



The Beacon Online

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

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Lisa Moyer Accepts Deaconess Call to Faith *Viera*

Lisa (Elisabeth) Moyer has accepted the call to be a Deaconess at Faith *Viera* in Rockledge, FL. Lisa graduates from the online Deaconess program at Concordia Fort Wayne. Her family will all be present as she graduates on May 15th.

Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne awarded awards to 17 students on May 5, 2026. Lisa Moyer received The Elizabeth Fedde Award for Outstanding Service (distance student). You can watch the ceremony by [clicking here](#).

We congratulate Lisa and rejoice with her, her family, and the congregation at Faith *Viera* as she begins her call!



Memorial Service for Rev. Thomas Soltis is Scheduled

The memorial service for Rev. Tom Soltis will be held on June 8, 2026 at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Parma, OH. The service will begin at 7 PM.



DISCOVER.
SHARE.
GROW.

Artist Illustrates Significant Events in Jesus' Life at St. John Lutheran Church

An artist member of St. John, Cudahy, WI has been using her God-given talent to help the children and Staff of St. John Day Care visualize significant events in Jesus' Life (including His Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension).



Donna Polzin took the Grey walls of the Day Care's indoor play area and single handedly (supported by her husband, Glen) produced, in "living color" the individual panels of the Garden of Eden; Jesus as the Good Shepherd; Jesus teaching the little children; children in the Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem; and the full wall that shows the Crucifixion, the Empty Tomb, and Jesus Ascension.

After a Lenten Midweek meal, before the Lenten Service, Rev. Phillip DeVries, Pastor of St. John, Cudahy, had a Prayer of Dedication to the Glory of God on the Murals.



There are three still gray wall panels that are planned for Shepherd, sheep, and Angels; the Manger scene; and the arrival of the Wise Men.

St. John thanks God for Donna's talent, and her willingness to use it to God's Glory to help tell the story of Jesus our Savior!



Mariachis Mission Sunday

Sunday May 3 was a special celebration of mission at St. Lucas! Mariachi San Pablo from El Paso, TX, helped in leading our worship at both the English and Spanish services. Rev. Gordon Naumann, former missionary to England and LWML SELC District pastoral counselor, preached that morning.

All this was in conjunction with the LWML SELC District Convention, which featured many inspiring speakers. With Pastor Naumann is pictured is Donna Snow, CPH Bible study author and speaker (pictured below right). We were also blessed by the presentations of Rev. Bill Geis, retired Mission Executive, as the banquet speaker, and Dr. Sue Hasselbring, Ministry Catalyst for International Student Ministries





Discover the 2026 Lutheran Summer Music Season

Lutheran Summer Music is thrilled to announce its 2026 season, featuring over 40 free concerts, recitals, and worship services open to the public. Hosted at St. Olaf College from June 21 to July 19, this season offers a vibrant lineup of musical experiences, also shared online via Live from LSM—bringing this summer’s transformational work to audiences around the world.

Highlights this season include a guest appearance by **Cantus**, a series of events dedicated to the music of J.S. Bach—including the **St. Matthew Passion**—the inaugural **LSM Choral Gathering**, the **Alumni Gathering**, and music celebrating the United States Semi-quincentennial.

[Click here](#) to explore the catalog.



Rev. John L. Telloni Retirement

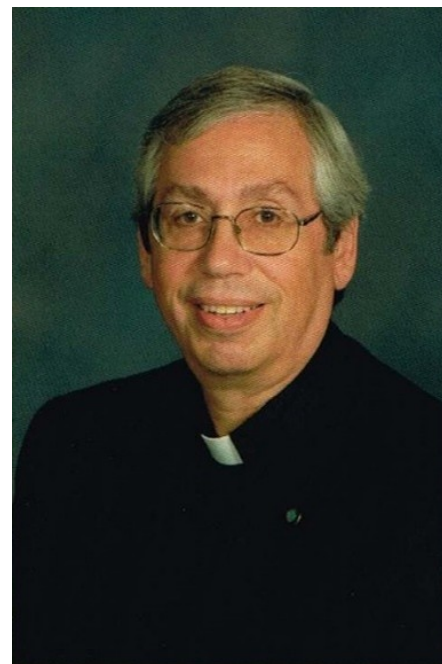
On Sunday June 28, 2026, Rev. John L. Telloni will preach his final sermon at St. John Lutheran Church Massillon.

You are invited to join us in celebrating his 39 years of service and bid him farewell! A special luncheon will be held following the 10am Divine Service.

St John Lutheran Church
1900 Wales Road NE
Massillon, Ohio 44646

Cards and expressions of memories, blessings, and well wishes may be sent C/O Pastor Telloni to:

Mary Kay Pershing at 2717 Eaton Dr NW,
Canton Ohio 44708.
or email at mkpikulik@sbcglobal.net





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.



Teachers Are a Blessing – A Rainbow of Thanks

During the past week, Zion Lutheran Church in Clark, NJ celebrated Teacher Appreciation Week with the theme, "Teachers Are a Blessing – A Rainbow of Thanks." Throughout the week, students joyfully expressed their love and gratitude for their teachers through colorful decorations and heartfelt messages. These special displays highlighted the many ways Zion's teachers help children learn, grow, and shine each day.



