



The Beacon Online

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

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SELC Representatives Attend God's Mercy Here Conference

On December 2 and 3, SELC representatives Rev. Chris Cahill and Board member Deborah St-Onge joined representatives from every synodical district at the "God's Mercy Here" Conference held in St. Louis. The conference was sponsored by the Office of National Mission and served two purposes: 1) To make sure all district leaders and mission executives are aware of the synodical support provided for domestic work and outreach, and 2) to share best practices among all the attendees from all around the US.

It was a practical and informative conference. There are many programs and efforts being made to support families, church workers, congregations, schools, communities experiencing disasters, multi-ethnic ministry, and grant writing. The SELC Board will hear a more detailed report at their January meeting.

Continue to support the work of the Office of National Mission with your prayers. We live in a changing culture with diverse needs and yet, through Christ by His Spirit, we can care for and support one another as we grow in unity of faith and love toward God and in service to our neighbor.



Pastor Charles St-Onge Accepts Call

Rev. Charles St-Onge, Pastor at Ascension Lutheran Church, A SELC Mission Church in Montreal, Canada, has accepted a call to St. John's Lutheran Church in Pembroke, Ontario. We ask for your prayers for the St-Onge family and the members of Ascension as they prepare for this transition early in 2026.



A Christmas Miracle in the Fire at the Haven

Not long before Christmas, three years ago, Rev. Les and Diane Kimball endured a devastating house fire (the first ever at Lutheran Haven) that destroyed nearly everything in their home. Over the previous 4 years, Pastor Kimball had crafted the double-sided intarsia (creates patterns by fitting different colored materials (yarn or wood) together like a jigsaw puzzle, with separate blocks of color rather than carrying yarn strands across the back) nativity which was meticulously made from various hard woods from around the world. At the end of each Christmas season, he and Diane would carefully wrap the figurines in bubble wrap and place them in a box on the floor of their closet.

On September 13th, 2022, the unthinkable happened when their home caught fire. Blessedly, everyone was able to escape safely. When the duct-work above the ceiling burned through that night, the thick, black, highly heated smoke from the garage poured through the ceiling vent and destroyed all their clothing, but NOT the box below containing this prized, hand-made nativity scene and another box of nativity puzzles that Diane made for their many grandchildren.



"What a joy it was when four of our adult children carefully sifted through the charred debris over the next several days looking for anything they could salvage from the ruins and came out with 2 boxes! Inside was the perfectly preserved nativity Pastor Kimball made along with Diane's nativity puzzles. "This was just one more of God's

miracles for our family in the fire.”

Pastor Kimball reminds us, “Isn’t that what Christmas is all about – God intervening in the lives of His people with a miracle of gigantic proportion? It’s not at all difficult to imagine the joy of those shepherds when the sky bursts forth with heavenly brilliance and angels announcing the greatest gift ever to mankind.”

“Our home at the Haven is now fully decorated for Christmas with this nativity as the centerpiece and it serves as a continual reminder of God’s faithfulness to us, and our thankfulness to Him for His blessings and His miracles both big and small.”

“When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God.”
Isaiah 43:2

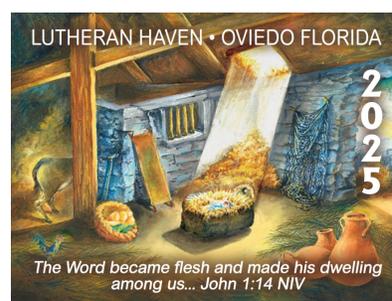


Spiritual Care and Mental Health Resource

If you are a pastor, do you sometimes wonder why you're the last to know when a church member or family is in crisis? If you're not a pastor, have you ever wondered why it seems that some pastors are more approachable than others? Whether or not you're a pastor, have you ever wondered whether pastors get depressed and need mental health care, just like everyone else? **The latest issue of the *Concordia Journal* from Concordia Seminary, St Louis, addresses these questions and more as it focuses on spiritual care and mental health.** You can read a review of this issue by SELC District Ministerial Care Coordinator Rev. Chris Cahill [HERE>>](#).



Lutheran Haven Annual Seals 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

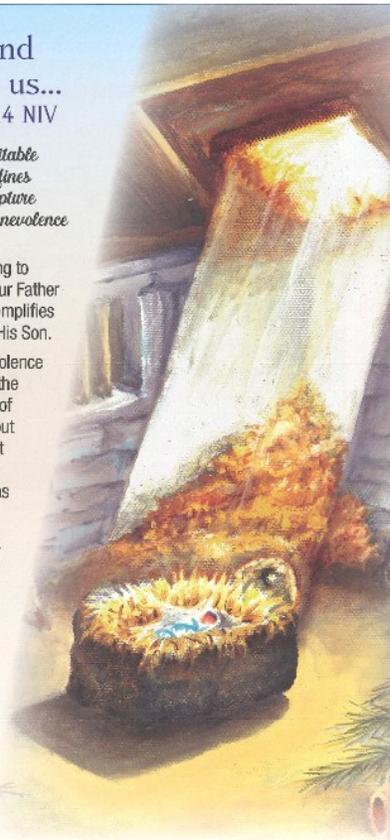
To call someone kind, well-meaning, or charitable is to call them benevolent. The dictionary defines benevolence as a disposition to do good. Scripture describes many of God's attributes, including His benevolence toward us.

