



The Beacon Online

October 3, 2025/ Vol. 6 / No. 39

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

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Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday is October 5th

Traditionally celebrated the first Sunday in October, Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday can be celebrated any time.

This year's theme begins a four-year cycle focusing on the LWML Mission Statement — As Lutheran Women in Mission, we joyfully proclaim Christ, support missions, and equip women to honor God by serving others. For Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday 2025 we focus on Proclaiming Christ.



Everything we do as Lutheran Women in Mission begins with Christ's message of repentance and forgiveness. The Ascension text of "GO" (Luke 24:44-53) is the mission emphasis for Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday 2025. On Ascension Day, Jesus gave his followers an assignment "that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations." We, as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, have a responsibility to proclaim the message of Christ, to be that body which proclaims repentance and forgiveness, showing forth the merciful Christ in what we do and say. As Lutheran Women in Mission we continue to support, encourage and uplift missionaries, and also provide physical support and compassion to all people. It is the proclamation of repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name that motivates us to do this work. All Glory be to Jesus!



St. John's Starts ESL Classes

I'm afraid the words 'slow down' aren't in our vocabulary. Two weeks after featuring on the front page of our local paper, 'The Standard Speaker', and one week after being interviewed by the local TV station, 2822 News, St. John's Lutheran Church launched their English as a Second Language (ESL) Program, beginning with their first class on September 24th, to be held weekly, every Wednesday at 5pm.

How did it all begin? Well, in researching what the community of Hazleton actually needs along with a brainstorming session at an outreach committee meeting earlier this year, by the time Summer came round, when the weather was nicer, St John's put out ESL class feeler flyers door to door close to the church, as well as inquired via social media. Pastor Naumann also wrote in to the Standard Speaker to see if it would be a story worth writing about and it turned out it was!!

Pastor Naumann also had the initiative of subscribing to an ESL curriculum on-line. So, with the help of superenglishesl.com (Only \$25 a month) we felt we were ready to try a warm-up session, to which we would invite a few guinea pigs from the many positive responses we received from individuals in the community that responded and said they were interested in the classes. So, without further ado, having coordinated a couple volunteers and prepared the test materials, we had a very relaxed session of conversation which led to further intrigue and ideas as to the direction we could go.

It turns out, it was as easy as just providing the right space in which interested parties could come to be encouraged to learn quite comfortably in a socially relaxed environment. Setting ourselves about an hour seemed right and was good in terms of getting through the printed materials that were prepared and wasn't too much but enough to know they could engage with further material and learn more should they come back, looking forward to being able to both revise material already covered, and then delve into the next lesson which is essentially another category, not necessarily increasing the level. From learning about what is in the home, to what we find in school, work, common greetings, and time of leisure.

So what does it look like? Is it hard? Not really! Here's the good news. It just takes hearts that care and a little patience and attentiveness. You know English. They want to learn English. superenglishesl.com has vocabulary lists for levels one through seven, beginner to expert (conversing fluently and being acquainted with our idioms). They can all be printed and set in piles ready for when people come in and peruse in order to engage right away where they're at from what words they already know. They can sit down and circle words and converse about where they need help with the vocabulary lists alone; that was our approach. Exercises can be printed off from the website curriculum which has dozens of lessons in multiple categories for each level. They can be used as homework, something to take home and practice or class exercises. Preprinting said exercises as mini tests may also be helpful, then, as well as the vocabulary lists. But that's about it. Half the fun is just sitting down with people and having the opportunity to just converse with them.

Initially we thought we had to do more; put on some coffee maybe; provide refreshments, maybe offer childcare, but it turns out that the hour zooms by and people are just content to be engaged in conversation the whole time and that's what people really value. And we say our farewell and 'see you next time'. While it might be helpful to have the option to divide up into groups for different level engagement, actually being one group is arguably as helpful, as people of a higher

level actually help you help the ones at a lower level and can help translate if need be (Level 1). Also, as a church, we wanted to start off and conclude with rote prayers, which were prepared and printed on a bilingual piece of paper so that everyone can engage worshipfully in their heart language, the concluding prayer being the Lord's prayer.

As the ESL classes continue, we're thinking of increasing our materials to include videos, board games, posters, and Google Translate, but frankly we have found that the most valuable point of this learning opportunity has been in just creating the right social context in which to grant the ability to converse with others in a simple yet very encouraging way.



We hope this can be an inspiration to you and your congregation, if you ever wondered whether you can. The answer is, 'yes, you can!'. As a concept, sure it's a little daunting. But, like most things, with a little planning, it is certainly possible. And with the right heart, actually probable!