On Wednesday, the teachers were honored with a special luncheon hosted by Zion's Preschool Board. The thoughtful gathering provided an opportunity to recognize and thank the dedicated staff for the care, encouragement, and Christian love they share with students and families throughout the year.

The celebration concluded with students creating cheerful rainbow crafts that reflected the week's theme and reminded everyone that God's blessings are often shared through the kindness and dedication of teachers.



Teacher Appreciation Week was a meaningful celebration and a wonderful reminder of how truly blessed we are at Zion to have such caring and devoted teachers who faithfully nurture the hearts and minds of our children.



Growing Older, Walking Home
Peace Lutheran Church brings the hope of Christ to the
SCOSA Festival at Stockton University
 Rev. Dr. Renato Hoerlle

Recently, Fred Meineke, a member of Peace Lutheran Church, brought to my attention a challenge: participating in the Stockton Center on Successful Aging Festival (SCOSA), hosted annually by Stockton University. Fred, who attends the festival every year through his work, observed that the church's presence could fill an important gap in the event's programming.

The festival offers services and information related to healthy aging, caregiver resources, financial planning, long-term care, recreation, and quality of life. Yet there was nothing focused on the relationship between aging and spirituality—an aspect deeply important at this stage of life. A church booth could offer spiritual resources, encourage meaningful conversations about aging, and make the congregation more visible within the community.



The preparation time was short, but after presenting the idea to the church council, we decided to embrace the challenge.

One of our first concerns was the content we would offer. I contacted Lutheran Hour Ministries, remembering a booklet published in Brazil called *The Privilege of Growing Old*. My friend Dr. Nilo Figur, who oversees Lutheran Hour Ministries in Latin America, promptly connected me with Dr. Chad Lakies, Vice President for Ministry Engagement at Lutheran Hour Ministries. Although there were no materials specifically focused on aging, Dr. Lakies graciously provided several booklets that address themes closely tied to the fears and questions common at this stage of life.



The next step was creating a booklet specifically for the festival: *Aging with Grace: The Heart, Loss, and the Hope that Remains*. Several congregation members and preschool teachers reviewed the text and offered valuable feedback. I also asked Pastor Reinaldo Lüdke, a fellow pastor in Brazil who, at 73, continues an active pastoral ministry in a congregation with many elderly members, including nursing home residents and homebound seniors, to evaluate the booklet. His response was deeply encouraging. He highlighted especially the phrase: "Old age is not the end of purpose. It is the deepening of it." He also appreciated how the booklet addressed the realities of aging while ultimately pointing people to Christ and the hope found in Him.





It was also beautiful to see Peace Lutheran Church members mobilize. Linda helped secure registration resources, coordinated banner printing, and organized booth materials. Samantha prepared the promotional flyers. Raquel helped extensively with the display preparation. Bob contributed resources for giveaways, and Alan Stearne served alongside me throughout the event.

When the day arrived, Alan welcomed people warmly with his characteristic introduction: "Hi, Alan, class of '90." It immediately created connections and opened doors for conversation. Throughout the day, we spoke with many people about aging, spirituality, and Christian hope. The visual guide included with this article summarized the booklet and served as a simple roadmap for our conversations. Above all, the material naturally led us to present Jesus Christ.

Many visitors showed genuine interest. Some asked thoughtful questions; others simply needed someone willing to listen. We heard stories marked by loss, loneliness, illness, and spiritual struggles.

Several Lutheran Hour Ministries booklets were especially popular, including: *How to Forgive, Where Is God When Bad Things Happen to Me? Grief and No Need to Fear*. These themes revealed spiritual needs that are very present among older adults and caregivers, making them important bridges for evangelistic conversations. Overall, our participation in the festival was extremely positive. Peace Lutheran Church became more visible in the community, and above all, we had the opportunity to share the comforting Gospel of Jesus Christ.

AGING & SPIRITUALITY
— GROWING OLDER WITH HOPE —

WHY ARE WE HERE?
Because aging is not only physical. It is also emotional, relational, and spiritual.

As we grow older, deeper questions often arise:
• meaning • loneliness • life and death
• loss • purpose

1 AGING CHANGES MORE THAN THE BODY
Growing older can bring:
• physical limitations
• loss of loved ones
• changing routines
• increasing dependence

And this affects more than the body—it touches the inner life.

2 WHAT ARE WE TRUSTING IN?
Throughout life, we often place our hope in:
• health
• independence
• relationships
• plans

What are we truly trusting in?

3 LOSS IS REAL— BUT IT IS NOT THE END
Loss can bring:
• grief
• discouragement
• fear
• loneliness

But suffering can also lead to: perseverance, character, and hope.

4 THE CHRISTIAN HOPE
The Christian faith teaches that our hope is not in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ.

He: lived for us died for us rose again

Even in the middle of loss, there is hope that does not fade.

