pictured right at a labor and delivery unit at a local hospital) founded her crochet and knitting group called "Beanies for Babies and Cancer Kids" group 2 years ago. She regularly gathers with a group of ladies (bottom right) to create these mini masterpieces of love and warmth for Oviedo's newborns and kids with cancer. Sharon supplies all her wonderful volunteers with crochet hooks, yarn and beanie instructions thanks to Thrivent and a very generous donor. She alone crafts at least one hat per day and her total has surpassed 2,000 hats! With her group of ladies, that total has more than doubled! Hats are off to you Sharon and your amazing group of Haven ladies!





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> 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>

www.EO.traveltrip Year = PA25 Date = 9/2/25 Code = A ID = 02195

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

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Prayer Requests

Rev. Brian Roberts, Orlando, FL. Please pray for him as he is regaining the weight he has lost and works to regain his strength and stamina.

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.

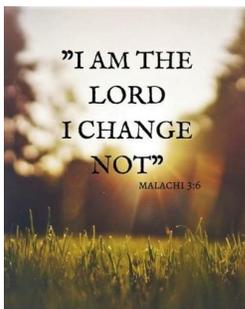
Megan Skelton in Oviedo, FL Please continue to pray for her and her doctors to find pain relief solutions for her jaw pain and severe headaches following her surgery.

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
Immutability: A Seldom Discussed Most
Helpful Attribute of Our Triune Go
“I am the Lord; I change not.”
(Malachi 3:6a)

Rev. Ken Ballas, EM

At first glance the above words and passages like Jonah 3:10 seem contradictory as we are told that God “*changed His mind*” regarding His punishing the notoriously cruel Assyrian Ninevites. Our eternal Triune God is not only *just* or *holy* on Monday and *kind* and *merciful* on Tuesday but **consistently at all times all** He claims to be or ever was (as it is *we people* who are *inconsistently* both righteous and sinful).

Seemingly “illogical” perhaps (yet intensely *theological!*), is the pan-biblical doctrine of justification of salvation by grace alone through faith (cf. a *third* so-called Old Testament *minor prophet's* cautionary words of warning originally addressed to God's ancient covenant people Israel's impending invasion by the Chaldean armies (Habakkuk 1:5; 2:4) later *reapplied* as **Gospel comfort** to His New Testament covenant people (Isaiah 55; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; **Acts 13:38-41**; Romans 1:17; Ephesians 2:8-9).

Because of His sinless incarnate Son, God has already redeemed an otherwise lost and fallen world that could never begin to save itself as the good we manage to accomplish today in no way atones for our tragic misdeeds of yesterday but is only what our Heavenly Father has a perfect right to expect of us sometimes ungrateful blatantly rebellious earthly children. Christ Jesus remains our loving brightly shining Morning Star because of whom we now have no reason to fear asking any questions or acting like mythical ostriches burying their head in the sand with no possibility of spiritual suffocation.

Living under a constricting “law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not” (Daniel 6:8, 15, KJV) must have been an extremely potentially unsettling experience. Fortunately for us today inspired hymn writers have long since been moved to give verbal expression to such memorable poetic verse as we can now confidently and joyfully sing together, **“O Thou who changest not, abide with me!”** Thank You, holy Jesus!



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

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