



The Beacon Online

May 1, 2026/ Vol. 7 / No. 18

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

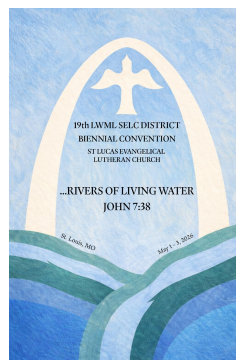
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LWML-SELC District Convention Starts Today

The LWML-SELC District Convention begins tonight with Opening Worship at St. Lucas Lutheran Church in St. Louis, MO. The convention ends on Sunday, May 3rd at the 10:30 AM worship service. The theme of the convention is Rivers of Running Waters, John 7:38.

We ask for your prayers for a successful convention.



Rev. Peter Haenftling Installation for Dual Parish May 2, 2026

Rev. Peter Haenftling, Pastor at St. Matthew in Wilkes-Barre, PA is being installed on May 2, 2026 at 4 PM as the Pastor in a multiparish formed with St. Peter Lutheran Church in Hanover Township, PA. The installation will be at St. Peter at 1000 S. Main Street Hanover TWP, PA 18706. We ask for your prayers as he is installed at St. Peter and as the two congregations work together to serve God's kingdom.



Lutheran Haven Kicks Off Its Mothers Day Appeal



Happy Mother's Day!



"Generations of Caring and Caring for Generations" is not just a slogan at Lutheran Haven. It truly reflects the lives of many of our residents who share a long history of family and friends who have chosen the Haven as their home. Each story is unique, but all share the common thread of deeply caring for one another in a place that deeply cares for them.

Lutheran Haven is honored to share Marilyn von Schlichten's heartfelt memories with you:

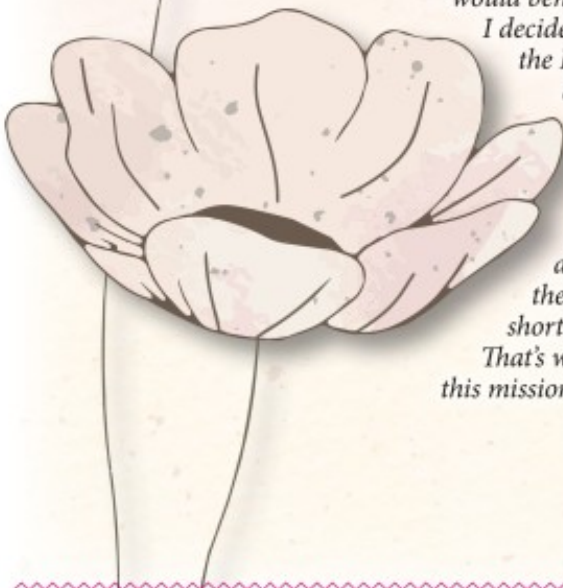
"I first heard about Lutheran Haven in the early 1970's when my mother-in-law, Louise von Schlichten moved to the Haven. Through her, my husband Bill and I learned of the vision to help retired Lutheran pastors and teachers. (Bill's father was a missionary pastor in India and served as a military chaplain in Germany). By the early 1980's, my parents, Bill and Charlotte Lohse also moved to the Haven.



Through our many visits over the years, we were impressed with the friendliness and care given to the residents. I live by the saying "God is in control" and I believe that every day. The Lord has blessed me and my loved one's lives so much. That's why we decided long ago to become donors to Lutheran Haven.

In 2000, Bill and I decided to invest in a trust fund that would benefit Lutheran Haven in the future. After 25 years, I decided to give the trust fund to the Haven to benefit the Restricted Endowment Fund for Benevolent Care and the Aging-In-Place initiative. This will assist residents in need for years to come.

Throughout the years I've thought of our parents and especially our moms on Mother's Day and how they were so well cared for and loved living at the Haven. It brings me such comfort now that they're with the Lord. Some say the "Haven" is just short for "Heaven" and I witnessed that for many years. That's why my husband and I shared such a passion for this mission and ministry.





Out of thanks to God for His many blessings, I/we enclose a gift to
The Lutheran Haven Foundation for:

- General
- Benevolent Care



Name (s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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.



