



The Beacon Online

February 6, 2026/ Vol. 7 / No. 6

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

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Eastern Circuit Pastors Conference at Zion in Clark, NJ

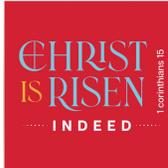
On Monday and Tuesday, Zion Lutheran Church in Clark, New Jersey had the joy of hosting the Eastern Circuit Pastors Conference, bringing together pastors from across the circuit for two meaningful days of fellowship, encouragement, and spiritual renewal.

Pictured on right, Back row:
Rev. Allen Dass, Vicar Rowan
Turner, Rev. James Douthwaite,
and Rev. Peter Haenftling Front
row: District President Rev.
Wally Vinovskis, Rev. Ray
Malec, and Rev.
Gordon Naumann



Throughout the conference, pastors were strengthened through times of worship, prayer, and thoughtful teaching. The sessions provided space to reflect on the call to ministry, share experiences, and be refreshed for the work God has entrusted to each congregation. Conversations were rich, connections were deepened, and there was a shared sense of unity and purpose among those in attendance.

As our pastors return to their churches, we pray that the encouragement and insights gained during these two days will continue to bear fruit in their ministries and communities. We thank God for the opportunity to gather, grow, and move forward together in faith.



Make Sure Your Congregation is Registered to Vote for the Synod President Deadline is March 8, 2026

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**.



Making a Joyful Noise at Zion Lutheran Preschool

Last week, Zion Lutheran Church in Clark joyfully celebrated National Lutheran Schools Week with our preschool students during "Let's Make a Joyful Noise Week!" Each day focused on praising God, serving others, and celebrating Jesus through songs, fun activities, and simple ways to make a joyful noise.

Throughout the week, students collected winter hats and gloves to help those in need, created heartfelt cards for our shut-ins, spent special "Jesus Time" with Pastor Dass, and talked about how much Jesus loves them. The week concluded on Friday morning with a special Coffee Break for parents, bringing families together in fellowship and celebration.

As a special keepsake, each student received a tambourine labeled "Make a Joyful Noise," reminding them of a week filled with faith, fun, and community. We loved seeing all the smiles, laughter, and joyful noise filling our school—not just this week, but every week!



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



Veterans of the Cross Gathering March 9-11, 2026

All retired lay and rostered workers who have served in LCMS churches and schools are invited to attend the Veterans of the Cross Gathering at St. Stephen Retreat Center-Titusville, FL.

Rev. Dr. Gerald 'Jerry' Kieschnick, President Emeritus LCMS and wife Terry along with Rev. Dr. David 'Dave' Benke, President Emeritus of the Atlantic District and his wife Judy will serve as Keynote and Bible Study leaders. Theme is "Christ in Our Chaos". There will be lots of fellowship, singing, and flocking together to enjoy a new look at Psalm 33.

Devotion leaders include Rev. Dr. Greg Walton, Rev. Stan Allen, Jr, Sheryl DeWitt, Rev. Dr. Anthony Steinbronn, and Rev. Dr. Tom Zehnder. President James Rockey will serve as proclaimer for the divine service. More information can be found on the FLGA District Website. Contact Andrea Ellis for questions (aellis@flgadistrict.org.)

Registration deadline is **February 14th, 2026**.



LWML -SELC Monthly Bible Study

The monthly Bible study will be held on February 19th at 10:30 AM EST in person at Christ the King Lutheran in Lodi, OH and by zoom at this link -

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72432487731?pwd=icwzj2O2OcUyBV1e2Uj4e8t0Onf4b2.1>



FL-GA Lutheran Early Response Receives \$10,000 Grant from Barge Design Solutions

Florida-Georgia Lutheran Early Response (FGLER) has received a **\$10,000 grant from Barge Design Solutions** to support the **purchase of disaster response equipment** used in recovery efforts across Florida and Georgia.

The funding will help equip trained volunteers as they serve communities affected by natural disasters, strengthening FGLER's ability to respond quickly, safely, and compassionately. As Scripture reminds us, *"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others"* (1 Peter 4:10).

FL-GA Lutheran Early Response is grateful for this investment, which helps ensure disaster survivors receive practical assistance, care, and hope during recovery.





Deadline for LWML Mission Grant Request is February 28, 2026

Your 2026 - 2028 Mission Grant requests are due February 28, 2026. You can access the form by clicking [here](#). If you have any questions please contact the Mission Grant VP Karen Ann Kowalczyk, her contact information is on the form on the LWML-SELC website, which can be accessed by clicking [here](#).



Mark Your Calendars

February 14, 2026 - Veterans of the Cross Gathering registration 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.

February 28, 2026 - LWML Mission Grant requests are due.

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/>



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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, please pray for Pastor Kevin and Holly Duff, asking Him for peace and courage in coming months as doctors figure out course of treatments for brain tumors and other issues.

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, was hospitalized this weekend with blood clots in his lungs. He is now at Presbyterian in Pittsburgh in the ICU while the clots are treated. Please pray for him as he receives treatment.

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.

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

Based on Simeon's temple canticle the **Nunc Dimittis** and Mary's Presentation of Our Lord 40 days after Christmas in Luke 2:29-32 is this beautiful hymn (Hymn 938, LSB) of Martin Luther:

In peace and joy I now depart
Since God so wills it.
Serene and confident my heart;

Stillness fills it.
For the Lord has promised me
That death is but a slumber.

Christ Jesus brought this gift to me,
My faithful Savior.
Whom You have made my eyes to see
By Your favor.
Now I know He is my life,
My Friend when I am dying.

You sent the people of the earth
Their great salvation.
Your invitation summons forth
Ev'ry nation.
By Your holy, precious Word,
In ev'ry place resounding.

Christ is the hope and saving light
Of those in blindness.
He guides and comforts those in night
By His kindness.
For Your people, Israel
In Him find joy and glory.



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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