



# The Beacon Online

November 7, 2025/ Vol. 6 / No. 44

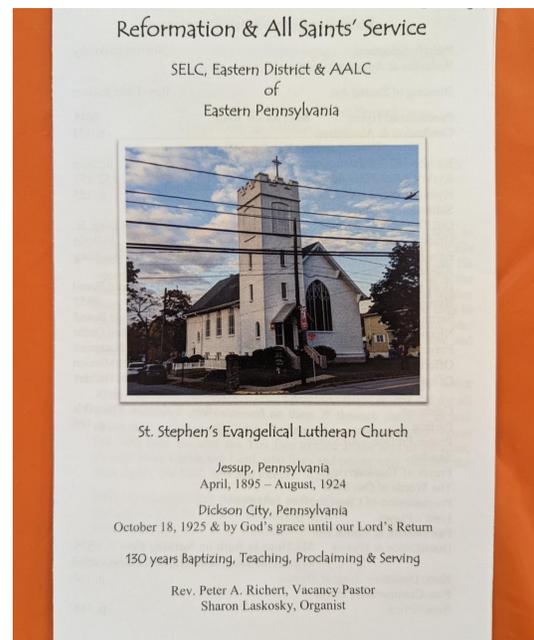
## The Beacon Online is the communication source for the SELC District.

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## St. Stephen's Lutheran Church Celebrates 100th Anniversary

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, in Dickson City, PA, celebrated their 100th anniversary of their church building dedication on November 2, 2025. They are also celebrated Reformation Sunday and All Saints Day at the service which was planned by Rev. Peter Richert and his committee. He has served at St. Stephen since November 2023. There was fellowship time before and after the service. Several SELC Pastors participated in the service including President Vinovskis, Rev. Peter Haenftling, Rev. Gordon Naumann. Several other area Pastors were also invited to participate including Rev. Donald Brand, former Pastor at St. Stephen's from 1977 - 1981, and Rev. Neil Cadle.





Pictured above are the worshippers and guests who gathered for the service. Below on the left is a photo of the service and the remaining photos are of groups who came together to share in the celebration.

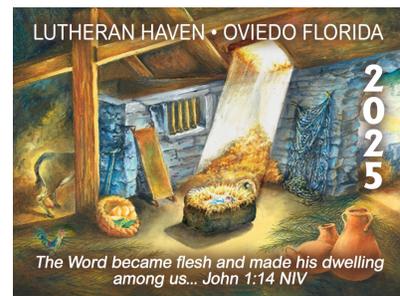




The photo below on the left includes Pastor Brand and his wife with members of St. Stephen's. On the right is Pastor Richert and members of the Church.



## 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

**T**o 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](http://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



## Setting Your 2026 SELC Budget Goal

*And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8*

Christ calls us to be witnesses of the Gospel throughout the whole world. One way we do this together is through our partnership with district and Synod missions, supported by the offerings of our congregations.

Your congregation should have received a letter for you to indicate your plans to support district and Synod missions. As your congregation completes its budgeting process, please return this information by mail, email, or [online](#) (preferred) by **January 15** to;

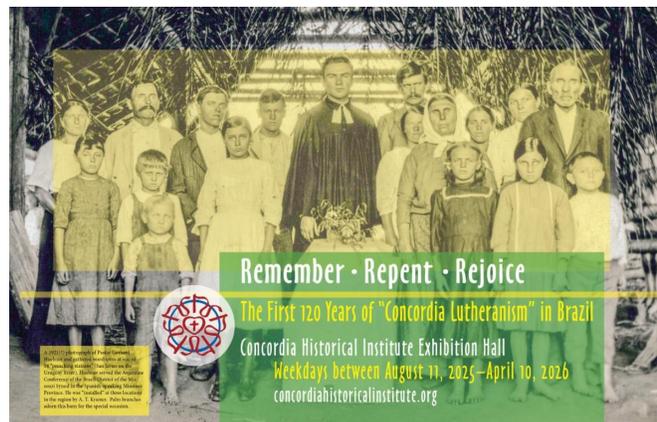
Rev. Bill Hale, Stewardship Committee  
c/o St. John Lutheran Church  
2001 St Clair Ave, Granite City, IL 62040  
[William.e.hale@gmail.com](mailto:William.e.hale@gmail.com)

Note that contributions should be sent directly to the District Financial Secretary:  
Irene Bray  
P. O. Box 292  
Westfield Center, OH 44251



## 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 era 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](mailto: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](http://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](#)



## Rev. Mark Zuehsow Accepts Call

Rev. Mark Zuehsow has accepted a call to serve as Pastor of Saint James Lutheran Church in the Blue Hills, Canton, MA. We ask for God's blessings for Pastor Zuehsow as he prepares for his call.