Please pray that this outreach would bear fruit and bless our neighbors here in Hazleton. Keep praying for what it is that your own neighborhood needs and how your hearts can be given the zeal to do something about it. And what have you got to lose?

We're here to share the love of God. Meeting new people is always going to be a challenge and potentially takes us out of our comfort zone. A little fear is a good thing; it keeps us humble and fosters a spirit of respect and awe.

To give you a few first impressions, our students so far have been polite, well-spoken, only there to learn, to try, and to give it a go; very optimistic. The bonus was that there were those at a higher level happy to help others. We were facilitating neighbors to make friends too. They were eager to improve their English not just for themselves but for each other. It was beautiful to see and be a part of; to witness such a wide range of English fluency - from only speaking a few phrases to participating in complex conversations, story-telling, and translating idioms. Finally, it was very moving to

realize that we really are one of the few opportunities they have to practice English in day-to-day life in this area, their part of America, Hazleton, where, if they wanted, they really could just speak Spanish at home and also among their co-workers. These insights can even give us a deeper appreciation for what learning English and American culture was like for the Slovak founders of this district, let alone this congregation. Many of the LC-MS can say the same of their German ancestors.

No teaching experience? No problem. We take for granted that we are teaching all the time when we simply converse with our neighbors and know they understand us. We teach ourselves figures of speech every day and learn from ourselves and mimic idioms for understanding. Parents teach their children. Siblings teach each other. You've got this. It doesn't take some big fundraising campaign to start. You don't need a grant from our district or synod, though I'm sure that would be helpful. You just need a passion for life, a zeal to converse with your neighbor and a willingness to step out of your comfort zone.

And may the Lord continue to bless you and your ministries in Jesus' name.



LWML Eastern Zone Fall Rally

On the 27th of September eight ladies from St. John's Lutheran Church, Hazleton, and Pastor Naumann, attended the LWML SELC Eastern Zone Fall Rally at Redeemer Lutheran in Manchester, NJ. Setting off early in the morning for our road trip, we were able to watch the sunrise. A few hours later we arrived in time for a hearty welcome and fellowship with the other Lutheran Women who had come, thanks to our hosts. There were about thirty-five people in total. I was able to meet with a few people that I had seen at former rallies which immediately put me at ease and I was able to enjoy myself right away. I also got to meet some new ladies as well, who I hope to see again in the future and can keep encouraging to come back as we form this unique bond as sisters in the church.

Deaconess Helen DeMario guided us through a very thoughtful Bible study focusing on how we can give back to God by looking at the story of Hannah, the wife of Elkanah. Hannah prayed to God to give her a son and God did so. In thanksgiving, Hannah dedicated her son Samuel to the service of the Lord under the supervision of the priest Eli. Samuel was a gift from the Lord and Hannah knew that this gift needed to be shared with the world, especially as she had promised this to the Lord, should He ever answer her prayer and grant her such joy.

After the Bible study we had a business meeting at which our zone president Karen Ann Kowalczyk went over our district's current missions as outlined clearly on our district website: lwmlselc.mystrikingly.com. Our district president, Carol Miksad, also told us about all the good work the LWML is doing on the national level. Then we had our service project of boxing the in-gathering items for Phil's Friends, a charity that provides lovely care packages for those dealing with cancer.

The day finished with a divine service, led by Pastor Daniel Barteau and Pastor Naumann, who blessed the in-gathering offering for the service of the Lord and in a way that expressed our gladness and joy to give as we have received all things from our gracious God.

Overall, I feel the rally was a very successful event, and I can't wait for the next one. And if you're coming to district convention next year in St. Louis, I hope to see you there!

Your sister in Christ,
Phoebe Naumann





Reminder

Financial Secretary Mailing Address Has Changed

The current Financial Secretary of the SELC District is Irene Bray. Her mailing address is below. Please be sure to mail your checks to her or the District Office, not to the former Financial Secretary Larry Schultz. Your help in getting the checks to the correct person is appreciated!

**Irene Bray
P.O. Box 292
Westfield Center, OH 44251**



Call for Nominations to Serve on Synod Boards and a Commission

Call for Nominations: National Synod Officer, Board, and Commission Positions

The **Committee for Convention Nominations** requests nominations of qualified members of Synod member congregations for the following positions to be filled by the Synod convention meeting July 18–23, 2026. Officers, agencies, ordained and commissioned ministers, and member congregations of the Synod and their lay members are all invited to submit nominations, to be received preferably before August 18, 2025, and **no later than October 18, 2025**. Nominees are sought for:

- Secretary of the Synod
- LCMS Board of Directors (at-large and regional)
- LCMS Boards for National and International Mission (regional)
- Commission on Theology and Church Relations
- Concordia Historical Institute Board of Governors
- Concordia Publishing House Board of Directors
- Lutheran Church Extension Fund Board of Directors
- LCMS Foundation Board of Trustees
- Concordia University System Board of Directors
- Synod University and Seminary Boards of Regents

Important information, including an explanatory memorandum, a detailed description of the offices to be filled (with present terms and incumbents), and instructions for use of the **new online nomination system**, is available at lcms.org/nominate. Any member of a member congregation with a valid email address will be able to establish an account and submit a nomination.

