



The Beacon Online

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

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Lutheran Haven Receives "Best Christian Workplace" Honor!

Recently, the staff of Lutheran Haven was asked to complete a survey from the "Best Workplaces Institute" which is a human resources research & consulting firm that helps organizations improve their workplace culture through employee engagement surveys.

The survey is confidential and is designed to capture honest feedback to determine the emotional engagement of staff and their ability to find meaning and purpose in their work.



It's also a means to determine how they feel supported and valued by their colleagues and leadership. This information can then be bench-marked against industry standards.

This is where Lutheran Haven shines! **The Haven is now officially certified as a "Best Christian Workplace" for 2026!** Thank you to each of you who work so hard to bless our wonderful residents and one another with your faith, kindness and diligence which makes the Haven the special place that it is to live and work!



LWML SELC District Held 19th Biennial Convention "Rivers of Living Water" John 7:37-38 May 1-3, 2026

The Western Zone of the LWML SELC District hosted the 19th biennial convention over three days in St. Lucas Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Missouri. The theme of our convention was "Rivers of Living Water" (John 7:37-38), *"On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture has said, 'Out of the heart will flow rivers of living water'"*, illustrated on our convention banner, displaying the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers.

Our convention began with our opening service led by our Pastoral Counselor, Rev. Gordon Naumann, from St. John's Lutheran Church, Hazleton, Pennsylvania. LCMS SELC District Waldemar Vinovskis welcomed our members and guests.

On Saturday, May 2, 2026, our convention began with a devotion and prayer, led by Rev. Naumann. Jennifer Michaud, with Monarch Jewelry, in partnership with Crisis Aid International and US Safe, was our first presenter. The Monarch Mission is to increase awareness, raise funds, and encourage others to join the fight to end sex trafficking and child sexual exploitation. Our convention's ingathering was the collection of old or unused jewelry, costume or otherwise, used in creating beautiful rings, necklaces, earrings, ornaments, and framed items for sale at their shows throughout the St. Louis metropolitan area. The net profits fund their affiliated organizations. Sue Hasselbring, Ministry Catalyst for International Student Ministries, shared her life experiences as a Missionary. Sue has been with the LWML for many years and gave us many tips on witnessing. National Vice President of Special Focus Ministries, Karol Selle, brought greetings from President Eden Keefe and the National Executive Board. We had 2 comfort dogs visit, Noah and Zion, ready for anyone needing a petting time.

After a wonderful lunch of jambalaya, prepared for us by Forged by Fire, a Bible study was led by Donna Snow. We had a table set up for her in the gymnasium where she could speak one on one with us, autograph her books, and share a few laughs. She told us that she is now working on her 14th book. Donna was a true delight. Saturday evening, we held a banquet at St. Lucas. Our banquet speaker was Rev. Bill Geis, a retired Mission Executive. Rev. Geis and his wife, Sandi (nee Griffin) have been friends of the St. Lucas congregation since their teens. It was great having the two of them among us.

At the banquet, our report on our 2026 – 2028 approved Mission Grants of \$1,500 were announced:

1. Lutheran Bible Translators – Tim and Michelle Miller
2. Concordia Center for the Family
3. Phil's Friends
4. St. John's Hazleton Outreach
5. Orphan Grain Train
6. Redeeming Life Ministries
7. Forged by Fire Ministries
8. Matthew 25 In Action

These eight approved Mission Grants will be fully funded as mites are gathered during the 2026 – 2028 biennium. Rev. Stephen Heimer and his family entertained us with

their Mariachi music. We thank them for celebrating the Hispanic ministry at St. Lucas on various occasions. They are all very talented. At both of the Sunday worship services, we had the honor of having the Mariachi San Pablo, sharing the Gospel Mariachi-style. They are an inter-generational music ministry based in one of the poorest communities along the border in El Paso, Texas. Pastoral Counselor Rev. Gordan Naumann shared a sermon proclaiming the Gospel and his background as a missionary in Wales, UK and his lovely family. His sermon was followed by the installation of new and old officers. Treasurer Stephanie Bailey was elected for a second term. God blessed our convention in so many ways and with so many great memories. Thank you for your support. Praise be to God!



Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary in St. Catharines, Ontario Celebrates Its 50th Anniversary

Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada is celebrating its 50th anniversary. It was founded by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in 1976 to train future pastors from Canada and the nearby northeastern states in the US, and it continues to serve that purpose now under the aegis of Lutheran Church-Canada, a sister church body of the LCMS.

