



# The Lutheran Beacon



*Let your light shine . . .*

[WWW.SELC.LCMS.ORG](http://WWW.SELC.LCMS.ORG)

Published by the SELC District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod JUNE/JULY 2017

## St. Matthew's (Norton OH) Welcomes Rev. Curtis Stephens

by Diane M. Hunsicker

The members of St. Matthew Ev. Lutheran Church, Norton, OH are grateful to the Lord that Rev. Curtis Stephens accepted the Divine Call extended to him to serve as our new pastor.

On Saturday, March 25, 2017, Rev. Stephens was installed as the sixth pastor in the church's 107 year history. The congregation held the Installation ceremony at 11:00am followed by a special installation luncheon for Rev. Stephens and his family.

Presiding over the Installation service was the Officiant, Rev. Andrew Dzurovcik, SELC District President, Clark, NJ as well as Preacher Rev. John L. Telloni, St. John LC (Massillon, OH) and Vacancy Pastor for St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Liturgist Rev. Dr. Christopher Cahill, SELC District First Vice-President, and Pastor of Christ the King LC (Lodi, OH) and Lector Rev. Kenneth Ballas, SELC District Central Circuit Counselor, Parma, OH. Also attending this special service was our former pastor, Rev. John D. Mashek, EM, and Rev. William Fenker, Pastor Stephen's Father-in-Law as well as 7 other local area LCMS Pastors.

Prior to his installation at St. Matthew's, Pastor Stephens served as the pastor of St. John's LC in Hazleton, PA. Pastor Stephens received his B.A. from Concordia University-Ann Arbor and his M.Div. from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN. He and his wife Naomi have been married for eight years. They have a one year old son, Jonah Alan Gerhard Stephens. Pastor Stephens is originally from Davison, MI. Naomi was raised in both Milwaukee, WI and Cincinnati, OH.



***Please rejoice in the Lord for bringing Pastor Stephens and his family to us and bless his ministry for many years to come!***

Summer is here. This is the first of our two combined issues covering June & July.

*The Lutheran Beacon* - Gail Peterson

email: [gailpete37@yahoo.com](mailto:gailpete37@yahoo.com)

**DEADLINE FOR THE AUGUST/SEPTEMBER ISSUE IS JULY 12<sup>TH</sup>**

# Zeroing in on Generation z

by Rev. Thomas Soltis, SELC Stewardship Director

## GENERATION Z

*“Generation Z” follows the “Millennials”.* Today, this would include those up to 22 years of age. It’s too soon to be specific. Things written about them are in generalities and there will be exceptions.

> **Characteristics** - Alexia Elejalde-Ruiz of The Chicago Tribune writes that Gen Zers are entrepreneurial yet pragmatic, hardworking yet easily distracted, with a streak of realism and a desire to make a social impact.

> **Independence** - According to Public Relations Society of America, Zers, after seeing people struggle in the workplace after the Great Recession, are entrepreneurial with a desire for occupational independence.

> **Church Participation** - A 2016 U.S. study found church attendance of Zers during young adulthood was 41% compared with 18% for Millennials at the same age.

> **Morals** - Research from the Annie E. Casey Foundation found Zers had lower teen pregnancy rates and less substance abuse. They also have a strong desire to make the world a better place.

> **Education** - Zers have a higher on-time high school graduation rate with 81% hoping for a college degree. Many high school students spend summers interning toward future careers.

> **Finances** - According to The Daily Telegraph, Zers are good personal money managers.

> **Political Views** - Zers tend to be more conservative than Millennials.

## INFLUENCES

**Technology** - Generation Z is the first to have internet technology so readily available at an early age. In 2015, 77% of 12 to 17 year olds owned a cell phone. Nearly three quarters of teens have access to smart phones. Researchers are divided on the impact. Some maintain digital technology will make Zers better educated and well rounded while others fear technology dependence may hinder proper development.

**Social Media** - Zers use the internet as a way to access information and interact with others. While there are many benefits, psychologists and parents are concerned about access to false information, inappropriate images and access to immoral people.

## THE CHURCH ZEROS IN ON GEN Z



**Worship** - Since Zers are digitally conditioned, worship services can be made more appealing by going digital. Many churches are already projecting services on screens in the sanctuary.

Sermons are enhanced with power point technology. Scripture passages, graphic illustrations, quotes, etc., projected visually, capture the sight and sound senses of worshipers, old and young alike.

**Variety of Approaches** - The age groups of Zers range from childhood to age 22. A variety of approaches are necessary to meet the needs and interests of each segment.

**Youth Groups** -Some churches have structured three youth groups consisting of pre-confirmation, high school students and college students (meeting mostly in summer). The groups not only offer social interaction, but include relevant Biblical discussions and societal action to benefit others.

