



The Beacon Online

January 23, 2026/ Vol. 7 / No. 4

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

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Lutheran Schools Week begins January 26th

National Lutheran Schools Week provides more than 1,800 preschools, elementary schools and high schools with the public opportunity to proclaim and celebrate God's work among us in schools of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

We thank God for the opportunity to provide excellent academic preparation for the children we serve. We are most grateful for the opportunity to share Jesus' amazing love with children and their families.

National Lutheran Schools Week gives us an opportunity to proclaim these great blessings within the communities we serve.

Our schools are amazing incubators for faithful witness of God's love for us through Christ by teachers and students alike.

Get ready for National Lutheran Schools Week during the last week in January. The theme is "Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth" which was drawn from Psalm 98:4, is a powerful and vibrant call to action.





Pastor Matthew Fitzpatrick to be Installed January 25th at New City Church in Orlando, Florida

Rev. Matthew Fitzpatrick will be installed as the Pastor at New City Church. He was the Associate Pastor with Pastor Adam Barcott who took a call. The congregation voted to call Pastor Fitzpatrick as the Sole Pastor of the Church. The installation is Sunday, January 25th at 2 PM at New City Lutheran Church in Orlando, Florida.

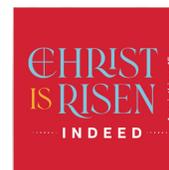


Nomination Period for Synod President and Vice Presidents Ends February 18, 2026

Each congregation should have received a Nomination mailer from Election-America/ Yes Elections to nominate candidates for the President of the LCMS and its Vice Presidents. This is a separate online nomination system and has its own unique credentials for logging in. If you did not receive this and wish to nominate for these Synod positions, please contact lcmspresidentvite@lcms.org



Make Sure Your Congregation is Registered to Vote for the Synod President



It is time to have a Voter's Meeting with your congregation to elect the two representatives from your congregation to vote for the Synod President. You need to elect one Pastoral Voter and one Lay Voter from your congregation to vote for the Synod President and Vice Presidents.

Once you have elected your Voters, please go to this website

<https://pvr.lcms.org/>

to verify/update your two attesting officers. Please make sure all this information is correct. If you need to add or change attesting officers, you can do that under **Manage Attesting Officers** and **Add Attesting Officers** on that website. Multiple officers can be listed, but you need to note the two Attesting Voters.

If your congregation expects to welcome a new Pastor after March 8th, please register the current Pastor and then a new Pastor can be registered if he has replaced the Pastor that was registered. It must be filed 7 days before (**May 29, 2026**) the President Election opens.

If you need help with accessing and using the registration site, please contact Rosters.Stats@lcms.org or by calling 314-996-1366. The Voter Registration must be completed by **March 8, 2026**.



Cheers to Our Newest Club at the Haven!

The Haven on Tap Brewers Club is one of the newest clubs at the Haven where residents gather on Mondays each month to prepare their newest creations of premium beer for their weekend gatherings at our cozy pub at the Harbor.

Haven on Tap was begun by resident, Duane Massoll and soon after several people joined in to prepare these tasty libations from crisp ales to robust stouts for all to enjoy. The group is open to everyone whether they are experienced brewers or those new to the craft and would like to learn about the art and science of brewing excellent craft beers.

"We have the availability for over 50 varieties of craft beers and it's always a lively and fun discussion of which one to try next" says Duane. Each week the club gathers to taste the newest creations that were brewed earlier in the week.





LUTHERAN CHURCH
EXTENSION FUND

Called to LEAD Application Period is Open Deadline is February 1, 2026

Called to LEAD is taking applications for its second cohort.

LCEF, in partnership with CUW, is pleased to provide this unique experience in developing leaders and allowing the development of a hands-on-project. You can find all the details about the program here:

<https://onlineinfo.cuw.edu/called-to-lead>

**L-Lift Others Up E-Empower with Faith A-Act with
Integrity D-Demonstrate Compassion**

Called to LEAD - Faith-Filled Leadership is an immersive program designed to equip emerging church leaders with the essential skills necessary for transformational ministry. This comprehensive program spans one year, offering a blend of foundational leadership courses, expert speakers, and hands-on project development. Participants will be guided through a journey, from vision setting to practical implementation of a faith-based leadership project, supported by ongoing mentorship from their designated Cultivator. At the end of this program, participants will present their Leading and Growing project and, if chosen, will have six additional months to work with their Cultivator. Seed money will be provided to execute their plan for leading and growing their communities with purpose and passion.

