



The Beacon Online

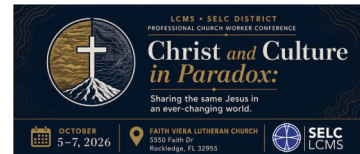
August 21, 2026/ Vol. 7 / No. 33

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

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2026 Professional Church Workers Conference October 5 - 7, 2026



The 2026 Professional Church Workers Conference will be held October 5 - 7, 2026 at Faith *Viera* Lutheran Church in Rockledge, FL. The theme is Christ and Culture in Paradox: Sharing the Same Jesus in an ever-changing world.

Overnight rooms have been blocked at Homewood Suites by Hilton Viera Melbourne at [this link](#). The room rates are \$149 for single occupancy and \$159 per night for double occupancy. **Book your room by September 3, 2026.**

Please [click here](#) for the registration site. The conference schedule can also be found there. The conference features Rev. Dr. Joshua Hollmann who teaches at Concordia St. Paul, Brenda Jank from Run Hard, Rest Well, and Orion Netsanet with Children's Hope Chest.

The registration fee is \$175 until September 3, 2026. The fee goes to \$200 beginning September 4, 2026. Emeriti Pastors have free registrations!

See the information on page 2 regarding Rev. Dr. Josh Hollmann and what he will be speaking about at the conference.

Christ, Culture, and Technology in Paradox: Sharing the Same Jesus in an Ever-Changing World

The presentation engages central tenants of Lutheran theology in paradox with culture and technology. Lutheran confessional theology boldly proclaims the unchanging Christ for the changing contexts of our ministries. Our time together will focus on Lutheran theological distinctives which inform our witness to Christ in North American post-modern and secular culture as impacted by the rapid rise of AI. Amidst cultural and technological changes, this presentation aims to equip and encourage us to faithfully share Jesus who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.



Pictured above is Rev. Dr. Josh Hollmann who will be presenting at the 2026 PCWC. Dr. Hollmann is a Professor at Concordia St. Paul and teaches in the area of systemic theology.



Concordia Center for the Family Training and Support

November 12 - 14, 2026

**Additional Financial Support Available Through
September 15th**

Concordia Center for the Family, a Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS, is uniting homes and congregations in making lifelong disciples of Jesus by **training** called, commissioned and lay church leaders to be **Family Discipleship Facilitators**. The basic training, with optional follow-up cohort support and professional coaching, will inspire and empower *Facilitators* to practice and teach family discipleship in their home, congregation, school and beyond. This proven biblical training is effective at **reviving church leader mission zeal** and **guiding every type of family to grow and stay in Christian faith daily for life**. CCF's trained Facilitators report families daily in Christian worship, service, and winsome witness, leading to vibrant congregations and schools. Another key outcome is new eager church workers.

The usual rate for foundational 3-day training and cohort support is \$500. However, thanks to District support and a generous SELC LWML Grant, **pay only \$150/each** to attend the **November 12-14, 2026 training in Rockledge, FL**. Use **discount code "SELC26"** when registering (by 11/4) at: www.concordiafamily.org/FD-Facilitator-Information Also receive discounted housing at Homewood Suites Viera-Melbourne: [Click HERE to book rooms for Concordia Center for the Family Room block](#)

Faith & Life Survey - Also consider this CCF tool to assess strengths, gaps and opportunities in serving families. Find out more at: concordiafamily.org/Faith-Life-Survey

We're Eager to Speak, so keep CCF in mind for Dist., Circuit, and local events. Our experience, knowledge, and zeal will bless any group. For the full, current list of

speaking topics, visit and freely share: <https://www.concordiafamily.org/Speaking-Engagements>

NOTE that **matching LCMS Convention Offering Funds of \$1K to \$10K** are available **8/1- 9/15/26** to congregations, districts or RSO's to "Tell the Next Generation." A great grant-worthy proposal can include: sending a team to CCF's Facilitator Training, using CCF's *Faith & Life Survey*, inviting CCF to speak for your event, and/or providing CCF resources to families! Go to **LCMS.org**.



LCMS TTNG GRANTS



Matching LCMS Convention Offering Funds of \$1K to \$10K are available 8/1/26 - 9/15/26 to congregations, districts or RSO's.

Go to LCMS.ORG for application information.

Grant-worthy proposals can include:

- Send a team to **CCF Family Discipleship Facilitator Training** (using some great discounts available now!)
- Use CCF's **Faith & Life Survey** and other resources
- Train parents & caregivers to pass faith to the next generation daily using CCF's biblical knowledge, skills & attitudes



SCAN THE QR CODE TO DISCOVER...