**Parenthood Training** - Parents are the primary resource for reaching younger Zers. The Church should provide parenting classes and child rearing resources for both church members and the community. Books, DVD’s, CD’s, etc. should be made easily accessible.

**Education** - Sunday Schools, Vacation Bible Schools, Bible Classes, Seminars, etc. should be structured to communicate via digital technology. Opportunities should be given Zers to tap their smart phones for relevant Biblical information.

**Internet Use** - Congregations emailing monthly newsletters have a great opportunity to include items for Zers. Congregational web sites also have an avenue to Zers with relevant items of interest salted with Biblical perspectives.

## RELATED GENERATION RESOURCES

[www.selc.lcms.org](http://www.selc.lcms.org) - Personal Stewardship

“Traditionalists” - “Baby Boomers”

“Generation X” - Millennials

# Selc District President's Report

by Rev. Andrew Dzurovcik

January 29 <sup>th</sup> :	Installation of Rev. Zach Zehnder at theCross, Mount Dora, FL
January 30 <sup>th</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> :	Eastern Circuit Pastoral Conference, Macungie, PA
February 5 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> :	COP Meeting in New Orleans, LA
February 12 <sup>th</sup> :	Guest Preacher at Redeemer, Manchester, NJ
February 13 <sup>th</sup> :	MissionInsite Orientation (Video Conference Call) with David Thiele, Paul Hoyer, Peter Wernett, Hope Alfieri and Dennis McGovak
March 5 <sup>th</sup> :	Guest Preacher at St. John the Baptist, Emporia, VA
March 9 <sup>th</sup> :	Meeting at St. John, Garfield, NJ
March 12 <sup>th</sup> :	Guest Preacher at St. John, Garfield, NJ
March 13 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> :	ECCE in Florida (Flights Cancelled due to Snow in NJ)
March 25 <sup>th</sup> :	Installation of Rev. Curtis Stephens at St. Matthew, Norton, OH
March 27 – 29 <sup>th</sup> :	Rev. Dr. Albert Marcis Funeral, St. Luke's, Oviedo, FL
April 20 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> :	COP Meeting and Call Days in Fort Wayne, IN and St. Louis, MO
April 29 <sup>th</sup> :	Building Dedication, Concordia, Macungie, PA
May 8 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> :	Board of Directors Meeting, Granite City, IL and St. Louis, MO

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

May 12 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> :	50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Graduation from Concordia, Mequon, WI
May 21 <sup>st</sup> – 23 <sup>rd</sup> :	Lutheran Haven Board Meeting/Ground Breaking, Oviedo, FL
June 3 <sup>rd</sup> :	Installation of Rev. Joseph Leech, St. John, Hazleton, PA
June 11 <sup>th</sup> :	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St. Peters & Paul, Sharon, PA
June 25 <sup>th</sup> :	100 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Holy Trinity, Boyceville, WI
July 8 <sup>th</sup> :	Installation of William Hale at St. John, Granite City, IL
July 20 <sup>th</sup> – 23 <sup>rd</sup> :	90 <sup>th</sup> Luther League Convention, Fellowship Deaconry, NJ
August 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> :	Lutheran Haven Board Meeting, Oviedo, FL
September 16 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> :	COP Meeting, St. Louis, MO
September 25 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> :	Professional Church Worker's Conference, Macungie, PA
October 22 <sup>nd</sup> :	500 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation, Grace, Lakewood, OH
November 14 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup> :	COP Meeting, New Orleans, LA
November 17 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> :	LCEF Conference, New Orleans, LA

## ROSTER CHANGES

*(DATE FORM SENT TO DEPARTMENT OF ROSTERS & STATISTICS)*

January 16th:	Rev. Mark Larson, Installed as Pastor at St. Lucas, St. Louis, MO
January 23rd:	James Coe, Director of Music and Worship, Changed from Active to Emeritus
January 25th:	Sharon Owens, DCE, Transferred to Pacific Southwest District
January 29th:	Rev. Zack Zehnder, Installed as Pastor at theCross Lutheran Church theCross Lutheran Church, New Congregation Start
March 6th:	Rev. Mark Zuehsow, Pastor on Candidate Status, Transferred from English District to SELC District
March 27 <sup>th</sup> :	Rev. Curtis Stephens, Installed as Pastor at St. Matthew, Norton, OH
March 27 <sup>th</sup> :	Rev. Dr. Albert Marcis Called to Glory
April 27 <sup>th</sup> :	Jill Dianne Meyer Hartman Reinstated as Commissioned Minister
June 5th:	Rev. Joseph Leech, Pastor, St. John's, Hazleton, PA
August 2017:	David Edwards, Vicar, St. Luke's, Oviedo, FL

# Passover Seder – 2017

by Rev. Carl Krueger



Fifty people gathered in the Fellowship Hall of St. John, Cudahy WI to share in an annual observance of an event that occurred approximately 3,500 years ago: the Passover Seder.