## 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](mailto: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](mailto:dlepley@genysys-group.com) to be invited to our introductory ZOOM at 8:00pm EST on Tuesday, October 28.





## LWML-SELC Monthly Bible Study

The November Bible Study will be held on November 20th at 10:30 AM EST. The topic will be **"Sharing Our Gifts as We Work for the Lord"** from the LWQ. To join online, please click on the link below. You can also join in person at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Lodi, OH.

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

[https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72432487731?  
pwd=icwzj2O2OcUyBV1e2Uj4e8t0Onf4b2.1](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72432487731?pwd=icwzj2O2OcUyBV1e2Uj4e8t0Onf4b2.1)

[Meeting ID:](#) 724 3248 7731

Passcode: 587538



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



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of journaling through the Bible.



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Call **407-542-1637** to find out more

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## Dates to Remember

**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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## Prayer Requests

Please pray for all the congregations and schools in the Western 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 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.

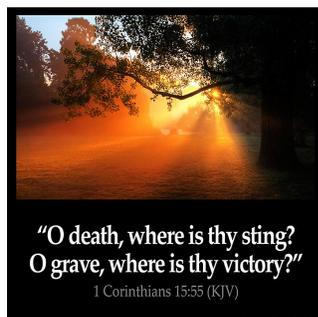
**Nita Huffines**, St. Louis, MO, wife of Rev. Warren Huffines, praising God for a year of scans clear of tumors, we ask for strength during immunotherapy maintenance; may the Lord complete His healing, adding joy and thanks to each of Nita's days.

**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.

**Pamela Meyr**, Rockledge, FL, wife of Pastor Ron Meyr retired from Faith Viera, for healing from kneecap surgery after a fall.

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 Similarities and Differences Between an Obituary and Christian Funeral Service**

Rev. Ken Ballas, EM

As we all have a story to tell, looking back over the years picture with me these musings as they hopefully relate to this week's closing thought. Like many of you, I was privileged to have been raised in a Christian home. Continuing on these past 65+ years of a blessed multi-generational family life in many North American locations as a student, pastor, teacher and mentor of two dozen + gifted vicar-interns, my years of active public ministry rather surprisingly also included nearly a full year's worth of days spent at our beloved SELC District's wonderful Lutheran Haven in Central Florida from 1976 to 2002. Scores of Board meetings during that period included opportunities to play the piano to accompany singing at Wednesday morning chapel services in the old Haven nursing home and assisted living area.

A recent Beacon article mentioned the biblical family of words starting with **eulog-** having the sense of *not* merely saying nice things about a beloved loved one who may have tragically died but "*eulogistically*" (and perhaps "*egotistically*" properly understood) about *praising our ever-living God* who sacrificially did indeed offer up His incarnate Son to death for this rebelliously fallen world (Philippians 2:8; 1Peter 1:3-9).

Thus, there may be a considerable difference between writing one's own obituary for publication as some have done containing perhaps an admixture of forced humor. Despite believing our ascended Redeemer and living Lord may indeed return *before* we die, likely more of us may also elect to devote a bit of our allotted time to planning an appropriately winsome God-glorifying, Christ-centered service in thoughtful *preparation* as a semi-final loving gesture for the sake of one's dear family, trusted church staff and professional funeral folk – a service with lots of music with lastingly comforting Gospel words the devil hates!

Was it Mark Twain who reportedly somewhat irreverently claimed that he would routinely glance at the obituary column in the morning paper to see if his name was included and, if not, would then eat breakfast? We know from personal experience not

to make light of what our risen Lord's apostle Paul calls the last great enemy of death (1 Corinthians 15:26).

Death is no laughing matter, and God Himself hated death more than we can ever imagine! We can all agree that there is nothing "funny" about death as the same may surely be said about our Brother-Savior's innocent voluntary crucifixion!

At the same time, paradoxically, my favorite composer, Lutheran Christian composer and musical genius, Johann Sebastian Bach, whose home was always filled with God's gift of music and whose family was blessed with no fewer than 20 children a large percentage of whom sadly died at a very early age was nevertheless able to compose an amazingly "upbeat" chorale melody regarding his own departure from this earthly pilgrimage entitled, "Komm , Suesser Tod" ("Come Sweet Death") as by the grace of God the Bach family knew and firmly believed from Holy Scripture other words of St. Paul from 1 Corinthians 15 where the apostle also quotes from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah that because of the messianic Christ Jesus' sacrificial death and glorious resurrection into which we have also been baptized "the last great enemy of death" has been swallowed up in victory (see Isaiah 25:6-9; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 15:55ff). Thank You, Jesus!



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Everyone Love in Christ***

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