



The Beacon Online

October 30, 2026/ Vol. 7 / No. 43

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

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A Farewell Message Rev. Gordon Naumann

As I prepare to step away from my role as a pastor, LWML Counselor, and brother within the SELC, my heart is full — full of gratitude, humility, and hope. These years have been a sacred journey, marked by shared joys, deep prayers, and the steady presence of God's hand guiding us.

The psalmist declares: "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy" (Psalm 126:3). Indeed, when I look back over these four years, I see the fingerprints of God in every baptism, every table of Holy Communion, every joint service, every LWML rally, conference and convention; every tear shed in prayer, and every laugh shared in fellowship. We have walked together through seasons of celebration and seasons of challenge, yet in all of it, the Lord has been faithful. Martin Luther once wrote, "God does not need your good works, but your neighbor does." This truth has been at the heart of our ministry together. The church is not merely a building or a Sunday gathering — it is a living body, called to serve, to love, and to bear one another's burdens. I have been blessed to witness your faith in action: From not only my own congregation's 'take it or leave it' trolley and community luncheons, but in the many service projects, in LWML rallies, in the casuistry of other churches, in the RSOs we support, in the impromptu visits to the lonely, in mission plants, in the prayers for the hurting, to overcoming language barriers and in the clear steadfast commitment to the Gospel.

Serving in the SELC has been one of the greatest privileges of my life. I have been welcomed, well inducted, and allowed to walk alongside you in moments both tender and triumphant. You have taught me much. I am deeply thankful for our bishop, Waldemar Vinovskis, who has been both a great leader and true friend; for all the brothers who have supported me in our times of fellowship at winkels, conferences and conventions, from all over the circuits, with our deep conversations, not just

theologically but personally, and being able to relate to each other in our own ways of life and dependance on God and our families; to all the members of our district, clergy and laymen alike, who make up such a significant part of our synod, without which it just wouldn't be the same. I have witnessed first hand such grace in members' willingness to serve, to adapt, and to grow; both a tribute and a testimony to the Spirit's work among us.

While my pastoral chapter here is at a close, the mission of Christ continues. The same God who has sustained us all these past few years will continue to guide us into the future. As the psalmist also reminds us: "The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore" (Psalm 121:8).

I leave you with this encouragement: keep Christ at the center, keep loving one another deeply, and keep your eyes fixed on the hope of the Gospel. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you always. Thank you for allowing me to serve, to learn, and to grow alongside you. And I have every confidence that you will continue to strengthen one another as you hold to the faith and continue to love and cherish the kingdom of God that is in your midst, as you truly are the body of Christ.

--

Soli Deo Gloria,
Pastor Naumann
[917-900-7502](tel:917-900-7502)

We wish Pastor Naumann and his family God's blessings in their new home and for their new call. Pastor Naumann will be installed November 1st.



Zion Lutheran Church Participates in Clark's Trunk or Treat!

Zion Lutheran Church had a wonderful time participating in Clark's Trunk or Treat over the past weekend!

Along with handing out candy, they passed out flyers for Zion's upcoming Safari Expedition Vacation Bible School this August. This was a great event and an important part of Zion's outreach ministry, helping to build meaningful relationships, welcome new families, and share the love of Christ throughout the community.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the event such a success. We hope to connect with even more families at VBS this summer!





Nominate Students for Lutheran Summer Music

Apply by December 1 for Priority Enrollment

As we look ahead to summer 2027, students who apply by **December 1** receive a **\$100 tuition discount** and priority access to financial aid.

Learn More & Apply

Know a young musician who would thrive at LSM? Take a few minutes to nominate a student and encourage them to explore the program.

Nominate a Student





Annual School Statistics are Due November 1, 2026

LCMS Rosters and Statistics and LCMS School Ministry request that you submit your statistics for the new school year (2026–2027).

To submit your statistics, log into the LCMS Information Support Network (LISN) for Schools website at: lisn.lcms.org.



Mark Your Calendars

November 1, 2026 - Annual School Statistics are due

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

February 26 - 27, 2027 - Online Life Ministries conference



- Independent Living
- Assisted Living (*new apartments*)
- Memory Care

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LCEF Loves Church Workers

It's Church Worker Appreciation Month, and we're celebrating those who keep LCMS ministries running. Our financial and wellness resources equip church workers to navigate the realities of life in ministry work through every season.

See how LCEF supports church workers year-round at lcef.org/resources.



Prayer Requests

Rev. Kevin Bergmann and Laura Bergmann, Munster, IN. Pastor Bergmann is regaining his strength at home after a hospitalization. His wife Laura is hospitalized. Please pray for the Bergmanns.

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, is home and working to regain his strength.

Rev. Brian Roberts, Orlando, FL, please continue to pray for him for continued strength.

Rev. and Mrs. Kenneth Ballas, Parma, OH. Please keep the Ballas' in your prayers for their health challenges. Pastor Ballas is temporarily in a skilled nursing facility following his hospitalization.

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 Pastor Duff as he has entered hospice care.

Rev. Edward Kucera, and his wife Irene, St. Louis, MO, for God's loving care.

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

Andrew DeMario, Galloway, NJ, son of Deaconess Helen DeMario, who had successful surgery on September 1st. He is gaining back his strength and goes for his follow up appointment in early October.

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.