The descendants of Jacob/Israel had become slaves in Egypt, crying out to God-Yahweh Elohim-to be delivered from their oppression. God chose Moses to be His spokesperson to Pharaoh, and to be leader of the people to whom God would bring freedom. God said: "Let My People go!" Pharaoh refused. God would send 10 Plagues to demonstrate God's power, and to set in motion the dynamics for slaves to become the nation of Israel.



God inflicted nine terrible plagues upon the Egyptians, but not the Israelites. The plagues: Blood-river; Frogs; Gnats; Flies; Livestock deaths; Boils; Hail; Locusts; Darkness. But still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and Israel remained slaves. Then, Plague #10 - the threatened death of the first born of every family. This plague would affect every family; except any family protected against God's judgement, with the blood of the sacrificed lamb. God's judgement would "PASS OVER" that home. Inside the home, the family would eat the lamb, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The effect of the Passover would lead to the release from slavery, plundering the Egyptians through borrowed silver and gold, the miracle of the Red Sea crossing and the destruction of Pharaoh's army, the miracles of water from a rock and daily manna, and the Mount Sinai Covenant.

The retelling, and the reliving, of these events, along with the meaning-filled menu items, is known as the Passover Seder Meal Experience. Unleavened bread, karpas, charoset, morar, and wine are the menu items that help tell the story of the Exodus, and lead to the kosher meal of lamb, barley, vegetables, salad, and fruit. This experience was led by Rev. Carl Krueger, who would also explain the Christian understanding of the Passover



message. Pastor Krueger wore the traditional Hebrew Prayer Shawl and yarmulke. Yarmulkes were available for each man. The women were invited to bring scarves or shawls as head coverings during times of prayer. Many of the Seder participants shared in the reading of various parts of the service.



The Seder is part Bible study, part worship service, part dining experience, part fellowship -- all to the glory of the God of history, promise, judgement, mercy, fulfillment, and victory. This is the God revealed most clearly through Jesus Christ. The Passover Seder is what Jesus and His Disciples observed on the night we now call Maundy Thursday, and is the basis for what we now call the Lord's Supper. The full script of this Passover Seder Experience is available on request to [selcpres@gmail.com](mailto:selcpres@gmail.com).

# Lutheran Haven Loves our Volunteers...and more!!!

by Diane Leining



The Haven is so very blessed to have so many residents that love to volunteer. Without them, flowers would not be delivered to NH residents each week, internal mail would not be put into our independent living resident's "farm boxes", the libraries would not run as smoothly, our ears and eyes would not be filled with wonderful music and skits, some of our NH residents would never get a visit, the altar in the NH/ALF Chapel would not get set up, devotions and hymns would not be given at the NH/ALF, we would not have our Flea Markets twice a year that brings in money for our NH/ALF resident's special needs and so many other wonderful and inspiring things that are accomplished every day.



To thank these "angels" we hold a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon every year. This year, the Haven staff served over 110 volunteers BBQ Chicken and all the fixin's! We played games that had the entire hall in stitches. Great fun was had by all!!



Speaking of our Flea Market, we just celebrated our 43<sup>rd</sup> year of this event. Thanks to donations from the Oviedo area and hundreds of hours of time and perspiration of our residents, we raised over \$28,500 for our nursing home and assisted living. God is Good All the Time ... All the Time God is Good!!

Small Town Trips have been popular with our residents. The Haven bus takes them to towns 30 – 40 miles from the Haven where they explore shops, art galleries, museums and historic areas of the city and of course we eat lunch. Our travels have taken us to Eustis, Cocoa Village and Mount Dora. In June we will visit Titusville on the east coast of Florida. It's a great way to learn about places near us and have a nice outing with friends and neighbors. Soon we will take our first overnight trip to St. Augustine, the oldest city in the U.S.

The Haven will soon expand with the addition of our villa homes in The Landings. We look forward to our groundbreaking ceremony on Monday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Pictures and information will be available in the next issue.

***Have a joy-filled month from your friends at Lutheran Haven!***

## **Dr. Doug's Disaster Corner**

By Doug and Nona Schipull  
The SELC-DDRCs

Our society is an information society. There is the need for "info" everywhere. There are many avenues for us to retrieve the info we need or desire. There is radio, TV, the Internet, cell phones and all the info modes that are integrated with cell phones. There are many information streams that impact us and which we have come to rely on.

We rely on two categories of information--incoming and outgoing. In a disaster, incoming information is usually needed more than outgoing. Any major disaster that takes out the communication infrastructure of a large area can leave thousands and thousands disconnected from their sources of information and isolated from the rest of the world.

