



The Beacon Online

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

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The Duda Family Council Celebrates Service Day at Lutheran Haven!

On Saturday, March 7th, more than thirty residents at The Harbor, Landings & Cottages welcomed The Duda Family Council to enjoy refreshments and storytelling on the porch. The Duda Family Council is a seven-member team who work on behalf of the Duda Family to provide education and development, plan events, cultivate philanthropy, and more for 260 plus Duda family members who live all over the country.

It was a lovely time filled with laughter and memories of days gone by when many residents knew and/or worked with descendants of the Duda Family. The Duda Family Council even brought residents a "care kit" full of useful items to take home.





Back in 1945, the Duda Company founder, Andrew Duda Sr., donated a generous gift of forty acres and \$90,000 in cash to the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC) to support his vision of a home for retired ministers, widows and children.

The first of two Lutheran Haven buildings was dedicated on May 30, 1948. Over the years, additional retirement cottages, memory care, and independent living apartments have been added to the property where nearly 300 residents call "home."



Many may know DUDA for the vast sod fields throughout Oviedo but may not know that DUDA is a fifth-generation family-owned and -operated company headquartered in Oviedo, Florida, with diversified operations in agriculture and real estate. DUDA celebrates its 100th anniversary this year! Land and assets have always been at the foundation of DUDA's strength and success, from the first 40 Florida acres Andrew Duda purchased in the early 1900s to over 45,000 acres owned and leased today across the U.S. Using good stewardship and land management practices, DUDA strives

to achieve its corporate mission as a diversified enterprise through wide-ranging operations and subsidiary companies in agriculture, real estate development, and related businesses.

Starting out as a small celery farm in 1926, DUDA's business operations today include Duda Farm Fresh Foods, one of the world's leading producers and suppliers of celery and other quality fresh and fresh-cut produce; The Viera Company, a highly regarded community developer with fully-integrated real estate operations including residential home builder Viera Builders, Duran Golf Club, Viera Commercial Properties, and Viera Pools and Outdoor Living; Duda Ranches, manager of DUDA's agricultural operations including sod, sugarcane, and cattle; and DUDA Commercial Properties, the company's asset management portfolio. Guided by a multigenerational leadership team and a family governance structure grounded in its purpose – to multiply and share God's blessings – DUDA continues to pursue sustainable growth and community impact across its many operations. www.duda.com



Congregational Statistics are Due March 31, 2026

The deadline has been extended a month

The annual congregational statistics are due to the Synod by March 31, 2026. If you are having trouble logging in to lc.lcms.org or that need other assistance can use the on-screen help or email Rosters at Rosters.Stats@lcms.org or call (314)996-1366 and Synod staff will assist them.



Concordia Center for the Family Training and Support

Concordia Center for the Family, a Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS, is uniting homes and congregations in making lifelong disciples of Jesus. Through foundational training events, NOW with follow-up cohorts and coaching options, Family Discipleship Facilitators are being equipped and inspired to strengthen the marriages and families served by our LCMS congregations and schools. **CCF wants YOU as a Family Discipleship Facilitator!** This training opportunity is for called and commissioned leaders of LCMS congregations and schools, along with lay family ministry leaders. MORE trainings have been added! **Find out about our 2026 trainings [HERE](#).** *Your District is offering funding to cover part of the cost of Training. Contact the SELC District office for more information.*

Also consider CCF's *Faith & Life Survey* tool to assess how well you're serving families and receive support as you seek to better serve them. Find out more [HERE](#). And please remember we have resources for you. You can head to our website or sign up for our weekly emails where we share resources by clicking [HERE](#).



Multiethnic Symposium

May 5 - 6, 2026

**Celebrating God's Love and
Faithfulness Across All Nations**



In the context of a multiethnic church, praise becomes a powerful witness to the rich tapestry of peoples who together glorify Him. Through expressions of praise in music, dance and art, the 2026 Multiethnic Symposium will explore how the church is equipped to bear witness to God's love and faithfulness across all nations. "Praise the Lord, all nations!" (Ps. 117:1 ESV).