Only 15 seats are available. **Application deadline is February 1.** The cohort begins May 1.

This is a unique program that blends the best of leadership development and mentoring with launching a new ministry opportunity.



Acts to Action by Rev. Dr. William Utech

When I served as a Mission Executive in Minnesota, we did a year-long study of our congregations to find out how they were doing. We learned that they were very concerned about their future viability. When we asked them what their greatest challenges were, they consistently identified three issues/problems...

- 1) Aging membership;
- 2) Declining worship attendance;
- 3) The financial stresses that come with the first two challenges.

As I traveled around the district and listened to the concerns of my brothers and sisters in Christ as they grappled with these three hard realities, it eventually dawned on me that the only thing that could promote and empower a change in the direction of their congregations was the Word of God. It was from this non-debatable truth that my book, "From Acts To Action" was born.

God's people are concerned about their local congregations and their surrounding communities, and they want to know: "Are my faith and my local church still relevant?" The answer is a resounding "YES!" But only the Word of God, and especially that Word as it comes to us in the Acts of the Apostles, can make it so. "From Acts To Action" (A2A) is a 90-Day devotional journey that leads readers on a guided tour of the entire Book of Acts to see and learn anew how God is always working through His people, His leaders, and His local congregations to make His kingdom grow.

Your brother in Christ,

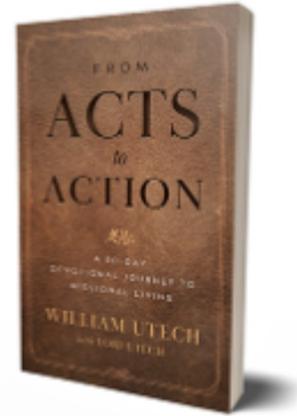
William

William Utech, M.Div., S.T.M., D.Min.

utechw@gofast.am

314-703-8071

- Missiologist
- Author of ***From Acts To Action***



If you would like to see yourself and the brothers and sisters in your local church becoming more intentionally engaged in the mission of God, then A2A can greatly bless you in that effort and outcome. The first century church changed the world for the better. The Lord of the church wants to use you and your 21st century congregation to do the same. A2A can help you get there! You can get a copy of it here — > <https://a.co/d/8I4UV2i>

Or here...





Family Bible Journey This Week King Solomon

Join the Family Bible Journey, as we hear the words of an old and disgruntled King Solomon towards the end of his life in Ecclesiastes. We also explore the hopes and aspirations of young love penned in the Song of Solomon. Listen on your favorite podcast player or at familybiblejourney.com



Join the journey
of journaling through the Bible.



Luther Classical College

Luther Classical College educates Lutherans in the classical, Lutheran tradition and prepares them for godly vocations within family, church, and society, fostering Christian culture through study of the best of our Western heritage.

In August 2025, more than thirty students began pursuing their degrees in Classical Liberal Arts (the only major at LCC) at our downtown campus in Casper, Wyoming. The staff and faculty appreciate your prayers and support as we continue preparing these young men and women for life in all three estates.

If you would like more information, or would like a college representative to present at a Winkel or congregational bible study, please contact Rev. Jacob Benson, Chief Advancement and Admissions Officer via email at jacob.benson@lutherclassica.org



Nominate Young Musicians for [Lutheran Summer Music](http://LSMacademy.org/nominate)

Now is the time to nominate students for LSM 2026. Enrollment for next summer is filling quickly, and we expect most remaining spots to be filled by the **March 1 Standard Enrollment deadline**. At LSM, students connect advanced musical study with worship and the joy of Lutheran church music traditions. We welcome musicians on all instruments—brass, woodwinds, strings, percussion, piano, organ, voice, and harp—to study with nationally recognized faculty in a welcoming and supportive community.

LSM 2026 takes place at St. Olaf College from June 21–July 19. Know a young musician (grades 8–12) who would thrive at LSM? Nominate them today at LSMacademy.org/nominate.

Questions contact us at admissions@lutheransummermusic.org.



Mark Your Calendars

February 1, 2026 - Called to LEAD Application is due.

February 18, 2026 - Your Nominations for Synod President must be submitted by this date.

February 19, 2026 - LWML in person and zoom monthly Bible study. 10:30 AM EST.