"Staying informed" is the most important objective of communication. The FCC has established regional radio stations (both AM and FM broadcast stations) that will operate during disasters. These regional stations overlap, so, if one goes down, there is still one providing coverage. To benefit from these, individuals need a battery operated radio receiver (with spare batteries) that covers the AM and FM broadcast bands, plus the weather alert frequencies. Nona and I have a very simple radio receiver that covers the aforementioned reception bands. It also has a rechargeable battery system that has a little crank to turn to charge the radio's battery. We should be able to listen to emergency radio broadcasts and stay informed. One can go big-time with a fancy shortwave listening station that has a large bank of batteries charged via a solar panel system. This would receive radio broadcasts from around the world.

Telling the world that you are still alive and well, or in need of help and assistance, is the objective of outgoing communication. It may be a long wait until the cell phones or land lines are up and running. One possibility is to locate an emergency shelter (Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc.) and get your needed info out to the world. The local police and fire departments might help, too. If all else fails, get a blanket, some dry wood, start rubbing two sticks together, and work on smoke signals. On second thought, one might want to keep a pair of homing pigeons in the attic.

Garden of Grace



"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."  
John 12:24

***Did you miss the early registration deadline for "Garden of Grace"?  
Don't worry! We are extending it until May 31, 2017!***

**90<sup>th</sup> SELC District Luther League Youth Gathering  
July 20 – 23, 2017**

Hosted by St. John Lutheran Church, Bound Brook NJ

Theme: "Garden of Grace"

Theme Verse: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (John 12:24)

New Jersey is known as the "Garden State", so what better theme for the SELC District Luther League Youth Gathering than "Garden of Grace"? Join us as we journey from the Garden of Eden, to the Garden of Gethsemane, and ultimately to the garden tomb. The youth gathering is hosted at Fellowship Deaconry Camp in Basking Ridge, NJ by the youth of St. John Lutheran Church, Bound Brook NJ. The weekend will include servant events and a trip "down the shore". Registration materials are available on the Luther League website ([www.lutherleague.com](http://www.lutherleague.com)). *Interested in getting on the Western Circuit bus? Contact Tim Hasko 262.497.0496.* [See more Dates to Remember on Page 7]

## BITS & PIECES

### Welcome to the Newest SELC Members

*May God bless them in their new endeavors!*

#### Rev. Joseph & Gayle Leech

Pastor at St. John LC (Hazleton PA)  
Installation scheduled for Sat. June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017

#### David Edwards

Vicar at St. Luke's LC (Oviedo FL)

#### Jill Meyer

Reinstated Commissioned Minister



Congratulations to Samuel Connor Thompson, born May 9<sup>th</sup>, weighing in at 7 lbs. 4oz. *Proud Parents are Jennifer (nee Hansell) and husband Eric. Proud grandparents are Rev. George & Krista Hansell.*



-----  
Congratulations also in order for Victoria Ruth Cleveland, born May 13<sup>th</sup>, weighing in at 6 lbs. *Proud parents are Joy (nee Dzurovcik) and Geoff Cleveland. Excited Big Brother, Geoffrey Cleveland, Jr. Proud Aunt - Hope Alfieri. Proud grandparents Rev. Andrew & Susan Dzurovcik.*

### FREE! Church pews of all Sizes

Submitted by Deb Klusak, LCMS Ohio District

*Church renovations - need removal by June 5<sup>th</sup>!*

71 pews of various sizes with racks for 4 books on either the back or under the seat. All are mechanically sound. The new owner is responsible for pickup and transport. Call Dave at 937-430-2760 or email [dmalas@emmanuelc.org](mailto:dmalas@emmanuelc.org) or call John at 937-434-1798 for more information and pick up arrangements.

*More church pews ...* made of oak, in good condition and FREE to someone in need. There are 6 pews ranging in size from 11'4" to 13'7" - all are 33" high and 24" deep. Contact Doug DeBruler at [ddebruler001@cinci.rr.com](mailto:ddebruler001@cinci.rr.com) or 513-262-1982 for more info and pickup arrangements.

### According to the LCMS 2017 Lutheran Annual Statistics for 2015

#### Can you guess ...

- A) Who are the only two districts in the LCMS that showed a positive gain in communicant membership in 2015?
- B) Which seven districts had more than \$100 per communicant for "giving at large"?
- C) Which are the top five districts in per communicant giving for "non-budget purposes"?
- D) Which are the top ten districts in per communicant giving for "work at home and work at large" combined?
- E) who are the top thirteen districts in per communicant giving for "work at home"?

