



# The Beacon Online

September 12, 2025/ Vol. 6 / No. 36

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

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## Pastor Accepts Call to St. Paul Lutheran Church

Rev. Anthony Celia has accepted a call to St. Paul Lutheran Church in Westport, Connecticut. We look forward having Pastor Celia join the SELC District. Look in a future issue of the Beacon for information on his installation.



## Rally Day Saturday at St. Stephen Lutheran Church

St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Dickson City, Pennsylvania celebrated Rally Day. Pastor Peter Richert said "As we continue to Rally around God's Word and Sacraments each week, many saints of St. Stephen's also enjoyed Rally Day games, fellowship, and food last Saturday afternoon and evening".





## Praying for your Kids and Grandkids

Discover heartfelt petitions that address traits like courage, humility, and respect. Scripture reinforces each prayer, and space is available for personal reflection.

[FREE PDF DOWNLOAD](#)





## 2025 Treasurer Manual Available

The Synod has issued the 2025 Treasurer Manual. They have not provided a downloadable link for the manual. If you would like the District to email you a file with the manual or send it to you on a flash drive, please contact the District Office at [selc.lcms@gmail.com](mailto:selc.lcms@gmail.com).



## LWML-SELC Events

The monthly zoom Bible studies have a new link! These are held on the third Thursday of each month at 10:30 AM Eastern. The new link is below.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72432487731?pwd=icwzj2020cUyBV1e2Uj4e8t0Onf4b2.1>

**Meeting ID:** 724 3248 7731  
**Passcode:** 587538

\*\*\*\*\*

Save the date for the LWML SELC **Central Zone** fall rally at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Lodi, Ohio on September 27th. The theme of the rally is I am the Vine, you are the Branches. The in-gathering will assemble Lutheran World Relief School Kits.

\*\*\*\*\*

Save the date for the LWML SELC **Eastern Zone** fall rally on Saturday September 27, at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Manchester, NJ. See the flyer on the right for more information. **The last day to register is September 22nd.**

**LWML SELC Eastern Zone Rally**  
**Saturday September 27<sup>th</sup>** at  
**Redeemer Lutheran Church**  
 2309 Route 70, Manchester, NJ 08759

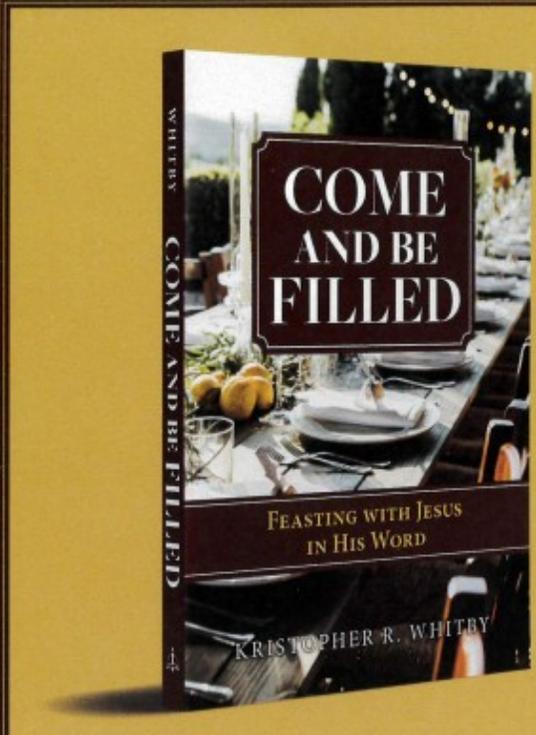
**10am – 2.30pm**

**\$5 pp** 

**Register Today:**  
 Karenannkow@hotmail.com  
 570-582-6046

*Bible Study led by Deaconess Helen DeMario on "Women of the Bible"*

**This Rally's Charity is 'Phils Friends':**  
**In-gathering items to bring & donate as part of our Service Project for the day:**  
 Blankets (\$4 at Walmart), fuzzy socks, puzzle books, deck of cards (no casino), and small size lotion (fragrance free).