March 8, 2026 - Your congregation's Voters, Pastoral and lay, must be registered.

May 1 - 3, 2026 - LWML District Convention in St. Louis, MO



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



The Book of Concord

Explore the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church

Concordia Publishing House is pleased to announce it is offering a free version of the Book of Concord on their new website. This easy-to-use resource allows you to navigate through all the major documents of the Book of Concord

The text for the Book of Concord is not a brand-new translation from the original German and Latin texts. This reader's edition is a revised and updated version of the translation originally prepared by William H. T. Dau and G. Friedrich Bente for the Concordia Triglotta, published in 1921.

From About This Edition, Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions, Pocket Edition. © 2005, 2006 Concordia Publishing House. Source: <https://bookofconcord.cph.org/en/about/>

The Book of Concord
Available Online

Explore the **FREE** Resource

The banner features a dark blue background with white text. On the right side, there is a photograph of a laptop displaying the website's interface, which includes a title and several menu options.

Want your church to grow?

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

 **genysysgroup**
Discovering New Life in Ministry

www.genysys-group.com

The advertisement features a watercolor illustration of a mountain range with several evergreen trees in the foreground. Below the illustration, the text asks 'Want your church to grow?' and encourages watching a video. A QR code is provided for access. The Genysys Group logo and website URL are also included.



- Independent Living
- Assisted Living *(new apartments)*
- Memory Care

Visit our Community to experience the difference
Call **407-542-1637** to find out more

AL Lic. #12811

lcef.org/SELC



Let's discover your financial path together

Meet your LCEF representative

Your LCEF District Vice President (DVP) is

John Hoover

 314-276-3370

 john.hoover@lcef.org



I am here to help **start, sustain and strengthen** LCMS ministries through financial and strategic partnerships.



LUTHERAN CHURCH
EXTENSION FUND



Lutheran Summer Music Academy Applications Due March 1, 2026

Youth musicians from across the country are headed to St. Olaf College this year for the 2026 Lutheran Summer Music Academy & Festival (LSM). Students in grades 8-12 will be immersed in a supportive community that nurtures their musical growth, and invites them to share their musical gifts in performance and in worship. The Standard Enrollment deadline is March 1, and spots are filling fast. Do you know young musicians who would thrive at LSM? Nominate them today at LSMacademy.org/nominate, or remind them to submit a free application by March 1 at LSMacademy.org/apply.



Prayer Requests

Rev. Brian Roberts, Orlando, FL. Please continue to pray for him as he continues his journey following cancer treatment.

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, we request prayers for strength and healing while undergoing infusion chemotherapy for him, Holly, and family."

Rev. Edward Kucera, and his wife Irene, St. Louis, MO, for God's loving care.

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

Rev. Arthur H. Baisch, Sharon, PA, dealing with an open wound on his left foot, near the ball of the little toe, which may, in the not-too-distant future, require surgery.

Bev Cahill, wife of Rev. Chris Cahill. Lodi, OH, recovering from an upper respiratory infection.

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. John, Granite City, IL. Praise God with us for 6 grace years (2019 colon surgery - 2024 remove metastasis to ovary); now we reach a pause in therapy. Pray for daily grace to live with Jesus among those in His dear Church, in worship and service and waiting and looking up – to see the full grace to come - for we all see Him face to face.

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 to recover from surgery.

Members of Grace Lutheran in Lakewood, OH - For the family and friends of **Stephan Kmetz** who went to be with Jesus on January 13. He was the treasurer and Communion Assistant at Grace and served his church faithfully. He battled cancer for several years but continued serving through it. Also, the President of the congregation, **Geoff Paul** is now receiving Hospice care having battled cancer for a few years. Grace's organist, **Tim Rasper**, had open heart surgery this past Thursday.

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. Kenneth Ballas, EM

Epiphany is a great time to remember it is the Word of God that does the work of God especially when we take time to read, hear and, yes, share with those we may meet or already have special reason to love.

Though most of us have easier access today than at any other time in recorded history to read for ourselves the written Word, globally there are still a surprising number of people (many of whom live in areas where Christians are being savagely persecuted), who are. prayerfully crying out for their first ever written Scripture portion in their very own native spoken language. We can help you learn how you can best support these dear sisters and brothers in the faith even at a distance.



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

Contact Us
selc.lcms@gmail.com

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