#### And Can You Name ...

***The only district listed in all of the above categories?***

[Answers on page 9]

### Luther League Dates to remember

May 31, 2017: Early Registration Deadline for Luther League Youth Gathering "Garden of Grace" (see Page X for more info)

June 1, 2017: Deadline for Luther League Scholarship Applications (transcripts can be mailed later)

July 20 - 23, 2017:  
SELC District Luther League Youth Gathering - "Garden of Grace"

#### Garden of Grace



"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." John 12:24

**Check out The Lutheran Beacon  
in full color at [www.SELC.LCMS.org](http://www.SELC.LCMS.org)**



## Jesus Christ Above All!

By Sharon Roegge, LWML SELC District President

***Jesus Christ above All*** – This theme, from Philippians 2:9, will be weaved throughout the 37<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention by our pastors, guest speakers, Bible study leader, and will remind us all whose we are. Following is a reminder of some of those participating in this convention: Opening Worship Proclaimer is Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, LCMS President; Closing Worship Proclaimer is Rev. Allen Anderson, Rocky Mountain LCMS District President; our Keynote Speaker is LWML Past President Ida Mall; our Bible Study Leader is Deaconess Betty Knapp; our Humorous Interrupter is Jan Struck as Katie Luther; our Song leader is Wendysue Fluegge; and our Organist is Shari Miller who is LWML Montana District President. There will also be many mission speakers and special luncheon speakers.

Gifts From the Heart include School Kits, New Baby Kits, Health Kits, twin size sheets, Quilts, children's underwear, and gift cards to be delivered to non-profit organization in need of these items. Delegates will be voting on new mission grants, some of the LWML officers, and bylaw changes. And in between all these activities we will be celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the LWML, meeting new friends, reuniting with other friends, and enjoying the fellowship of some of the other 3,500 plus Christian sisters and brothers in Christ.

If you would like to know what mission grants are on the ballot for the 2017-2019 Biennial, you can find them by going to [www.lwml.org](http://www.lwml.org) and clicking on Convention Central under 'News and Events' and scrolling down to 'Delegate and District Information'. You'll find the 34 mission grants listed as well as their 'where as' statements' along with the candidates for office and the bylaw changes. Our delegates, along with myself, who will be voting on these are: Eastern Zone, Karen Ann Kowalczyk from St. John's in Hazleton; Central Zone, Miriam Wilms from Calvary in Parma; and Western Zone, Julie Stoller from Zion in Norridge. Emilie Stoller, also from Zion in Norridge, is our Young Woman Representative. If you are familiar with any of these mission grants (or candidates running for office) and would like to let your zone's delegate know, please contact one of them or me. We will be able to vote for 8 of these grants. By the way when all the envelopes post marked by March 31<sup>st</sup> were opened, the total amount was **\$97,904.23** over our \$2,000,000 goal! PRAISE GOD!

Our LWML SELC District biennium ends on March 31, 2018. This summer our churches will be receiving information for submitting applications for the 2018-2020 LWML SELC District Mission Grants to be voted on at our District Convention in May of 2018. Plans are now being made for our District Convention. More details will be coming soon.

The twenty-one of us planning to attend the LWML Convention are looking forward to having a mountain top experience-some may be enjoying a hot air balloon ride in Albuquerque!

***God's Blessings to all on your summer activities.***



# Christian Estate Planning Transfers Blessings

submitted by Robin Paris, SELC District Gift Planning Counselor

Estate planning is often avoided, even among Christians. No one wants to think about death. Many times, difficult choices need to be made and the process can be cumbersome. However, this end-of-life planning is as important of a time for the person who dies as it is for those who are left behind.

Spiritually, proper Christian estate planning protects, projects and transfers the blessings of God's abundant kindness. This kindness can be partially measured by wealth, but wealth doesn't begin to capture relationships, or the sense of meaning that other, more powerful factors quantify.

Each faithful Christian steward designs their charitable estate plan, their own Lifetime Plan for Giving, as if they were taking what is intangible (values or fervent hopes) and puts them into a plan that becomes tangible. This can be done today to provide blessings tomorrow for the people they love and the ministries they care about.

Whether naming trusted representatives to stand in for you, or naming exempt charitable entities or charitable trusts to avoid taxes, a Christian steward can take the time to coordinate his or her transfer of wealth in such a way as to bless rather than curse beneficiaries.

A gift to ministry in your plan says that you value God's Word and want to see it taught to your children's children. It communicates that, to you, faith is real, the one thing needful for people to enter in to the kingdom of heaven.

Transferring blessings involves so much more than wealth. It involves miracles that can be transferred to those we love. It fulfills the Great Commission until Christ comes again. For help with completing your Lifetime Plan for Giving, contact Robin Paris, our SELC District Gift Planning Counselor at 937-477-9713, or email her at [Robin.Paris@lfnd.org](mailto:Robin.Paris@lfnd.org). There is no cost to this service, and the blessings and peace of mind will be great.