Join Kristopher R. Whitby to explore eleven meals throughout Scripture and the lessons God teaches there around His table.

*Your Lord invites you to come and be filled with His good gifts. Experience the joy of gathering around the table with His people, sharing together in the blessings of Christ. Through Jesus, your meals will mean more.*



## **Vocatio: Retreat set for Oct. 5–7, 2025 Prospective Students Explore Path to Ministry**

**Registration Closes on September 15th**

College students and second-career adults who are considering future service as a pastor, deaconess, missionary or chaplain are invited to Vocatio: Retreat Oct. 5–7, 2025, at **Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.**

The three-day retreat offers an introduction to life as a seminarian. Participants will worship in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus, spend time in God’s Word, engage in conversations with Seminary faculty and students, and explore the Seminary campus. The schedule includes chapel services, class visits, panel discussions on academic programs and ministry paths, an introduction to campus ministries, and presentations from Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) missionary and military chaplain recruiters. The retreat also provides opportunities to connect with others who are discerning a similar call.

“The Lord of the harvest invites us to pray earnestly for more laborers to be sent into

His harvest fields,” said Rev. Jesse Kueker, director of Enrollment. “The fields are ripe, and for those discerning the possibility of serving the church as a pastor, deaconess, chaplain or missionary, Vocatio: Retreat offers the perfect opportunity to come, pray and get your questions answered. Please come! We cannot wait to welcome you, receive the Lord’s gifts alongside you, and pray for you throughout all the steps ahead.”

Registration is free and affordable lodging options are available, but space is limited. The registration deadline is Monday, Sept. 15. Learn more and register at [csl.edu/admissions/visit/vocatio-retreat/](http://csl.edu/admissions/visit/vocatio-retreat/).

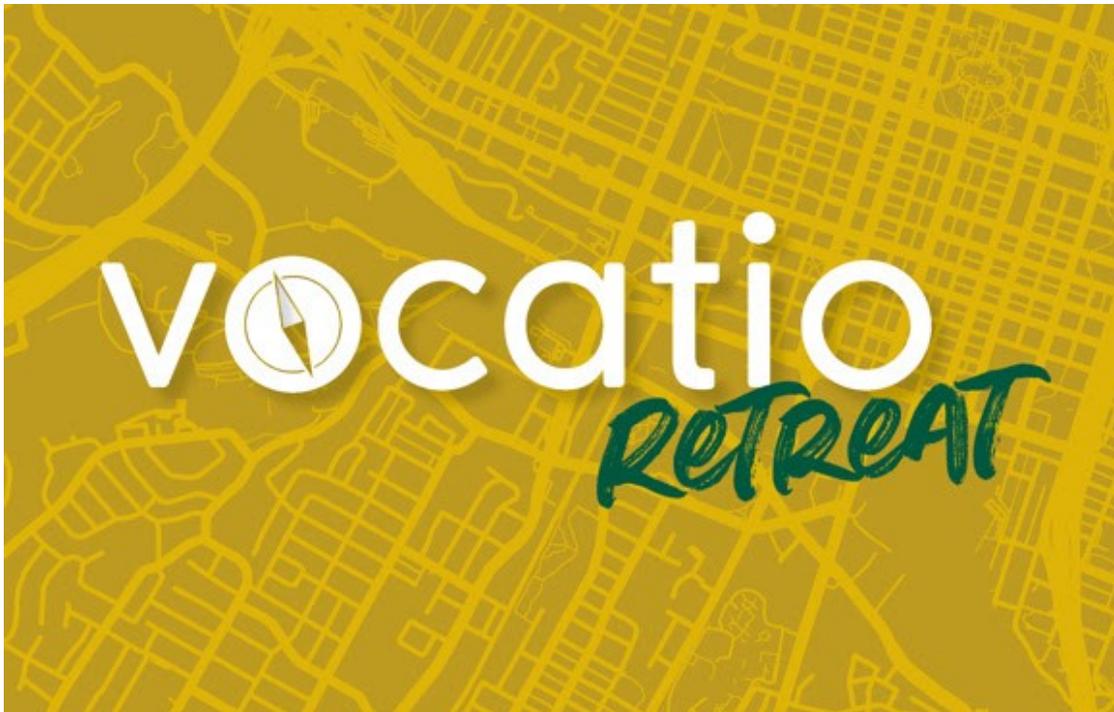
If you’ve wondered whether God is calling you to be a pastor, deaconess, missionary or chaplain, Vocatio: Retreat offers time away to explore that call in community. From Oct. 5–7, you’ll worship, study Scripture, talk with Seminary professors and students, and experience life on campus — all while connecting with others on similar journeys. Space is limited. [Register by Sept. 15.](#)