To celebrate this important milestone, the seminary will host a three-day (Monday noon to Wednesday noon) conference on 19-21 October 2026 in nearby Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. The conference will feature prominent speakers from both sides of the border, as we discuss how to engage in respectful theological dialogue in the digital age. The featured speakers will be Jon Bruss, Thomas Egger, Thomas Korcok, Roger Paavola, Larry Rast, Trevor Sutton, and Thomas Winger.

The conference will serve as the official pastors' conference for the Eastern District of the LCMS, as well as for the corresponding pastoral conference on the Canadian side. But we welcome pastors, commissioned church workers, and interested lay people from anywhere to attend the event.

A couple items for our American guests to keep in mind: You will need a passport to enter Canada. And the costs for the conference are given in Canadian dollars, which means that the conference is much more affordable than you might first think.

More information and an online registration form can be found on our anniversary conference website, <https://concordia-seminary.ca/50years/>.



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Register Here!



LERT Basic Training Available

Family of Christ Lutheran Church in Tampa FL is sponsoring a Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) BASIC CHAINSAW TRAINING on Saturday, June 27, 2026. This training is intended to increase LERT volunteer's skills, knowledge and safety in chainsaw operation so they can provide a critical service to those who do not have the skills or means to perform this dangerous work following a disaster. The training is for those who want to operate a chainsaw on a LERT event. It is being held at:

Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 16190 Bruce B Downs Blvd, Tampa, FL
33647 (Building 3)

Participants may arrive at the site at 7:30 a.m. to register. Class will begin promptly at 8:00 a.m. and conclude at 4:30 p.m. Your LERT Trainer will distribute all material for, and after, the class. LCMS LERT Chainsaw Trainer Joel Mathews will lead the training event.

You must have previously completed the LERT Basic Training Class to participate in this class.

During the morning classroom training, participants will learn:

- Safe operation of a chainsaw
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Injury prevention
- How to buck and limb storm-damaged trees
- How to properly clear debris in a safe and beneficial manner and
- Proper saw maintenance

The afternoon session is hands-on training in field chainsaw operation, where participants will learn and demonstrate chainsaw skills. This training is limited to 10 participants. To be an authorized LCMS LERT Chainsaw Operator and use a chainsaw on LERT disaster response sites, you must attend BOTH the morning classroom and afternoon "hands-on" sessions.

Class registration must be made at www.lcms-lert.org

Cost of Training:

- Registration (includes training, lunch and snacks) -- \$50. (Couples: \$85)
- Pay at the time of training; Checks payable to "Family of Christ Lutheran Church – LERT" or [pay online at FGLER.org](http://www.fgler.org)

Participants should bring (if you have them):

- Chainsaw, bar oil, gas/oil or synthetic fuel mix.
- Chaps and other Personal Protective Equipment (helmet, eye protection, ear protectors, gloves, and steel-toe boots).
- Participants must wear steel-toed boots. Tennis shoes or sandals/flip-flops are not allowed in the afternoon field session.
- Outdoor work clothes and boots appropriate for the weather at the time. Shorts are not allowed.

If more information is needed, contact the site coordinator,
Donnie Moore, dmoore@familyofchrist.org, 615-981-1162 (Cell / Text)



Concordia Center for the Family Training and Support

November 12 - 14, 2026

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, 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. Upcoming training will be November 12-14 in Rockledge, FL. Find out about our 2026 trainings at this link: <https://fd-training.concordiacenterforthefamily.org/>



SELC—LCMS Student Aid Committee Policy The Application Deadline is August 15

The SELC Student Aid Committee is dedicated to provide financial assistance to students from our district congregations who are preparing for full-time church work at our synod's colleges, universities, and seminaries. The members of the Student Aid Committee are appointed by the President and Board of Directors and are currently served by Chairman John Glanzer (St. Luke's, Oviedo, FL) and Secretary Rev. Kevin McLeod (Resurrection, Malvern, OH).

Students planning to attend or are currently attending our synod's colleges, university, and seminaries (and are enrolled in full-time church work programs) should complete the accompanying application in order to apply for the SELC scholarship assistance.

Students receive the grants once per year, typically for the academic year that begins in September and ends in May or June of the following year. The SELC District Application for Financial Aid must be filled out and returned each year that the student is enrolled in the institution. This form is separate from the District Financial Aid Form which the university or seminary uses; although, this form is also sent to the Student Aid Committee.

It is the student's responsibility to apply for aid. In addition to any scholarship aid granted by the district, we also hope you have inquired if your congregation provides financial assistance as well. Many of our congregations have scholarship funds for students preparing for full-time church work.