- MORE ABOUT CCF
- CCF'S RESOURCES FOR YOU
- ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

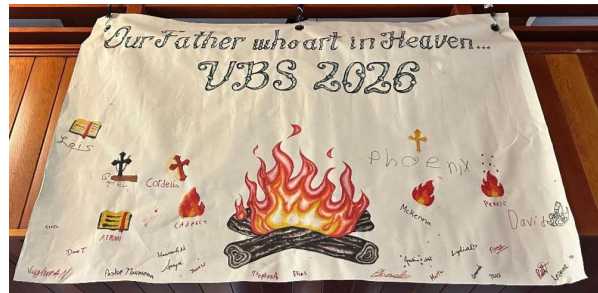




Three Parishes in Northeast Pennsylvania Hold Vacation Bible School

Once again, this past week St. John's Lutheran Church in Hazleton joined with the parishes of Wilkes Barre, St. Matthew's and St. Peter's, in combining efforts to hold a Vacation Bible School this year.

The theme was 'Around the Campfire'. And looking into the narratives of Moses, Joseph, and Peter on the Sea of Galilee, there was much food for thought as we also wove the Lord's Prayer into the messages throughout the three evenings. Whereas the catechism splits this chief part of our faith into seven petitions, including an introduction and conclusion, we managed to get it all in three parts. With Moses, starting with the burning bush, we learned how God's name is hallowed, following the Israelites through the wilderness and to Mt. Sinai, we learned how God's kingdom is here, and that God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. With Joseph, we learned how with the years of plenty and even in the years of famine, God provides our daily bread. And with the reconciliation with his brothers we learned how to forgive as we are forgiven. Peter learned the hard way that temptation isn't fun. At the trial of Jesus, Peter turned away, but later He was given an opportunity to love Jesus again when He appeared to them on the beach. By keeping our eyes on Jesus, we understand with Peter exactly how it is that God grants our request, just as He has taught us, to be delivered from evil.



The evening was simple. Starting with an opening, introducing the basic theme and outline, reading the biblical texts, singing related songs and praying, including the Lord's Prayer, we'd split up into groups to do either a craft or have play time.

Then we'd come together again to have a story sitting around a make-shift campfire (Inflatable for our fellowship hall), surrounded by other props such as camping equipment, summarizing the narratives again in my own words as campfire stories, then we'd have snack time, and before you know it, it was time for the closing.

Our special guests Marty and Katie would turn up (Famous puppets from Wilkes Barre), who would tell us what they got out of VBS that day. A great big thank you to Jeff Howells, who also wrote the scripts for each day, taking note of the themes we had planned.



Each registrant went home with a full Bible Comic and encouragement to remain in God's Word and faithfully attend their home church.

Again, with such great volunteers, teamwork, and a passion for our Lord, our 2026 VBS was a great success. What a pleasure it is to minister along such faithful members of Christ's Church. THANK YOU!! And may all God's children be so encouraged to find ways to share the faith.



Block Party, Bratwurst, and Bearded Dragons

On a sunny Saturday in July, Pentecost Lutheran Church (Racine WI) hosted a Block Party, where we served just over 300 hot dogs and brats, 150 ears of corn, countless cookies, wonderful watermelons, and 450+ individual beverages. The event also featured a Sheriff's Department K9 (below left), bounce-houses, up-close encounters with reptiles from WPS Reptiles, live music, and much more.



Children and adults (below right) enjoyed interacting with Nacho (a bearded dragon) and Lincoln (a rosy boa snake), along with many other turtles, tortoises, geckos, lizards, and snakes.



Because the church building and parish house are located on two triangular blocks adjacent to each other, it provides the perfect opportunity to block off the street and invite neighbors from a several block radius. Flyers are delivered the week before, and neighbors look forward to this annual event.

The street provides a great venue for the always-competitive water balloon toss (followed by the even-more-competitive water balloon fight). Pictured on the left are Deacon and Jake who are water balloon toss champs this year!

This year we took a collection of new, small stuffed animals for Racine Fire & Rescue to be used as "comfort animals" for children.

Many times during the year while out and about, our members will run into people who say, "You're from the church that hosts the block party!". We hope serving our community in this small way shows the love of Christ and will lead people to him.



Zion Lutheran's Tropical Trek VBS a Huge Success!

More than 50 children gathered at Zion Lutheran Church in Clark, NJ, for an unforgettable Tropical Trek Vacation Bible School! Throughout the week, the children explored God's Word and learned the wonderful truth that Jesus seeks and saves us in every situation.

Their faith also came alive through service as they collected food for Zion's Food Pantry, assembled hygiene kits for Timmy's Wings of Hope, and raised coins to support Concordia Gospel Outreach.



A heartfelt thank-you to our incredible Zion volunteers whose time, energy, and dedication made this joyful, faith-filled week possible!