Nita Huffines, St. John, Granite City, IL. Nita suffered a fractured disk from a fall. Please pray for God's wisdom in decisions about surgery. Lord, protect her spinal cord from paralyzing trauma. Grand patience and peace while awaiting healing.

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 - Part 2

Gospel Comfort During Times of Transition in the Lord's Church

"The Lord is my Shepherd . . .
Your rod and Your staff, they *comfort* me!"
Rev. Kenneth Ballas, EM

Lest we give the devil too much credit or think him the "polar opposite" of the Holy Spirit, we do well to allow the Almighty's appointed archangel Michael and His angelic army do battle in our behalf against Satan and his minions of darkness as it is our primary task to KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN with the result that, as potentially dangerous as the prince of this world may still be, our uniquely sinless Brother-Savior Jesus is infinitely stronger (see Colossians 1:18, 27; James 4:7; Revelation 12:7-12 also noting the unusually comforting words in the ancient Litany Prayer with reference to Satan not only being beaten down under Christ's feet but also under our feet as our having been baptized into His innocent substitutionary death and bodily resurrection, we safely belong to our perfectly obedient victorious Lord and King Jesus!

Another example of prayerfully guided repositioning concerns missionary extraordinaire, Pastor Charles St. Onge and his recent acceptance of a Divine Call to a Canadian LCMS English District historic parish in the Ottawa River Valley Ontario/Quebec provincial border community of Pembroke, Ontario. Located a fairly short distance by Canadian standards from that dominion's capital, said move followed his and wife Deb's blessed ministry at Montreal's Ascension Lutheran Church coupled with Charles' earlier simultaneous assignment among the island nations of the Caribbean. (Lois, our infant son, Mikey, and I were also privileged to experience the Christian warmth of Ascension's then Slovak-English speaking family of believers nearly 65 years ago).

We thank God for the ongoing positive contributions to His Kingdom by the St. Onge family and others like them, people who are wholeheartedly engaged in the ongoing Gospel mission of Christ's "Church militant" in anticipation of our also becoming part of His future "Church triumphant" at our ascended Lord's promised glorious return at the final Day of bodily Resurrection of all flesh. We also pray for Pastor Gordon and Phoebe Naumann regarding that family's current transition to multiple parish ministry in South Dakota as well as remember our fellow-believers at St. John's, Hazleton, PA.

In the meantime, labor in the Lord's potential harvest fields here and now is far from complete regardless of the congregation with which we may have ever been affiliated! Though our Triune God could conceivably have exclusively only used His holy angels to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel to fallen humankind, He deliberately chose to enlist globally redeemed forgiven sinners to spread the Word to a rebellious world the only lastingly comforting message of salvation (John 3:16-17; Revelation 7:9-17).

Beloved servant-leaders like Pastor Telloni who not that long ago was in danger of losing his speaking voice could have easily wastefully misused many weeks of prayerful enforced inactivity sorting office paper clips. Instead, he chose to join numerous other SELC District published authors in seeing to conclusion his eminently readable 200-page devotional paperback aptly titled, *The Best Way to Live: Meditations for a Christ-Centered Life*. Highly recommended also is the co-authored 2026 publication of William and Lori Utech available through our SELC District office on the New Testament Book of Acts: *From Acts to Action: A 90-Day Devotional Journey to Missional Living*.

*We are all "providential products" of the Christian mission
as none of us were born believers.*

Without the powerful aid of the Holy Spirit, ordinary human beings could hardly have composed the inspired written Word of God on their own. Also included among what should be taken as unusually comforting language is the ancient Litany Prayer's reference to Satan not only being beaten down under Christ's feet but also under our feet having been baptized into His innocent substitutionary death and bodily resurrection, we safely belong to our perfectly obedient and exalted Lord and King Jesus!

Thus, instead of His being on a well-deserved vacation these past two millennia, think perhaps of our ascended Lord as being busily engaged "checking each of us in for our previously confirmed heavenly mansion reservations" in the Lamb of God's blood-stained book of eternal life (John 14:2f.; Revelation 12:13). Meanwhile, beloved retired "repositioned" individuals like Pastor Telloni can be envisioned to be free endlessly to compose and we play and sing additional praiseworthy eternal life-related hymns like his already locally beloved, "O Savior of Mankind" also likely continue composing additional mutually praiseworthy hymns in honor of our eternal Triune God here as well as in the promised "endless day" in God's haven of heaven while the St. Onge family and others will surely discover new and creative ways of strengthening the baptismal faith of countless other believers not only in the friendly confines of their present Pembroke, Ontario, Canadian parish but in global cultures far beyond in keeping with our ascended Lord's apostle Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 9:16-23 in +effect that once a proven Spirit-empowered dedicated missionary, always a missionary as evidenced by today's global persecuted Church.

The Slovak words "Bozou pomocu" meaning "God helping us," we can all continue to "bloom wherever we are presently planted" regardless of external circumstances! Encouraging words of lasting comfort these. Something we all need and have as with good reason our forever sinless Brother-Savior and living paracletic Lord and Holy Spirit John 14:26; 15:26f; 16:7, 13 The interesting Greek word "Paraclete" variously translated as Comforter, Encourager, Helper, Intercessor, Counselor, Guide, Teacher and even most etymologically accurate 21st C. translation of all, "Sideline Coach!"

**WE ALL NEED TO BE COMFORTED AND ENCOURAGED BY GOD
ON A DAILY BASIS!**



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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