[Learn more](#)

[Click here](#) to watch a video about Vocatio.



Register by Sept. 15 at [www.csl.edu/vocatio-retreat](http://www.csl.edu/vocatio-retreat), by scanning the QR code or by Googling “Vocatio: Retreat Concordia Seminary.”





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a church raise over \$500,000  
in four weeks!



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## Opening Night of St. Luke's Concert Series is Tonight!

Join the Brass Band of Central Florida for an unforgettable evening as they bring the spirit of the Celtic nations of Scotland, Ireland, & Wales to life! Experience the power and passion of music that has echoed through the ages.

WATCH ONLINE: [youtube.com/  
@stlukesconcertseries](https://www.youtube.com/@stlukesconcertseries)

For further information about the  
Concert Series,  
visit [slcs.org/concert-series](http://slcs.org/concert-series)





## Family Bible Journey Podcast

The book of Romans comes to a close in the podcast with Paul, wrestling some of the most difficult theological issues that surround election, salvation, and how the Holy Spirit changes the lives of believers. Listen on the website or your favorite podcast player at

[familybiblejourney.com](http://familybiblejourney.com)



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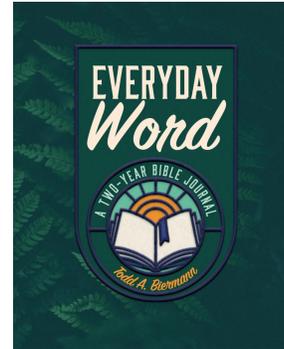
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## Resource of the Week from Concordia Center for the Family

Resource of the Week: Now is the time to pre-order a great tool for daily family discipleship in every home, Rev. Dr. Todd Biermann's book, *Everyday Word: A Two-Year Bible Journal*. It's coming out from CPH in early October as the result of a joint venture with CCF.

[Read about it and reserve your copy here.](#)



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## Prayer Requests

Please pray for all the congregations in the Southern Circuit of the SELC District.

**Rev. Brian Roberts**, Orlando, FL. Please pray for him as he is gaining weight and strength.

**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 the Ballas' in your prayers for their health challenges.

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

**Rev. Kevin Duff**, Hilton Head, SC, who will be having another surgery in the next few weeks. Please keep him and his family in your prayers as they prepare for the surgery.

**Rev. Edward Kucera**, and his wife Irene, who have moved to St. Louis, MO.

**Bev Cahill**, wife of Rev. Chris Cahill. Lodi, OH, received good news from her doctor. The CT scan showed no cancer and that she will be monitored every three months. The Cahills are grateful for all the prayers for Bev. The Cahills are posting updates on "Caring Bridge" at <https://tinyurl.com/Bridge4Bev>.

**Anna Bocklage**, Bel Air, MD, wife of Rev. Steve Bocklage, who is in physical therapy and will return to work in October.

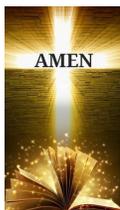
**Megan Skelton** in Oviedo, FL Please continue to pray for her and her doctors to find pain relief solutions for her jaw pain and severe headaches.