Joint Circuit Meeting Held at Concordia in Northampton, PA

Several Pastors held a Joint Circuit meeting at Concordia Lutheran Church in Northampton, PA on August 13th. Those gathered discussed the LCMS Council of Presidents discussions on Communion statements. Pictured below are those who attended the Circuit meeting.





Book of Concord Available in Spanish Concordia Publishing House Sale Extended



The Lutheran Confessions are now **available in Spanish** on our free website, **bookofconcord.cph.org**, extending this resource to more readers and communities.

The sale at Concordia Publishing House has been extended through August 31st. You can get Pew Editions of the Lutheran Service Book, in addition to several other editions that are available. Click below to see what is available.

Shop the Sale



Our offer of **\$20 Pew Editions** and **20% off Lutheran Service Book** products continues through August 31. Continue the celebration of the 20th anniversary of Lutheran Service Book by taking advantage of these limited-time savings.



Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday is October 4, 2026

Traditionally, Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday is the first Sunday in October, but it can be celebrated any time. The focus of this year is ***Supporting Missions***. The theme is based on Ecclesiastes 3:9 - 15, Galatians 2:1 - 10, and Mark 10:35 - 45. Christ Jesus asks us to be wise stewards of His good gifts.



Lutheran Women in Mission Applications for Mission Grants 2027 are due September 1, 2026

Applications for Mission Applications to be Awarded at the 2027 Lutheran Women in Mission Convention in 2027 are due September 1, 2026, midnight Central Time. The application to apply is found here - [Submit a Mission Grant Proposal](#)

The 2027 Convention is being held July 8–11, 2027 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. More information on the convention can be found at lwml.org/convention



Concordia University Irvine Offers Virtual Financial Planning Workshops

Is 2026 the year to finalize (or start) your Estate Plan?

Join Concordia University Irvine, in partnership with Financial Planning Ministry for a FREE Virtual Estate Planning Session

Concordia University Irvine, in partnership with Financial Planning Ministry (FPM), is pleased to offer **TWO FREE Virtual Estate Planning sessions!** No matter where you are at in your estate planning journey, Concordia's partnership with FPM will be able to help you complete your estate plan documents **at no cost!** This is a savings of thousands of dollars that we are able to pass on to you.

Register TODAY for one of the below:

Each session will last approximately 75 minutes with optional Q&A after

THURSDAY, SEPT 10 at 6:00 pm PDT

REGISTER HERE

SATURDAY, SEPT 12 at 10:00 am PDT

REGISTER HERE

Should you have any questions, please reach out to Jonathan Howard at jonathan.howard@cui.edu/ 949-214-3535



Join us for Vocatio: Retreat Oct. 4–7, 2026 Registration closes Sunday, Sept. 13

College students and second-career men and women considering service as a pastor, deaconess, missionary or chaplain are invited to Vocatio: Retreat Oct. 4–7, 2026, at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. This distinctively Lutheran retreat offers an introduction to life as a seminarian, as participants spend time in God's Word and join in sessions with the Seminary's renowned faculty. Register by Sept. 13 at csl.edu/vocatio-retreat, by scanning the QR code or by Googling "Vocatio: Retreat Concordia Seminary."





Family Bible Podcast Ezekiel and James

The family Bible is now in Ezekiel and James! Ezekiel shares great visions of our future in heaven. James, not Luther's favorite epistle, encourages us towards godliness, a good encouragement living for those living in times of declining morality and lax faith.



Join the journey
of journaling through the Bible.

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



Mark Your Calendars

October 4, 2026 - Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday

October 4 - 7, 2026 - Vocatio Retreat

October 5 - 7, 2026 - SELC District Professional Church Workers Conference

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



An American Story

Do you like a true, come back story? Learn how the demise and rise of the American Elm tree tells a compelling story of hope! Watch as Genysys Group founder Dan Lepley shares this inspiring story!

[Click here](#) to watch!



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Prayer Requests

Rev. and Mrs. George Dolak, Cabot, PA. They are 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 most recent hospitalization.

Rev. Brian Roberts, Orlando, FL, please continue to pray for him as he is home following a recent hospitalization.

Rev. John Telloni, St. John in Massillon, OH as he begins his retirement.

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 and Holly Duff, and their children Leo and Oliver, as they battle cancer. Please pray for peace, strengthening, and healing the Lord has in mind. It is impossible to know the mind of God, just trust in His purposes being always good.

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. and Mrs. Otto Baker, Brodheadsville, PA for God's healing and care.

Rev. Michael Croon, Mt. Prospect, IL as he begins his retirement from ministry.

Andrew DeMario, Galloway, NJ, son of Deaconess Helen DeMario, who is having cardiac surgery September 1st.

Megan Skelton in Oviedo, FL Please continue to pray for her and her doctors as they 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.



SEL District - A District Without Borders

***Showing Everyone Life in Christ, by Showing
Everyone Love in Christ***

SEL District of LCMS

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