Please distribute this call widely and urge participation.

John W. Sias, LCMS Secretary

In Preparation for the  LCMS Regular Convention

For general information on the upcoming convention, see lcms.org/convention/timeline. Congregation administrators, please make sure your leader emails are up to date at lcms.org so that important convention-related announcements will be received. Congregations will receive nomination ballots for the President and regional vice-presidents of the Synod in the fall of 2025.



St. Luke's Concert Series Florida Symphony Youth Orchestra

You're Invited!

All concerts are FREE and OPEN to the public — no tickets needed!
Come enjoy the music and bring your family and friends — everyone's welcome!

WATCH ONLINE: [youtube.com/@stlukeconcertseries](https://www.youtube.com/@stlukeconcertseries)
For further information about the Concert Series,
visit [sllcs.org/concert-series](https://www.sllcs.org/concert-series)

Florida Symphony Youth Orchestra

Join us for an unforgettable afternoon as the talented musicians of FSYO's Symphonic Orchestra take the stage to perform a powerful and inspiring selection of works.

Come celebrate the passion and dedication of the next generation of performers—we'd love to see you there!



Saturday,
Oct 11th | 2p | Sanctuary



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.



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Family Bible Journey Podcast

Did you know that Psalm 88 gives us a window into the mind of Jesus on Maundy **Thursday** when He was locked in a dungeon? Want to hear how crystal clear this psalm of prophecy, penned 900 years before Jesus' arrest and imprisonment really is? Listen to our episode, "Darkness of Death," on the Family Bible Journey podcast!

<https://www.podbean.com/eas/pb-takfc-197afe3>

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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 continues his recovery from surgery last week. Please keep him and his family in your prayers as from this 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.

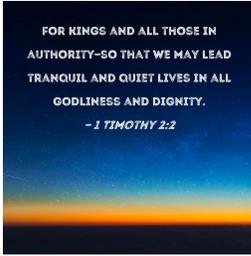
Megan Skelton in Oviedo, FL Please continue to pray for her and her doctors to find pain relief solutions for her jaw pain and severe headaches.

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, praising God for a year of scans clear of tumors, we ask for strength during immunotherapy maintenance; may the Lord complete His healing, adding joy and thanks to each of Nita's days.

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

Rev. Ken Ballas, EM

Holding in highest esteem the God of Old and New Testament Scripture, by the power of the Holy Spirit make every reasonable effort in aiding others to trust the Almighty by loving one another.

Living as we all do in today's divided society and in the midst of such realities as "stranger danger," the inspired written Word of God also cautions us against putting undue trust in fallible mortal princes or human leaders without, however, at the same time failing to remember in intercessory prayer all in positions of authority in this sadly broken, sin-stained world (see Psalm 146:3; 1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Speaking of the privileged gift of prayer, may our devotional thoughts daily call to mind the third petition of our Lord's Prayer and obediently reflecting on our sinless Brother Savior Jesus also perfectly carrying out the redemptive will and mission of His and our Father in our behalf. To that end, let us pray, "Heavenly Father, as I consider doing this or that for myself and others, correct me if I am remotely mistaken in my intended thoughts or actions!" (cf. James 4:15).

And, yes, in the otherwise sobering likelihood of preparation for a hopefully "upbeat" music-filled Christian *funeral* or memorial service (assuming our ascended Lord's promised glorious return does not occur first) that any "eulogies" consist mainly of hearing *lots of nice things about our wonderful ever-living **GOD!***

Meanwhile, consider this home-spun poem-prayer often used by sainted SELC District Pastor John Kucera and others at the close of countless services of worship as a reminder that solely because of Jesus there is a sense in which God's very best gifts are yet to come!

LORD, lay some soul upon my heart,
and love that soul through me;
And may I nobly do my part
to love that soul in Thee.
And when I enter the Heavenly City,
and the saved all around *us* appear –
I'd like to hear somebody tell me:
"It was *you* who invited me here."

Possible sung hymns including added instrumental music:

Christ, Be My Leader!
Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me
God Loved the World So That He Gave
What Wondrous Love Is This?
Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart



SELC District - A District Without Borders

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

SELC District of LCMS

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