



The Beacon Online

October 31, 2025/ Vol. 6 / No. 43

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

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SELC District Multi-Circuit Meeting

Rev. George Hansell
Central Circuit Visitor

It has often been noted that the SELC District is a "spread-out" district, consisting of congregations in 12 states and 2 Canadian provinces. While there are certainly blessings that come from being a "District without borders," it also comes with its unique set of challenges, not the least of which being that opportunities for Pastors across the district to meet together for mutual fellowship and support on a regular basis are limited. To address that challenge, the four circuits of the SELC District began having Joint Circuit Conferences in the Fall of 2024. Last Fall, the Central and Western Circuits met together while the Southern and Eastern Circuits met together. The format was appreciated so much that the decision was made to use the format again in the Fall of 2025. What began as planning for two conferences with West and East meeting together and Central and South meeting together quickly changed into a Multi-Circuit Conference consisting of representatives from all four circuits meeting together in the Laurel Highlands region of western Pennsylvania.



The second day began with breakfast followed by Matins. Following Matins, a presentation entitled "Our Stations in Life: Growing in Faith, Love, and Good Works" was given by Pastor Jacob Deal, top right, (Saints Peter and Paul/Sharon, PA). Later in the day, the Rev. Dr. Mark Larson, bottom right, delivered a presentation on Missions and Church Planting within the SELC District. Rev. James Douthwaite also presented on International Missions and the work of the LCMS Office of International Mission. Other presentations included a report from LCEF by John Hoover, a presentation on "Set Apart to Serve" by James Fernandez, and various reports from around the District (Lutheran Haven, Youth, Scholarship, etc.) Evening activities included a conference Worship Service with Holy Communion. The service observed the feast day of Saint James of Jerusalem. The evening fellowship featured an intense game of Bible Jeopardy moderated by Pastor James Douthwaite. Entering into Final Jeopardy, Team Central Circuit (Central and Western Circuit) held a 100 point lead on the Southern Circuit with Eastern Circuit in third place. However, a strategic "no-bid" by Eastern Circuit coupled with wrong answers by Central and Southern gave Eastern Circuit the championship.

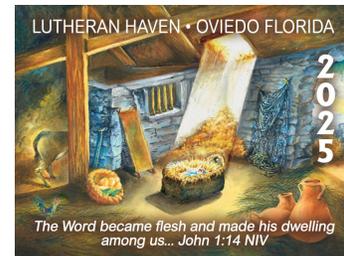


The third day began with Morning Prayer followed by a presentation delivered by the Rev. Brett Witmer, on the left, (Holy Cross/Johnstown, PA) on the left, entitled "The Filioque: Does It Matter?" This presentation was given in recognition of the 1700th Anniversary of the drafting of the Nicene Creed. A Bible Study on Biblical Transitions and Successions was moderated by Pastor Chris Cahill. The conference ended with the praying of The Litany.

The Multi-Circuit Conference was a blessing to all who were in attendance with several comments that it is a format that should be continued in the future.



Lutheran Haven Announces Annual Appeal to Benefit the Benevolent Care Fund



The 79th Annual Seals Campaign has begun! This campaign supports the Benevolent Care Fund at Lutheran Haven. This campaign supports the mission and ministry of Lutheran Haven:

To provide a quality, Christ-centered haven of care for older adults.

Our Benevolent Care Fund is critical in assisting retired Lutheran pastors, rostered church workers, retired Lutherans and others in need of our healthcare services. We also assist with things like Advanced Fees and Monthly Maintenance Fees along with assisting residents with emergency needs such as temporary healthcare assistance or even meals. It is only through the generosity of people like you who support the Haven that we can continue to come alongside these faithful servants.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us...

