



The Beacon Online

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

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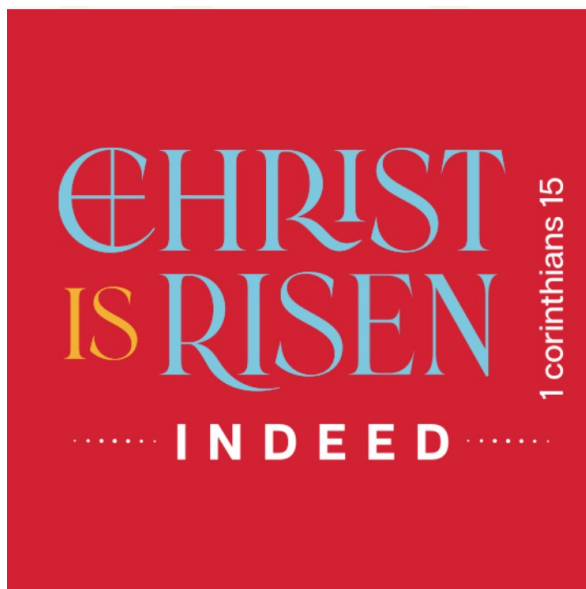
Synod Presidential Voting Will Require a Third Round of Voting June 20 - 23, 2026

The election for the Synod President has resulted in the need for a third round of voting as a majority was not reached. The candidates on the third ballot will be

- Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison
- Rev. Dr. Joel D. Biermann
- Rev. Dr. Benjamin T. Ball

All Pastoral and lay voters will be able to vote beginning June 20, 2026. The voting ends on June 23, 2026. Please be sure to encourage your congregation's voters to vote.

You can read the full story in The Reporter by [clicking here](#).





My Experience as a Vicar **St. Luke's Lutheran Church and School** Vicar Grant Burnham

Hello everyone, my name is Grant Burnham and I have had the joy and privilege of serving as the Vicar at St. Luke's Lutheran Church and School in Oviedo, FL for the past year. Because St. Luke's has a preschool, K-8 school, and the Lutheran Haven retirement community immediately to the South, it is a particularly unique vicarage. One of the most memorable results of this dynamic came when I heard that I would lead the Wednesday morning men's Bible study, and that around a quarter of the men are retired pastors who live at the Haven! I wasn't sure what I was getting myself into, and you'd better believe that I spent extra time preparing for the first few class sessions. I quickly learned, however, that they're (usually) not trying to "stump the vicar," and instead are eager to share what they have learned and discuss the text at hand. There were plenty of jokes and laughter, but also lots of learning as we meditated upon God's Word.



I also enjoyed the time I spent with the fifth-grade students. I would often lead them in a devotion and get to answer their questions about the Bible and Christianity. I even went on a field trip with them to MarineLab in the Florida Keys, where we learned about plant and animal life and then snorkeled to see the creatures we learned about in their natural habitat. The snorkeling was amazing (pictured on the left), and equally amazing were the conversations I had with some of the students. We even had a couple of impromptu Bible study sessions, including one on how John 1 is connected with the creation account in Genesis 1! Spending time with these students was incredibly rewarding, and I'll miss them as they move on to 6th grade and I go back to St. Louis for the final year of the Master of Divinity program.

Of course, I have also led services and preached during my time here. One of my favorite memories is preaching at the Easter Sunrise service (pictured on the next page), held in the church cemetery. It is an amazing thing to begin in darkness and watch the sky lighten as you are joined by a few hundred members to celebrate Jesus Christ's Resurrection and look forward to the resurrection of those buried and interred nearby. While every Sunday is a little Easter, the different setting made it particularly special, and I am grateful that I had the opportunity to preach at this service.



There are many other activities and responsibilities that I was involved with this year: playing in the Shawn J. Metcalf Memorial Golf Classic with other St. Luke's staff (pictured on the left), visiting members who are homebound or in the hospital, helping with the high school and young adult groups, leading school chapels, planning and leading midweek services during Advent and Lent, and so much more.

I remember when I was first placed at St. Luke's and spoke on the phone with senior pastor Rev. Tige Culbertson. During that call, he said, "You will be a well-rounded vicar." Now, as I am concluding my vicarage, I know that he was correct - I have truly been blessed with a breadth of experiences that have shown me many different parts of ministry and prepared me for my future service as a pastor in Christ's Church.



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/>.



←
Register Here!



**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.



Retired Pastors, Wives, and Widows Retreat SAVE THE DATE - Tues., October 6, 2026

Retired Pastors, Wives & Widows Retreat is being held on October 6, 2026 at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 300 Broadway Dr., Sun Prairie, WI. The retreat's theme is "Follow Me...First and Last". The retreat features Rev. Dr. Tom Feiertag and Rev. Dr. John Oberdeck.

The cost for the lunch and speakers is \$30/person or \$55/couple. Please contact Karen Raynor for more information - Rayner@swd.lcms.org

Gather with your fellow Retirees and enjoy the fellowship!



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 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, and **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](#)



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of journaling through the Bible.



Mark Your Calendars

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

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

August 15, 2026 - Deadline for student aid applications

October 6, 2026 - Retreat in Sun Prairie, WI for retired pastors, wives, and widows

November 12 - 14, 2026 - Concordia Center for the Family Training at Faith *Viera* in Rockledge, FL



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

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, was hospitalized for three days and is now in a rehab center following his hospitalization.

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 and Holly Duff, and their children Leo and Oliver, as they battle brain cancer. Please keep them in prayer during

this long journey.

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.



Closing Thoughts
Nature's Beauty -- Far Better Than Television
Rev. Kenneth Ballas, EM

Earlier this week my Lois and I were privileged to observe from our kitchen window for our personal enjoyment alone two beautiful creatures of our loving God. Posing for a few minutes within inches of each other were a sleek doe white-tailed deer and handsome male mallard duck, a rather unlikely combination of vastly different members of the animal kingdom. Minus a tell-tale photo but without "commercial interruption" this stately non-threatening image shared verbally with Beacon readers will thankfully linger in your memories also for some time to come.



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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