Thank you for your kindness.

I have already included Lutheran Haven In My Estate Plan.

I would like more Information on the following:

- Charitable Gift Annuities
- Including Lutheran Haven in my Estate Plan

For your privacy, Lutheran Haven Foundation does not release personal information to third parties.

Happy Mother's Day

The mission of Lutheran Haven is to provide a quality, Christ-centered haven of care for older adults.



Residential vs. Online Seminary Education Experience Discussion

We encourage you to listen to SELC District President Wally Vinovskis and South Wisconsin District President Nathan Meador, along with host Rev. Zach Zehnder who discuss residential versus online seminary experiences and ways to encourage more men to enter into the seminary. The need for more men to enter the Seminary and become ordained is paramount to help fill the vacancies in many churches across the Synod.





An Easter Season Devotion

Rev. John Telloni

Two grieving men distraught over the events of the past weekend. Heading home. Scratching their heads wondering what the future is going to be like. Worn out. Tired. Brokenhearted. Not knowing where to turn.

But suddenly a stranger appears, and asks in a compassionate way, "*What is going on? You both look so sad.*"



And the men answer that their hopes collapsed by the events of the past few days. They described the gruesome tragedy that shattered their dreams of redemption and glory. They were so banking on this Jesus of Nazareth wearing the Messianic crown. What would happen now that He has disappeared?

So, this kindly stranger proceeds to explain what really happened. He provides them with answers about the truth of life and the future, and what God has done according to His promise in the Scriptures to heal and save and bring hope and joy that will last forever.

The men listened intently to the message, and they were thinking very hard about what they had heard, but they did not verbally respond. But they were impressed with the man and so invited him to stay in their home with them overnight.

They offered their table for a meal and invited this erudite stranger to fellowship with them. When they brought the food, He gently but unexpectedly became the host! He then broke the bread in their presence for them to eat, as if he were the benefactor of the hospitality and feast.

But then He surprisingly disappeared as quickly as He had appeared earlier.

Immediately the two men said, "*How our hearts were burning when he was talking to us on the road,*" and now they recognized Him as the Jesus they knew – and now IS the answer to their problems and the source of their comfort and the reason for a fantastic hope for the future.

They were so elated that they could not contain their joy, and so they immediately left their home and traveled seven miles up to Jerusalem to tell their friends all about the Miracle Worker and Teacher and Savior and Lord now risen.

I tell this very familiar story of the two Emmaus disciples encountering Jesus in the way that I did so that you could see something special that I believe St. Luke the Gospel writer intended for us to detect in this fabulous story.

If you really study the words and the order in this story, the events basically are a stunning "*paradigm*" for the worship pattern of Christians who trust and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes, this story, believe it or not, in my opinion, gives us the basic form for Christian worship that has developed through the centuries as the Word and Sacrament are delivered to people who are lost and broken and weary.

First, our worship services are structured to allow people to vent and tell the Lord what is hurting in their hearts – as the two men did on the road – and how they messed up and misunderstood God’s plan. This is true *Confession*.

And God provides His answer by forgiving them for the sake of Jesus Christ, who died on the cross, and rose again to pay for their sins, and give them eternal life. Yes, *Absolution*.



SELC District Receives Two Vicarage Placements at Call Day

Two students at Concordia Seminary received Vicarage Placement assignments at Call Day at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Garrett Robison will be at St. Luke's Lutheran Church and School in Oviedo, Florida and Zachary Johnson will be at Concordia Lutheran Church in Macungie, PA. Pictured on the right is President Vinovskis and Rev. Dr. Joel Elowsky at Call Day.

Pictured below left is Garrett Robison and on the right is Zachary Johnson





Honduras Mission Connection

The Honduras Lutheran Mission Network, which has partnered with Faith *Viera*, Rockledge, FL and St. Luke's, Oviedo, FL, establishes a formal support system for U.S. churches, equipping them with resources and training to engage in missions that strengthen both Honduran and American congregations. It seeks to connect God's people to His mission by using global partnerships to awaken believers to opportunities for discipleship both abroad and in their everyday lives. Rather than focusing solely on mission trips, the network emphasizes building relationships across borders that deepen faith and strengthen the Church on both sides. If you would like to learn more, please contact Pastor Micah Steiner at Msteiner@oflc.net.