— John 1:14 NIV

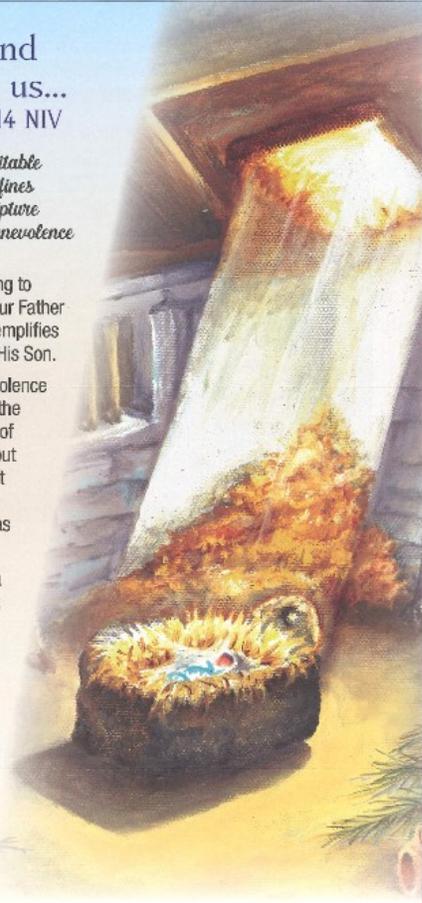
To call someone kind, well-meaning, or charitable is to call them benevolent. The dictionary defines benevolence as a disposition to do good. Scripture describes many of God's attributes, including His benevolence toward us.

In 1 Timothy 6:17: "He richly provides us with everything to enjoy." He satisfies "the desire of every living thing." Our Father not only provides for our earthly needs, but He also exemplifies the greatest benevolence of all time in the sacrifice of His Son.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated benevolence through His actions. He healed the sick, the lame, and the blind, to name just a few. He gave up the perfect glory of heaven to come as a helpless infant to die on a cross out of His great love for us. He healed not only the body but also the heart and soul of sinful people who could not help themselves. He still does so today. His example has been our reason for being.

His was the guiding principle of our founder, Andrew Duda Sr. and remains our mission today: ***"To provide a quality, Christ-centered haven of care for older adults."***

It is your benevolence that has helped sustain Lutheran Haven for nearly eight decades! What began 79 years ago with our first Christmas Seal outreach is now a vital source of support for many in need through our Benevolent Care Fund. Saying "thank you" seems insufficient for all you've done, but please know that your prayers and gifts have made a monumental difference in the lives of our seniors. It is a blessing for us to *show* how benevolence is lived out in the lives of our precious residents, thanks to you:



"Lutheran Haven's benevolent care fund has meant the world to me. My family is always telling me not to worry about the future and this program helps me to do just that. I talk to the Lord about things all the time and He helps me. I thank Him for bringing me here and providing me with the help I needed. Many years ago, God led me to Lutheran Haven and I'm so happy He did!" - A grateful resident

Out of thanks to God for His many blessings, I/we enclose a gift to The Lutheran Haven Foundation for:

Benevolent Care General

Name (s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Church Affiliation _____

Payment: My check payable to LHF is enclosed

Please return this card with your gift in the enclosed envelope.

Credit card donations can be made directly through our website by visiting lutheranhaven.org. Just click on the Faithful giving tab on the menu bar. You can also scan our QR Code and it will take you directly to Faithful Giving.



You can mail your gift to the Benevolent Care Fund to the address below.

Lutheran Haven Foundation
2041 West State Road 426
Oviedo, FL 32765



Rev. Dr. Renato Hoerlle to be Installed November 15, 2025

Rev. Dr. Hoerlle will be installed at Peace Lutheran Church in Galloway Township, NJ on Saturday, November 15th at 10 AM. A light lunch will follow the service. Peace Lutheran looks forward to celebrating the installation of Pastor Hoerlle with everyone.



Pastor Anthony Celia to be Installed on November 16, 2025

St. Paul Lutheran Church in Westport, CT is pleased to announce the installation of Rev. Anthony Celia. The installation service will take place on Sunday, November 16th at 2 PM. A reception will follow the installation service. Please join St. Paul Lutheran as they install their new Pastor.