Registration is now open for the 2026 Multiethnic Symposium, May 5-6, 2026 here at Concordia Seminary St. Louis.

Learn more on this YouTube video is an invitation from Dr. Ely Prieto: <https://youtu.be/oRHIS61bwh4?si=LZzmVI314PI25hg2>

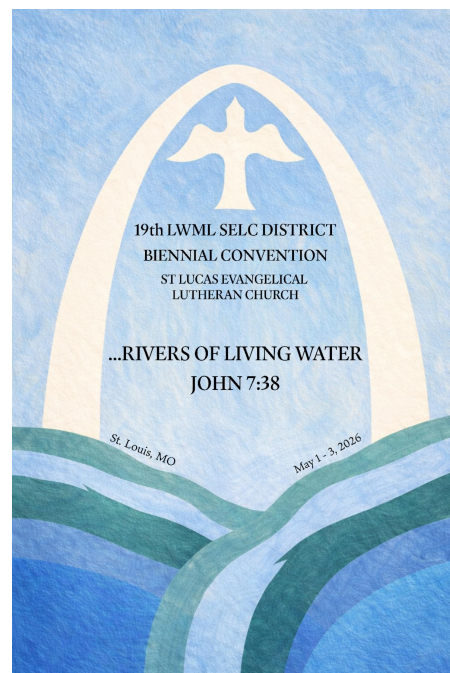
Register <https://www.csl.edu/resources/continuing-education/multiethnic-symposium/>.



LWML Convention May 1 - 3, 2026

The LWML-SELC is holding their convention in St. Louis, Missouri May 1 - 3, 2026. The theme of the convention is "Rivers of Living Water" based on the Bible verse: John 7:38 - Jesus declares, he that believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly will flow Rivers of Living Water.

The convention will be held at St. Lucas Lutheran Church at 7100 Morganford Road St. Louis, Missouri 63116. Overnight rooms are available at the River City Casino and Hotel and rooms must be reserved by **April 16, 2026 at 8:00 AM** is the last day for guests to reserve their hotel rooms through the booking link **River City Hotel Booking Link** CODE: **STLC26E**. Individuals may also call 855-785-4263 for reservations using the same code STLC26E.





Called to Serve Event St. Luke's Lutheran Church Oviedo, Florida

Please join us for a meal and presentation by [Rev. Jesse Kueker](#), director of Enrollment, on the doctrine of vocation and the status of enrollment at [Concordia Seminary, St. Louis](#).

Who should attend?

- Those exploring or interested in pursuing pastoral ministry
- The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) clergy and laity interested in helping recruit the next generation of church workers

St. Luke's Lutheran Church and School
Oviedo, FL
5–7 p.m. Saturday, May 23, 2026

There is no cost to attend, but space is limited. Please [register online](#) or by calling 800-822-9545.



2026 Take Heart Scholarships Available

The Take Heart Scholarship was developed for high school seniors who will soon advance to your next level of higher education. During these times of excitement, anxiousness and uncertainty, "take heart!" As Christians, we cannot anticipate that life will be perfect or familiar, but when we feel that the world has become difficult, take comfort in knowing that our God has overcome it all!

As you begin your new journey, LCEF wants to assist your transition by offering financial support through the Take Heart Scholarship. Three individual awards are available: **\$3,000, \$1,000, and \$500**. **Applications close May 1, 2026**, and winners will be announced by May 30.

How to Apply

Complete the [application form](#).

In 1,000 words or fewer, answer this question in essay form:

Other than Jesus, pick one person from the Bible you would want to talk with for an hour. Why would you choose this person? What would you talk about? What questions would you ask them? What would you hope to learn?

Scholarship recipients will be selected based on the thoughtfulness and creativity of their response.