A New Shepherd's Canyon Retreat Center is Opening

Shepherd's Canyon Retreat (a Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS) is in the process of closing on a new Missouri property, and their first Missouri retreat is scheduled for June 9–16, 2026. Additional retreat dates for both Missouri and Arizona can be found here: <https://www.shepherdscanyonretreat.org/2026>

The property is located in the northeast corner of Missouri near the Iowa and Illinois borders. Its location is within driving distance of roughly a dozen states, making it especially accessible for many church workers in the Midwest and beyond. This property is part of a pilot model intended to keep year-round overhead costs low while still providing a meaningful setting for retreat ministry. Under this model, the two therapists and chaplain will serve at the property throughout the day while staying at a nearby hotel overnight.

It may be most helpful to think of this property as a parsonage-style ministry home that can host several retreats each year, rather than as a full-sized, year-round retreat center with a large full-time staff like they have in Arizona.

This Missouri location, and potentially others like it in the future, is intended to include a host couple (most likely a retired pastor and his wife) who would live in a portion of the home. In exchange, they would serve as the on-site hosts during retreat weeks and help represent the ministry throughout the year by speaking at area churches, attending church worker conferences, and building relationships with supporters in the region.

We are thankful for your prayers and support as this new chapter begins.



The Apostolic Fathers Educational Opportunity Dr. Joel Elowsky August 10 - 12, 2026 in Macungie, PA

Dr. Joel Elowsky will be in Macungie, PA to lead a study of the primary literature of the Apostolic Fathers with application to the life of the church today. The study will primarily focus on the texts themselves, with attention given to issues of authorship, dating, the integrity of the text and the occasion for the writing, as well as major theological, ecclesiological and social issues that the writings address, such as martyrdom, church order, orthodoxy and heresy, and early Christian rituals.

Dr. Elowsky is a member of the SELC District and is the professor of Historical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He also is the director of the Seminary's Center for the Study of Early Christian Texts and is a researcher for the Center for Early African Christianity at the Oden House in New Haven, Conn. He has been a faculty member at Concordia Seminary since 2014. His interests and areas of expertise include early church studies, the history of exegesis, mission work and African Christianity.

The course will be held from August 10 - 12, 2026 at [Concordia Lutheran Church in Macungie, PA](#). The schedule is

August 10 - 1 PM - 4 PM

August 11 - 9 AM - 4 PM

August 12 - 9 AM - 12 noon

Registration is \$160 and you must register by July 27, 2026. Please contact [District President W.R. Vinovskis](#) with any questions.

[Click here to register](#)

PROF INSIGHTS
FACULTY-LED WORKSHOP SERIES

**AUG 10-12
2026**

**The Apostolic
Fathers**

Concordia Lutheran Church
2623 Brookside
Macungie, PA 18062

Dr. Joel Elowsky
Professor of Historical Theology,
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis



Women's Monthly Bible Study

The monthly in-person and zoom Bible study will be held on May 21st at 10:30 AM ET. To access the zoom link, [click here](#). The **May 21st** study will be "Who Is My Neighbor and What Does This Mean?" from the Lutheran Women's Quarterly on page 18 and **June 18th** will be "Out of Sight but Not Out of Mine" on page 22.



The DOXOLOGY Classic Series June 1-4, 2026

DOXOLOGY is a professional continuing education program for LCMS pastors, their wives, and congregational lay leaders. Participants consistently describe it as transformational for both life and ministry.

The DOXOLOGY Classic Series (June 1-4 in Wichita, Kansas) offers advanced training designed to:

- Strengthen pastors for the holy calling of shepherding souls
- Ground learning in the classic care of souls
- Integrate insights from contemporary Christian psychology
- Provide time for meaningful conversation, encouragement, and worship

The next Classic Series begins June 1st. We hope you'll prayerfully consider joining your brother pastors in being renewed and refreshed for the work of the Gospel.