SERVICE OF
INSTALLATION
FOR
**Pastor
Anthony
Celia**

SUNDAY | NOVEMBER 16 | 2 PM
RECEPTION TO FOLLOW



ST PAUL WESTPORT



Concordia Lutheran Church Welcomes New Members

Concordia Lutheran Church in Macungie, PA welcomed eleven new members on October 25, 2025. They were installed during the Reformation services. Pastor Vinovskis, SELC District President, and Vicar Rowan Turner, Vicar at Concordia are also pictured.



Hope Lutheran Welcomes New Members and Holds a Marty Party on Reformation Sunday

Hope Lutheran Church in Melbourne, Florida welcomed new members on October 26th. After the service, they held a Marty party in a local park with food, games and 1517 balloon arrangement. Fun was had by all! Below are the new members who joined Hope Lutheran at the early service.





Celebrate Reformation at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church Dickson City, PA

A Reformation Service will be held at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in Dickson, PA on November 2, 2025. The schedule is the Fellowship begins at 4 pm. The Divine Service begins at 5:00 PM and then we will continue fellowship following the service at 6:30 PM

In addition, St. Stephen's is celebrating their 100th Anniversary on October 18th. Please keep them in your prayers as they enter their second century.

St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Reformation, All Saints, & 100th Anniversary Celebration of Dickson City Mission & Ministry October 18, 1925 – October 18, 2025

Divine Service

Sunday, November 2nd at 5 pm
Fellowship & Light Refreshments before & after worship beginning at 4 pm

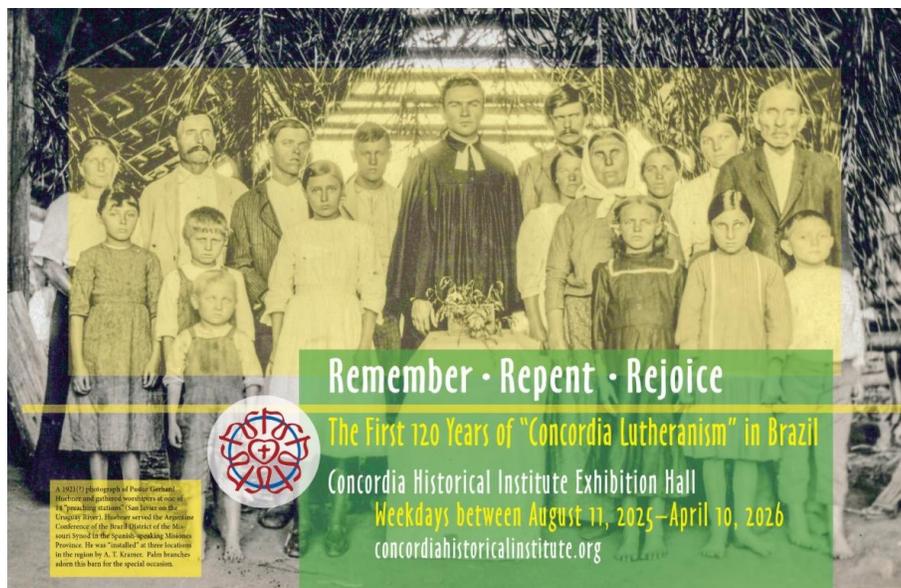
Rev. Peter A. Richert, Vacancy Pastor
Karen Muir & Sharon Laskosky, Organists



Remember – Repent – Rejoice! The First 120 years of “Concordia Lutheranism” in Brazil

This multimedia exhibit utilizes photos, banners, and artifacts to tell the history of the early years of “Concordia Lutheranism” in Brazil. Using over 300 photos and a progression of banners to tell this history in three museum rooms, Concordia Historical Institute is pleased to trumpet this exhibit to anyone interested in missions. This exhibit opened on August 11, 2025, and runs until April 10, 2026. An 80-page exhibit catalog will be available January 15, 2026.

[Click here](#) to see the press release for the current museum exhibit.