Registration open for Vocatio: High School June 20–26, 2026

Students explore vocational ministry during on-campus visit

Vocatio: High School, an annual weeklong visit event for high school students held on the campus of **Concordia Seminary, St. Louis**, is set for June 20–26, 2026. The visit provides an introduction to Seminary life and the ministerial formation process.

Specifically, the retreat offers young people the opportunity to explore the vocations of pastor and deaconess and consider future service in the church. Participants will engage in theological conversation, hear from Seminary professors and attend a Concordia University System college fair. Group sessions will focus on thoughtful conversation about the Lutheran faith, aspects of vocation and the call to pastoral or diaconal ministry. Participants also will walk through the admissions process, learn about the St. Louis area, and engage in some fun and recreation!

“As I went through high school, I thought about pursuing several different vocations, including helping with my dad's business, going into youth ministry or studying to become a Lutheran teacher. While the idea of becoming a pastor was on my mind as well, it wasn't until I visited the Seminary campus that the idea became a real possibility,” said **Rev. Craig Reiter**, admissions officer. “It's a joy now to lead Vocatio: High School and I pray our youth are blessed by their time on campus and are encouraged toward considering church work like I was.”

The registration fee is \$300, which includes lodging and meals. The deadline to **register** is May 15, 2026.



Mark Your Calendars

March 31, 2026 - Congregational Statistics reports are due

May 1, 2026 - Take Heart Scholarship Applications due

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

May 5 - 6, 2026 - Multiethnic Symposium, Concordia Seminary St. Louis

May 15, 2026 - Vocatio for high school students registration ends

May 23, 2026 - Called to Serve Event, St. Luke's Oviedo, Florida



Family Bible Journey

The family Bible journey podcast is walking through the pages of Isaiah, a mini Bible within the Bible. We are also reading 2nd Thessalonians. Learn how the book of Isaiah is an Old Testament summary of the entire scripture including 27 chapters of prophecy, promise and hope in a Messiah that correspondence perfectly with the 27 books of the New Testament.



Join the journey
of journaling through the Bible.

Listen on your favorite podcast platform or go to the website familybiblejourney.com.



Want your church to grow?

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a church raise over \$500,000
in four weeks!



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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



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. 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, who is receiving physical therapy and is working on healing a foot injury he had before the hospitalization and blood clots.

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 the Lord for 7 years of healing, the name *Jesus* is greater than *Cancer*. We thank Him for His presence in daily victories, while we all watch and wait to see Jesus 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 **To What Extent Is Our God Subject of Our Theology and Practice?**

Rev. Kenneth Ballas, EM

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do so with your might!" Depending on one's motivation, people of faith will interpret these words usually attributed to King Solomon from Ecclesiastes 9:10 much differently from say an impulsive band of bank robbers.

On the other hand, serious students of the written Word of God will be much more apt to be prayerfully to be mindful of the **Spirit of God's Gospel motivation of maximizing the grace of God** with the single-hearted goal that our **messianic Lord Jesus Christ** be and remain **preeminent** with a view to an undying focus of our consciously **taking our every single thought captive to obey Christ** (2 Corinthians 10:5-6; Colossians 1:18).

"Easier said than done, St. Paul!" one may think, yet ever potentially attainable in more than seemingly limited "drips and drabs." "How so?" you ask. The words "**Gospel motivation!**" recall our creedal affirmation of believing in "**the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting!**" with a view to gladly seizing additional newer opportunities for Kingdom service of our sinless crucified Brother-Savior and glorified ascended Lord.

*Thus we pray. Living Lord Jesus, forgive our purely self-centered expenditure of "negative energy" including any missed opportunities better to help others not only with their obviously appreciated temporal physical needs without at times demonstrating a similar or even greater concern for Your beloved Church's uniquely positioned role in providing the even more deeply needed **eternal spiritual** dimensions of our most holy blood-bought baptismal faith. Amen.*



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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