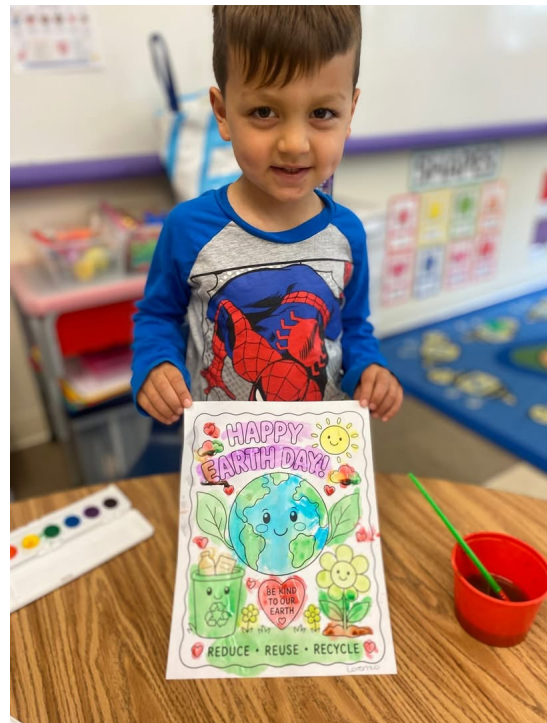
Registration & Grants

- Tuition: \$2,900
 - Covers 10 days of instruction, lodging and meals for pastors (three events)
 - Covers instruction, lodging and meals for wives and lay leaders
- **LCMS Worker Wellness Retreat grants provide assistance for pastors who desire to participate in a retreat program. Please complete an online form to apply for a grant. Inform your District President about your interest and then [apply online at this link](#).**
- Thanks to generous LCMS grants every registration is a fraction of the true cost.
- Additional district, LCMS, LWML, and PALS grants available. Visit the registration pages for more information on these opportunities.



Concordia Preschool Celebrates Earth Day

Concordia Preschool in Macungie, PA celebrated Earth Day on April 22nd. The PreK 5 class dissected an owl pellet to discover what owls eat. Another class went to work planting seeds in the Community garden. They also talked about and colored ways to keep our plant clean.





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 interested in pursuing a career in church work...
- 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.



**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

- May 1, 2026** - Take Heart Scholarship Applications due
- May 1 - 3, 2026** - LWML District Convention in St. Louis, MO
- May 2, 2026** - Installation of Rev. Peter Haenftling at St. Peter in Hanover TWP, PA
- May 5 - 6, 2026** - Multiethnic Symposium, Concordia Seminary St. Louis
- May 15, 2026** - Vocatio for high school students registration ends
- May 21, 2026** - LWML monthly zoom Bible study at 10:30 AM
- May 23, 2026** - Called to Serve Event, St. Luke's Oviedo, Florida
- August 10 - 12, 2026** - The Apostolic Fathers, Concordia Macungie, PA



Family Bible Journey

In the military, there is a clear chain of command. Everyone knows to whom they report. IN this life of competing allegiances, how can we live confidently, trying to please all who are over us? By endeavoring to serve Christ in all things. we will be fulfilled and approved. Listen to A Worker Approved by God, from II Timothy 2



Join the journey
of journaling through the Bible.

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

Is your church considering how to make a greater impact in your community? Talk to the professionals at genysysgroup.com to learn how our teams of consultants are equipping churches to make real impact in their community for Christ and the blessing of those they serve.



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Prayer Requests

We ask for your prayers for the family of Sam Jurkovich of Pleasant City, Ohio. Sam was a lifelong member of our Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Pleasant City. His brother Paul served for many years as the SELC District Financial Secretary. His funeral and committal were held on Wednesday, April 29, 2026.

Please keep the congregations of St. Matthew in Wilkes-Barre, PA and St. Peter in Hanover Twp., PA in your prayers as Pastor Peter Haenftling is installed to serve St. Peter in addition to St. Matthew.

Daniel McLean, Oviedo, FL, who has entered hospice. Please keep him, his wife Emily, Deaconess at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Oviedo, and their children in your prayers.

Rev. David Triplett, North Ridgeville, OH, had cervical fusion surgery on February 27th and is still recovering with post-surgery complications within the Cleveland Clinic System in Cleveland Ohio.

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. Mrs. Ballas is recovering from a fall at home.

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.

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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