---

---

## 2015 Statistics Quiz - Answers [QUESTIONS ON PAGE 7]

- |                 |                          |                |                   |
|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| A) <b>SELC</b>  | .66                      | 5. \$1226.33   | Mid-South         |
| North Dakota    | .18                      | 6. \$1184.81   | Florida/Georgia   |
| B) 1. \$ 119.25 | Mid-South                | 7. \$1147.68   | Rocky Mountain    |
| 2. \$ 109.80    | <b>SELC</b>              | 8. \$1105.83   | Oklahoma          |
| 3. \$ 107.68    | Texas                    | 9. \$1104.50   | Pacific Southwest |
| 4. \$ 106.80    | Southeastern             | 10. \$1035.56  | <b>SELC</b>       |
| 5. \$ 103.97    | Florida/Georgia          | E) 1. \$ 21.58 | Mid-South         |
| 6. \$ 100.51    | Nebraska                 | 2. \$ 17.87    | North Dakota      |
| 7. \$ 100.20    | California/Nevada/Hawaii | 3. \$ 16.80    | Iowa West         |
| C) 1. \$ 69.09  | Nebraska                 | 4. \$ 15.72    | Wyoming           |
| 2. \$ 62.04     | South Wisconsin          | 5. \$ 15.65    | Minnesota North   |
| 3. \$ 53.04     | Florida/Georgia          | 6. \$ 14.68    | South Dakota      |
| 4. \$ 52.04     | Texas                    | 7. \$ 14.34    | Montana           |
| 5. \$ 48.01     | <b>SELC</b>              | 8. \$ 13.80    | Texas             |
| D) 1. \$1313.93 | Southern                 | 9. \$ 13.49    | Oklahoma          |
| 2. \$1312.68    | California/Nevada/Hawaii | 10. \$ 12.68   | Nebraska          |
| 3. \$1275.19    | Southeastern             | 11. \$ 12.56   | Michigan          |
| 4. \$1252.42    | Texas                    | 12. \$ 11.23   | Central           |
|                 |                          | 13. \$ 11.08   | <b>SELC</b>       |

## A Loving Tribute to the Rev. Dr. Albert M. Marcis

by Pastor Ken Ballas, EM

Born in Tarentum, PA to devout Slovak Lutheran parents March 14, 1928, Albert Michael Marcis was early baptized into Christ's Church and later confirmed in His baptismal faith in our Triune God. He graduated from Concordia High School and Junior College in Fort Wayne, IN, a preparatory school for Missouri Synod pastors.

As a key part of his seminary training at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, he served his required year of vicarage in what is today Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada during which time he was asked to preach the Word of God in more than one language (including German) in Western Ontario outposts reachable only by train (or even on foot) at times in sub-zero cold that on occasion necessitated his having to sleep wearing all the clothing and footwear in his possession.

It was during his vicarage that the Lord led him to meet and fall in love with a lovely Finnish Lutheran girl, Sylvia Karjalainen, who became his devoted bride of 60+ years and mother of the four Marcis family children – Michael, Ruth, Lois and Karen. Justifiably proud of their beautiful family, as recently as last summer the Marcises were still able to enjoy time at their family lake cottage not far from Sylvia's ancestral home.

Our brother in Christ is fondly remembered as a church-planter first at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Blue Island (now in Alsip), IL before accepting a Call as new mission developer at Calvary Lutheran Church in Parma, OH. During his 37-year tenure at Calvary, our dear brother in Christ mentored more than a score of vicar-interns some of whom serve as pastors in our SELC District and all of whom benefited from “Pastor Al's” firm but loving decisive, no-nonsense style of leadership.

The respect with which his peers regarded Dr. Marcis' administrative skills and renowned churchmanship resulted in his not only being repeatedly reelected as president of the SELC District of the LC—MS for nearly 25 years (while also capably serving as Calvary's pastor) but also in an impressive array of additional elected or appointed positions after his retirement from parish ministry.

Those privileged to know the Marcis family over the years remember the team of Pastor Al and Sylvia Marcis as both inseparable couple and loyal friends to many in and out of the church. As mentioned by Pastor John Telsoni, Calvary's first vicar, in his sermon on May 13 (a memorial service attended by many from far and near including a number of Marcis family Canadian relatives), Pastor Marcis, together with his faithful Sylvia, was above all an unassuming faithful servant of his Lord.

Blessed with an engaging sense of humor coupled with seemingly boundless energy, he was never afraid to get his hands dirty as he could often be found “tinkering” with things mechanical ranging from mower-tractors at Lutheran Haven board meetings to crawling about in the inner recesses of Calvary's organ chest in search of a recalcitrant pipe (the latter activity often requiring the enlisted help of one or more of the Marcis children) during which he would often be seen wearing his good dress clothes.