We are grateful to the Lord that the SELC Board of Directors and our congregations have demonstrated their concern for future church workers by allocating generous funds for financial assistance in the district's budget.

[Click here](#) for the overview and application.



Registration Opens for 2026 Fall Online Greek Course

Registration is now open for **Online Greek: Part I** for the 2026 fall semester at **Concordia Seminary, St. Louis** (CSL). The dates for the fall semester are Aug. 24-Dec. 11. Tuition is \$1,200 and the registration deadline is Aug. 1. Class size is limited to 15 students.

This noncredit course primarily serves three groups of prospective students: Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Program graduates continuing to the General Pastor Certification (GPC) track, applicants to the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) Program and applicants to the Residential Alternate Route (RAR) Program. The course prepares students for the Entry Level Competency Exam (ELCE) in Greek, a prerequisite for admission to these programs.

If space remains after SMP-GPC, M.Div. and RAR students have enrolled, others interested in learning Greek may register. While the course has no prerequisites and is not for credit, a solid understanding of English grammar is essential.

The course includes live online tutoring sessions from 4-5 p.m. (CT) Mondays and Thursdays, beginning Aug. 24. Students should expect to dedicate eight hours per week to study. Registration for Online Greek: Part II, offered in spring 2027, will open in October.

Required textbooks:

- **"Fundamental Greek Grammar", 4th rev. ed.** (Concordia Publishing House, 2019)
- **"Novum Testamentum Graece", 28th ed.** (German Bible Society, 2012)

In addition to this online course, CSL also offers residential Greek courses during the summer term.

For more information, contact Rev. Joel Heckmann, admissions officer, at 314-505-7224 or heckmannj@csl.edu. For registration inquiries, contact Gina Matzenbacher, assistant registrar, at 314-505-7107 or matzenbacherg@csl.edu.



Chief Financial Officer Job Opening Ohio District

Dear Fellow Workers in Christ's Church, the Ohio District of the LCMS is accepting resumes in application for the position of Chief Financial Officer (CFO) until June 30, 2026. The **Cover Letter** provides details on the request for your assistance.

Please [click here](#) to access the job posting. Applications will be accepted through June 30, 2026.

All resumes should be sent via email to Lisa Rachul at rachull@oh.lcms.org.



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 vertical rectangular graphic divided into several colored sections. At the top left is the Prof Insights logo. To its right, the text 'PROF INSIGHTS' is written in large white letters, with 'FACULTY-LED WORKSHOP SERIES' in smaller white letters below it. The middle left section has a light green background with the text 'AUG 10-12' in small teal letters and '2026' in large teal letters below it. The middle right section has a red background with the text 'The Apostolic Fathers' in large yellow letters. On the far right 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 the text 'Dr. Joel Elowsky' in white, with 'Professor of Historical Theology, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis' in smaller white letters below it. The bottom left section has an orange background with the text 'Concordia Lutheran Church', '2623 Brookside', and 'Macungie, PA 18062' in white.



Family Bible Podcast

Hebrews is a mini Old Testament in the New Testament! Hear how God's love and truth hasn't changed because it doesn't need to. We walk confidently in faith because God faithfully shepherds His people now as He always has. Listen on your favorite podcast platform or go to the website familybiblejourney.com.



Join the journey
of journaling through the Bible.



Women's Monthly Bible Study

The monthly in-person and zoom Bible study will be held on June 18th at 10:30 AM ET. To access the zoom link, [click here](#). The **June 18th** session will be "Out of Sight but Not Out of Mine" on page 22.



Mark Your Calendars

June 8, 2026 - Memorial Service for Rev. Thomas Soltis at Holy Trinity, Parma, OH at 7 PM

June 18, 2026 - LWML monthly zoom Bible study at 10:30 AM

June 28, 2026 - Retirement service for Rev. John Telloni

August 10 - 12, 2026 - The Apostolic Fathers, Concordia Macungie, PA



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Prayer Requests

Rev. and Mrs. George Dolak, Cabot, PA, both have recently suffered falls. Thankfully no bones were broken. They are now in Assisted Living at Concordia Lutheran Ministries in Cabot, PA. Please keep the Dolaks in your prayers as they heal from their falls and adjust to a new phase in their earthly journey with Christ.

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 soon.

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, continues his recovery from recent hospitalization for blood clots in lungs, and long-term treatment for healing of chronic left foot open wound. Thanks to all for thoughts and prayers!

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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