You are cordially invited to visit our inspiring museum exhibit of “Book of Concord Lutheranism” mission work in Brazil. Photographs and banners and artifacts span pre-Lutheran eras of Brazil and also document the massive European Lutheran immigration from 1825 until the Great War of 1914, when German was outlawed and congregations began a marked shift from German to Portuguese. The exhibit runs through April 10, 2026 and is open weekdays from 9AM-3PM at CHI on the campus of Concordia Seminary in Clayton, Missouri. 804 Seminary Place. Call 314-505-7900 for more details or to make reservations for your group over twelve people. An 80-page printed exhibit catalog will be available on January 15, 2026.



Vicarage Applications due February 13, 2026

Vicarage applications are due to the SELC District office no later than February 13, 2026. If you are interested in applying for a Vicar, please contact the District Office at selc.lcms@gmail.com or 610-965-3265, press 6.



Good Shepherd Institute Music Events

Skillful and Discerning: Cultivating Our Callings

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), invites you to attend one of our special Good Shepherd Institute music events November 9 and 10. On Sunday, November 9, CTSFW will host an organ recital at 4:30 p.m. and All Saints' Choral Vespers at 7:30 p.m. On Monday evening at 7:30 p.m., there will be a hymn festival at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in downtown Fort Wayne. These events are free and open to the public, with no registration required. For more details, visit ctsfw.edu/gsi.

GSI Organ Recital

Sunday, November 9, at 4:30 p.m. ET

Kramer Chapel, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne
Nicholas Quardokus, organist

[Organ Recital Information](#)

ORGAN RECITAL INFORMATION

All Saints' Choral Vespers

Sunday, November 9, at 7:30 p.m. ET

Kramer Chapel, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne
Bach motet: *Jesu, meine Freude* (Jesus, Priceless Treasure)
Featuring the Seminary Kantorei, Bach Ensemble, and soloists

[Choral Vespers Information](#)

CHORAL VESPERS INFORMATION

Hymn Festival—St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne

Monday, November 10, at 7:30 p.m. ET

Celebrating the 1700th Anniversary of the Nicene Creed

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

1126 S. Barr St., Fort Wayne

Featuring the Seminary Schola Cantorum, choirs from local LCMS congregations, Concordia Lutheran High School A Cappella Choir, and Fort Wayne Philharmonic Strings and Brass

Kantor Matthew Machemer and Mr. Isaac Weander, choir directors; Kantor Kevin Hildebrand, organist; and Dr. Carl Beckwith, commentary

HYMN FESTIVAL INFORMATION

[Hymn Festival Information](#)



"Basin and Towel"

Rev. Chris Cahill has been revising and expanding his online "Basin and Towel" offerings for ministerial care on various platforms. While some of these are still works in progress, you can find them at these links; we'll do a deeper dive into each of these in future Beacons:

- NEW **Basin and Towel 2025** website at bit.ly/bnt2025
- Read or subscribe to **Basin and Towel 2025** on Substack at bit.ly/bnt2025substack
- Listen to **Basin and Towel** podcast episodes at bit.ly/3INLzfF or on YouTube at bit.ly/ctcbntsermons



Did Your Church Receive the Official Nomination Ballot for Synod Elections?

Each congregation should have received notice from the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod regarding that it is time for **Your Congregation** to make nominations for the Synod President, First Vice President, and Regional Vice President.

Each congregation should have received a mailing sent via USPS labeled **LCMS OFFICIAL NOMINATION BALLOT**. This mailing includes the information you need to nominate for the Synod President, First Vice President, and Regional Vice President. Your ballot must be submitted by Wednesday, **February 18, 2026**.

If you did not receive this information by November 4, 2025, please contact the LCMS Office of the Secretary at lcmssecretary@lcms.org or call the office at 314-996-1417.



Reformation in Germany: In the Footsteps of Martin Luther with Pastors Dan Lepley and Andy Currao | June 2, 2026

Follow the liturgy as we explore the land of the Reformation next June with Pastor Dan Lepley! This unique Lutheran heritage tour comes with a liturgical twist. We will begin considering the effects of pride and prejudice at Ravensbruck concentration camp. From there, we will be built up in our appreciation of our Lutheran forebearers as we visit many key sites of the Reformation. See all tour information and register [here](#). Or, email dlepley@genysys-group.com to be invited to our introductory ZOOM at 8:00pm EST on Tuesday, October 28.