Ever a “people-person,” Pastor Marcis not only was but still is the kind of Christian we should strive to emulate—a man of God who rarely, if ever, appeared to care about what others thought of him as much as how they perceived our Creator-Redeemer God and His Christ, our Brother-Savior and living Lord Jesus. “Blessed by God are the dead who die in the Lord also from henceforth; yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors for their deeds do follow after them!” (Revelation 14:13; also see Romans 14:7-9).

# Reaching Rural America for Christ

A newsletter of LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission

Volume 8, Issue 5 • Newsletter

May 2017



## Our "Life Together"

- To follow the core beliefs of the LCMS
- To equip rural professional and lay leaders
- To support congregations in community engagement

Remember: RSTM is eligible for Thrivent Choice Dollars!

## Please Pray for These Important Dates

### May 25 - Webinar

"Teaching the Faith: Sunday School" Angela Kollbaum, youth director, St. Paul's, Concordia, Mo. 1-2 p.m. CST

### June 10

"Engaging the Wandering event" Zion Lutheran, Chamberlain, S.D. with the LCMS South Dakota District.

### Nov. 9 - 11

National RSTM Conference Hilton Kansas City Airport, Kansas City, Mo. [lcms.org/rstm/conference](http://lcms.org/rstm/conference)

If you have an idea or story for Rural Outreach, contact Amy at the RSTM office.

Phone: 888-463-5127

Email: [amy.gerds@lcms.org](mailto:amy.gerds@lcms.org)

*"And we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and fervent love toward one another through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord" (Post Communion Collect, LSB)*

## STRONG FAITH, FERVENT LOVE

Alexander Pope in "An Essay on Criticism" said:

"A little learning is a dangerous thing; drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring: these shallow draughts intoxicate the brain, and drinking largely sobers us again."

Pope reminds the reader that when one learns a little, one can become puffed up and think he knows more than he does. Even more dangerous is the one who with a little learning thinks he knows it all.

Conversely, when we continue our learning, we might find out just how much we don't know.

This is the premise behind our recent series of articles and webinars on "Teaching the Faith." Often in the Church we have folks who engage in learning the Word of God but at some point decide they've learned enough, whether in Sunday school, confirmation, high school or beyond.

As Pope observes, however, this way of thinking is dangerous! In fact, our faith is a lifelong learning situation, for it is

through God's Word and His Sacraments that we are made strong in faith and life. In fact, we are told in Deut. 6:6-9, "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

Sounds like lifelong learning to me.  
Pastor Todd



## RSTM Events Update

**Don't forget:** RSTM provides free monthly webinars on topics important to congregations in town and country settings. Up next is *Teaching the Faith: Sunday School* with Angela Kollbaum, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Concordia, Mo., on 5/25, 1-2 p.m. CST, followed by *Teaching the Faith: Adults* with Rev. Heath Trampe, Faith Lutheran, York, Neb., on 6/8, 1-2 p.m. CST. Find past webinars in our webinar archive on our website as a free resource for use when

you need it. Register for our Engaging Your Community (EYC) and our new Engaging the Wandering events on our website, [lcms.org/rstm](http://lcms.org/rstm). You can also see our full calendar.

Don't forget to check out all the RSTM National Conference details at [lcms.org/rstm/conference](http://lcms.org/rstm/conference). Now is a great time to register! Contact our office at 888-463-5127 or [rstm@lcms.org](mailto:rstm@lcms.org).



## TEACHING THE FAITH:

# SUNDAY SCHOOL

Contributed by Angela Kollbaum, youth director, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Concordia, Mo.

### Does your church offer "drive-by" Sunday school?

Gone are the days of the little ones attending Sunday school and their parents attending a Bible class of some sort during that hour before or after church. Too often, if they are brought at all, children are dropped off for Sunday school. What can we do? How do we reach out to the young families who are getting their children, if not themselves, to Sunday school? How do we reach out to those who don't even try? The most important thing is to give them an opportunity to learn about Jesus, but wouldn't it be great if we could also connect to them in other ways?

Most rural congregations struggle with small attendance numbers. Maybe instead of seeing this as a struggle we should see it as an opportunity. Imagine

the relationships that can be built when we can talk about the lesson and how it applies to our daily lives! Here are some thoughts on how to get children and families excited about Sunday school.