**Laura Bergmann**, Munster, IN, please pray for her to continue to build strength in her injured knee.

**Nita Huffines**, St. Louis, MO, wife of Rev. Warren Huffines, let's praise God for bringing stage four cancer under control; then ask for more grace during a maintenance phase of treatments, that the Lord complete the healing while increasing Nita's energy and joy for each day.

**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](mailto:selc.lcms@gmail.com) or call the District Office at 610-965-3265 and press 6.*



## Closing Thoughts The Deeper Meaning of the Word AMEN

Rev. Ken Ballas, EM

Many of us privileged Lutheran catechumens were properly taught to recite and hopefully understand the meaning of **Amen** as “**Yes, yes, it shall be so!**” – the “it” ultimately being the totality of Scripture and catechetical instruction (see Acts 2:42; 20:27; 2 Timothy 3:16f.).

Quite aside from *irreverent jokes* which continue to be made about supposedly long-winded preachers by clock-watching pew-sitters, whose *body language* exhibits impatient waiting to hear that little four-letter word signifying the *conclusion* to a usually prayerfully prepared pastoral message from the written Word of God, these thoughts -- at the risk of oversimplification, conceivable factors contributing to the longstanding commonly *misunderstood* meaning of **Amen** as *the end* may include many additional possible reasons for confusion.

The use of the word **Amen** in *both testaments* of Holy Scriptures calls to mind our Lord Jesus' repeatedly used words “*verily*” or “*truly*” (at times doubled) for greater emphasis of what immediately follows at the very *beginning* of Christ's teaching sentences as in John 1:52, 3:5 etc.

Our gracious God's Gospel promises more than counterbalance to our every need by also giving us the ability to trust His every promise all of which find their ultimate fulfillment in Christ. As we begin to understand a bit better this originally neither Greek nor Latin but *Hebrew concept* of **Amen**, the underlying meaning indicates a confident, affirmative reaction to eternal biblical truths without ever intending to suggest a termination of our loving Triune God's abiding presence with whom there really never was a final beginning or end.

A little over four centuries ago a faithful royally commissioned committee of scholars made heavy use of relatively recent copies of accessible Greek manuscripts in Protestant England which reflected a likely *liturgical use* of the word **Amen** at the conclusion of all 27 canonical New Testament books. These were likely read aloud in public worship from the venerable Authorized or King James Version of 1611. Something rather similar occurred in still fondly remembered church hymnals where the mere positioning of the word **Amen** may have influenced the mind's-eye of some to indicate an otherwise obvious conclusion in the possibly at times redundant words *The End* – dare we also mention here more secular literature, Hollywood movies or even televised Saturday morning cartoons for children of all ages?

Noting sainted Eugene Peterson's popular 21<sup>st</sup> century paraphrastic rendering of **Amen** in his *The Message* as “**Oh, Yes!**” calls to mind our ascended Lord's apostle Paul's succinct Christological summary of the certainty of God's Gospel promises (also note 2 Corinthians 1:20, James 4:15 and Revelation 3:14 where *Jesus Himself* is called the ultimate affirmation or “**The Amen!**” Also consider **Amen** as a reiteration of the *third petition* of our Lord's Prayer! “Thy will be done here on earth as it is also being done in

heaven as our eternal salvation has already undeservedly been earned for us by our sinless victorious Brother-Savior Jesus Christ.

Given its original Hebrew meaning then, our understanding of the frequently occurring biblical and liturgical word **Amen** signifies its being a powerfully confident worshipful ascription of praise (think in a spiritual sense perhaps of a well-muscled arm. **"Amen! Yes, ever-living Lord, I truly and firmly believe what I and others with me have just heard or read and sung!"**)

Thus, in keeping with the likes of Dr. Luther, Eugene Peterson, and many others, the biblical word **Amen** was *never* intended to mean "the end" as Christ Himself through whom we enjoy not only a most purposeful present but, **YES**, also a glorious future! (see Hebrews 13)



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