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

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing: A Christmas Music Celebration and Christmas Eve with Worship Anew

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing: A Christmas Music Celebration" is a compilation of favorite Advent and Christmas hymns from choirs who have recorded on the "Worship Anew" program. See below where to tune in to hear your favorite hymns this season!



December 22nd: "One of Us" (*Mathew 1:21*) by Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer. The Son of God came in humility that we might be glorified. He came in poverty that we might be rich. He came to die that we might live. He came to dwell with us that we might dwell with Him.

Sermon Text: John 1:14

Readings: Psalm 2; Isaiah 52:7-10; John 1:1-14

Featured Choirs: The Kapelle of Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill.; St. Paul Choristers, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Concordia Lutheran High School A Cappella Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: Trinity Lutheran Church, Detroit, Mich.

On Christmas Eve, come and celebrate the Birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, with a special Christmas Choir Program as well as a special Christmas Eve Service. We will also air our regular Sunday services throughout Advent.

Where to Watch

- YouTube - [youtube.com/@worshipanewonline](https://www.youtube.com/@worshipanewonline) or Search "Worship Anew"
- Streaming through Roku, Amazon Firestick, AppleTV, and Google TV - Search "Worship Anew"

- Worship Anew App - Available through the Apple and Android Stores - [Click here to learn more.](#)
- Facebook - www.facebook.com/WorshipAnew.LMM



Two Job Opportunities at Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries

Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries is a Registered Service Organization of the LCMS that provides a home, help, and hope for women in crisis pregnancy situations. We are currently searching for two Lutherans with a passion for life-affirming ministry to join our team, based out of Sanford, FL. Please check out the job listings for Program Manager and Director of Development and contact us through the information on our website (rlom.org/careers) if you have interest in discussing these opportunities further.



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.



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

Note that contributions should be sent directly to the District Financial Secretary:

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



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](#).



2025 Musical Advent Calendar

Since the nineteenth century, households and congregations have marked the days before Christmastide with many kinds of Advent calendars. The season of waiting and longing for the “already-but-not-yet” incarnation of Jesus unfolds amidst waning daylight in the Northern Hemisphere, a time of yearning for hope, joy, and peace.

Experience the anticipation and hope of the Advent season with Lutheran Summer Music's fifth-annual **Musical Advent Calendar**.

Join us each day from November 30 to December 24 for a musical meditation—inviting you to pause, listen, and find stillness amid the season. Selections will be shared on LSM's **Facebook**, **Instagram**, and **YouTube** pages and archived on our **website**.

Sign up below to enjoy each day's Advent video delivered to your inbox.

Daily Email Sign-Up



Want your church to grow?

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



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December 26th Issue Update

The SELC District weekly newsletter will not be issued on December 26, 2025. We look forward to issuing a new Beacon Online on January 2, 2026.

The District wishes everyone a joyous Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!



Family Bible Journey Podcast

The Family Bible Journey origination story is on this week's episode of God Works Weekly. Here are the links:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/17UijxPfo5/?mibextid=wwXIfr>

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DSFXgxTjuK0/?igsh=MWFkOWp4eDNnanNoOQ==>

Listen on your favorite podcast player or at familybiblejourney.com.



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of journaling through the Bible.



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- Memory Care

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

AL Lic. #12811

Merry Christmas

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and
bear a son, and they shall call his
name Immanuel.”

MATTHEW 1:23



LUTHERAN CHURCH
EXTENSION FUND

JOHN HOOVER

LCEF District Vice President | English & SELC
314-276-3370 | john.hoover@lcef.org



Prayer Requests

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 rehabbing 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.

Rev. Stephen Bocklage, Bel Air, MD, for care and healing for health concerns for his left leg.

Bev Cahill, wife of Rev. Chris Cahill. Lodi, OH, continues her recovery. The Cahills are grateful for all the prayers for Bev. The Cahills are posting updates on "Caring Bridge" at <https://tinyurl.com/Bridge4Bev>.

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.

Milly Kwiatkowski, Parma, OH, who had surgery. Please pray for Milly as she continues her recovery from surgery.

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.



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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Macungie, PA 18062
610-965-3265

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