We are directed in Prov. 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." The best way to do this is to lead by example. When we drop our children off for Sunday school we are sending an important message, but is this the message we want to convey? Do we want to train them to only be in God's Word for an hour on Sunday or worse yet, teach them that once you can drive you do not need to be in the Word for even that hour? It is imperative to teach the importance of a lifelong faith that requires learning, studying, praying and fellowship with other believers. God created us to be in fellowship with one another, but as fallen human beings

we think we can do it entirely on our own.

There is also a lack of volunteers to teach Sunday school for a variety of reasons. What if we developed a ministry that would involve the whole family? We could provide an opportunity for families to learn about Jesus together and provide education/resources for this to spill over into

every day of their lives. We could connect the widow with the young family, the single mom with the empty-nest parents whose grandchildren live in other states, or the military wife with the family who is living far away from their own family.

Another challenge is creating excitement. Excitement is contagious, so it is important to find leaders who are excited about Sunday school ministry. This can be an even bigger challenge, but if people know the responsibility will not be entirely on them, maybe they will be more willing.

God's Word provides us with amazing curriculum, but how do you develop this in your congregation? Plan to join me in the conversation about Sunday school curriculum, creating excitement, intergenerational ministry and lifelong faith during the LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission webinar on Thursday, May 25 at 1:00 p.m. CST.

LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission supports and encourages rural and small-town congregations in engaging their communities and growing together in Christ through Word and Sacrament.

Learn more about RSTM at [lcms.org/rstm](http://lcms.org/rstm) or by calling Amy at 888-463-5127. "Like" us on our Facebook page at [facebook.com/lcmsrstm](http://facebook.com/lcmsrstm).

Click the Give Now button to support the work of RSTM.

Give Now





# Lutheran Church Extension Fund

> the SELC district

Newsletter for LCEF Advocates and Congregations



## THE CHURCH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM:

Identify, assess and fund critical church repairs and upgrades.

For a Limited Time, Your Church Can Receive a Free Church Assessment.

**Does your church need repair?** Whether it's a water-stained roof, broken down bathroom or a poorly-ventilated chapel- your church may need critical repairs before it's too late. **The LCEF Church Improvement Program** is designed to help churches fund critical church repairs and upgrades.

**Lutheran Church Extension Fund and TCG Services have partnered to help you assess your church's improvement and repair needs.** A local technician, contracted by TCG, will visit your church to conduct an independent facility audit and provide a deferred-maintenance checklist and assessment, including exterior and interior photos.

**For a limited time, your church can receive a free assessment!**

**Contact David Thiele at (517) 980-2857 to receive further details on the Church Improvement Program and free assessment offered by LCEF.**

*The mission of Lutheran Church Extension Fund is to support the Church in fulfilling its mission of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ by being a Christ-centered servant partner of the LCMS, ensuring that funds and services are available now and in the future.*



It's Not Too Late to Schedule Your **FREE Assessment**

Offer expires May 29, 2017



[lcef.org](http://lcef.org)

SELC District - LCEF  
Rev. David L. Thiele  
1381 Fox Haven Trail  
Eaton Rapids MI 48827

[david.thiele@lcef.org](mailto:david.thiele@lcef.org)  
517-980-2857



## Gracefully Increasing Congregational Giving

### How to Gracefully Increase Congregational Giving -

LCEF's Consecrated Stewards program is a uniquely Lutheran perspective of creating Christian stewards in your congregation. Over 620 congregations have completed the Consecrated Stewards program with an average increase of giving between 15% and 30%.\* Other benefits include:

- **Minimal time commitment. The program takes just four weeks to complete.**
- The congregation is not required to attend additional meetings since the commitment process is tied to the Sunday morning act of worship.
- Can be used at any time throughout the year.
- **Includes Lutheran Bible study materials and sermon outlines.**
- Includes publicity and communication aids like posters, bulletin inserts and emails.
- Offers guidance for anyone who wants to share their stewardship journey story.
- You'll work with an LCEF-trained and certified Guest Leader who **supports and guides you through the program.**

**LCEF can help you gracefully increase congregational giving. For more information, please contact David Thiele at [david.thiele@lcef.org](mailto:david.thiele@lcef.org).**

*\* Individual results vary. A congregation's results could be greater or lesser. LCEF cannot guarantee results in a Consecrated Stewards program or the fulfillment of member commitments. Success depends upon the cooperation and participation of congregational members.*

### ***Earn More for your Y.I. Club Investment***

Mission Builders and World Changers (ages 7-18) did you know you can earn up to \$25 "extra credit" per year just by completing 10 hours of community service?

And don't forget that all Y.I. Members 7 years old and older can turn in their good grades to earn

LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, LCEF investments are not FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. LCEF will offer and sell its securities only in states where authorized. The offer is made solely by LCEF's Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks. LCEF StewardAccount access features provided through UMB Bank n.a. The Demand/Dedicated Certificate and StewardAccount are not available to investors in South Carolina.