5 A POWERFUL TRUTH
Our greatest need is not control—it is redemption.

6 AGING IS NOT THE END
Aging is not merely decline. It can also become:
• a journey of growth
• deeper reflection
• renewed purpose
• preparation for eternity

We are not just growing older. We are walking home.

7 YOU ARE WELCOME TO TALK WITH US
We listen. We talk. We share hope.

You are not alone. We would be glad to listen, talk, and share hope with you.

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
HALLONDALE, NEW JERSEY

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."
PSALM 34:18

Grace Hope Home

We sought to show that aging should not be seen merely as a process of decline and limitation, but also as a spiritual journey that reveals where we place our hope and security. Although aging brings fragility, dependence, loneliness, and the reality of death, it can also become a path of growth, maturity, compassion, and renewed hope. From a Christian and pastoral perspective, we affirmed that our greatest need is not control, but redemption—redemption found in Jesus Christ, who lived, died, and rose again for us. In this way, aging is no longer seen merely as decline, but as preparation for eternity. After all, for those who trust in Christ, we are not merely growing older—we are walking home.



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](#)

The flyer is a rectangular graphic divided into several colored sections. At the top left is the Prof Insights logo (a blue circle with a white profile and colorful dots) and the text "PROF INSIGHTS FACULTY-LED WORKSHOP SERIES" in white on a dark blue background. Below this, on a light green background, are the dates "AUG 10-12 2026" in large, bold, teal letters. To the right of the dates, on a red background, is the title "The Apostolic Fathers" in large, bold, yellow letters. At the bottom left, on an orange background, is the location: "Concordia Lutheran Church, 2623 Brookside, Macungie, PA 18062" in white text. On the right side of the flyer is a portrait of Dr. Joel Elowsky, a man with short brown hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie, smiling. Below the portrait, on a teal background, is his name "Dr. Joel Elowsky" and his title "Professor of Historical Theology, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis" in white text.



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.

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.



Mark Your Calendars

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



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Prayer Requests

Mrs. Joyce Ongstad, widow of Rev. Chris Ongstad, who cancer has metastasized. She will begin targeted chemotherapy. Please pray for her strength, patience, and healing as she deals with a new treatment plan. She is thankful for her supportive family.

Rev. David Triplett, North Ridgeville, OH, had cervical fusion surgery on February 27th and is receiving rehab treatment provided by Cleveland Clinic with the goal of being discharged on May 19th.

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.



Closing Thoughts **Ascension Thursday: A Sadly Neglected** **Christian Holy Day**

Rev. Kenneth M. Ballas, EM

Up through endless ranks of angels, Cries of triumph in His ears,
To His heav'nly throne ascending, Having vanquished all their fears.
Christ looks down upon His faithful, leaving them *in happy tears*.

Death destroying, life restoring, Proven equal to our need,
Now for us before the Father, As our Brother intercede.
Flesh that for our world was wounded, Living, for the wounded plead!

To our lives of wanton wan'dring, Send Your Spirit, promised Guide;
Through our lives of fear and failure, With Your love and pow'r abide;
Welcome us, as You were welcomed; To an endless Eastertide.

Alleluia! alleluia! Oh, to breathe the Spirit's grace!
Alleluia! alleluia! Oh, to see the Father's face!
Alleluia, alleluia! Oh, to feel the Son's embrace!
(LSB, Hymn 491)

Text – Jaroslav J, Vajda (sainted Slovak Synod and SELC District pastor)

Tune – Henry V. Gerike (“Ascended Triumph”)

Following our victorious Lord and King's *parting prediction* to His student-disciples-become-apostles 40 days after Resurrection Sunday:

You will receive power because the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and **you will be My living and dying witnessing martyrs** starting in Jerusalem and all Judea and hated Samaria and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Only then quickly and effortlessly did the nail-pierced body of our glorified King Jesus Christ begin to disappear from the sight of 11 *privileged apostolic witnesses as they were looking up as their risen Lord was being lifted up until a cloud of God's presence took Him from their eyes and two angelic white-robed messengers appeared saying, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand here gazing into the sky? This same flesh and blood Jesus who was just taken up away from you into heaven will come again in the very same manner that you have seen Him traveling into heaven” (Acts 1:9-11).

Thus the last completed creedal element of our Triune God's perfect plan of salvation is our sinless ever-living Brother-Savior's triumphal bodily ascension into heaven and rightful royal session at the right hand of God the Father Almighty **as well as** His *and our* promised **unfinished** mission of which we are a *privileged part and glorious return on the day of our bodily resurrection (see Matt. 24:14). Gracious Lord, deliver anyone in Your blood-bought Church from the preposterous notion of ever thinking we are “doing You a favor” by being a member of Your flock of forgiven sinners!

*Privilege (Slovak *vysada*) was a favorite word of sainted Holy Trinity, Yonkers, NY, pastor George Marcek who with his beloved wife, Teresa Marcek were also the very first retired cottage residents at Andrew Duda Sr & Sons now SELC District Lutheran Haven in Slavia (Oviedo), FL ca. 1948.



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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