Resource of the Week

Written by Rev. Dr. Mart Thompson of Concordia Seminary, Daily Prayer and Discipleship using Luther's Small Catechism explains how usage of Luther's Small Catechism in the home each day can be a blessing as it is "Simple, Short, Shaping, Structured, and Synchronized." Click [here](#) to take a look at this free resource on our website. It would be great to share this week leading up to Reformation!



Want your church to grow?

Watch this video to see how we helped
a church raise over \$500,000
in four weeks!



www.genysys-group.com



Family Bible Journey Podcast

Conflict and communion? How did those two topics end-up in the same chapter of the Bible? Learn how by listening to the Family Bible Journey podcast, as we explore a portion of scripture we hear every time we receive communion. Listen on your favorite podcast player or at familybiblejourney.com.



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of journaling through the Bible.

familybiblejourney.com



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Dates to Remember

November 2, 2025 - Divine Service at 5 PM celebrating Reformation, All Saints & 100th Anniversary Celebration of Ministry at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Dickson City, PA.

November 15, 2025 at 10 AM - Pastor Renato Hoerlle will be installed at Peace Lutheran Church in Galloway, NJ.

November 16, 2025 at 2 PM - Pastor Anthony Celia will be installed at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Westport, CT.

November 20, 2025 at 10:30 AM - Monthly LWML Bible Study via zoom.

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LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, LCEF investments are not FDIC insured, are not a federally insured savings or deposit account or insured by any state or federal agency. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. LCEF will offer and sell its securities only in states where authorized. The offer is made solely by LCEF's Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks. StewardAccount products are not available to investors in South Carolina. StewardAccount access features are offered through UMB Bank n.a. All Access Account is known as "StewardAccount" for investors in Washington.



Prayer Requests

Please pray for all the schools, teachers, students, and administration of the schools in the SELC.

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 is recovering from surgery. Please keep him and his family in your prayers as they prepare the next steps in his treatment.

Rev. Edward Kucera, and his wife Irene, 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.

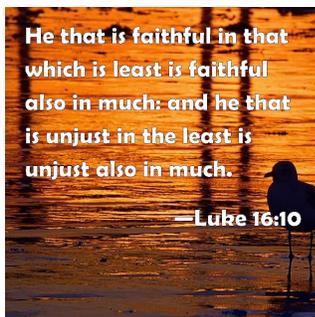
Megan Skelton in Oviedo, FL Please continue to pray for her and her doctors to find pain relief solutions for her jaw pain and severe headaches.

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 It's All a Matter of Perspective

Rev. Ken Ballas, EM

Imagine being an interstate trucker on the then I-95 Connecticut Turnpike toll road on a hot summer night of June 28, 1983, shortly after midnight. With traffic being unusually light, you see an unnamed motorist frantically waving for vehicles behind him to stop until, to your horror, you also notice a gaping hole in the roadway just ahead of his stopped car. An entire section of heavily traveled highway had moments earlier fallen into the briefly tidal Mianus River not far from emptying into neighboring Long Island Sound.

Wonder of wonders, only two passenger cars and an equal number of tractor-trailers trucks had toppled into the darkened abyss. Miraculously, three of the six people involved survived the descent. My Lois being one of many Greenwich Hospital medical staff caring for those so singularly blessed.

The apparent cause of that bridge collapse concerning, how could the toll have been worse? A single rusted broken steel bolt and joint (it was also later reported that thousands of starlings had providentially abandoned their customary nightly roosting site for other locations but a few weeks before!).

What's more important? The "big picture" or some minor component or contextual detail? Our Lord Jesus spoke about being faithful in little things as He alone was consistently faithful in matters big or small in our eternal behalf (Luke 16:10). No wonder we often sing:

His oath, His covenant and blood
Support me in the raging flood;
When ev'ry earthly prop gives way,
He then is all my Hope and Stay.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.
(Hymn 575, LSB, stanza 3)



SELC District - A District Without Borders

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

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