

Worship Resources

The Committee on Worship continues to make new resources available on the synod website at els.org/resources/worship/. Of particular note for individual church members is a booklet called "Worship While Away." This is intended for summertime use by congregation members who are traveling for vacation or work and are unable to attend a church of our fellowship. The booklet contains a short order of service, suggested readings, and a select number of hymns. It can be downloaded and printed from els.org/resources/worship/general-worship-resources/.

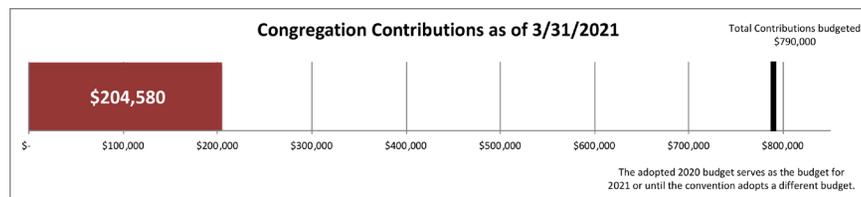
Seminary Anniversary History

This year we are observing the seventy-fifth anniversary of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. As we observe Good Shepherd Sunday in the church year, we remember the seminary chapel. The chapel is named the Good Shepherd Chapel because of the stained glass window that predominates in the worship area. The window reminds the seminary students that the heart of all Christian preaching is the Good Shepherd who gave His life for us, and it points out that the seminary is training its students to be shepherds under the Good Shepherd.



Upcoming Events

- May 3–4 – ELS Board of Regents
- May 5 – Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary Commencement
- May 7–8 – Bethany Lutheran College Commencement
- May 11 – Board of Trustees
- May 19 – Great Plains Pastoral Conference
- June 20–24 – Synod Convention



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President's Newsletter



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May 2021

Dear Members and Friends of the ELS:

Greetings in the name of our resurrected Lord Jesus Christ!

On April 18 we observed the 500th Anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther's refusal before the Emperor to recant his writings unless shown from clear Scripture to be in error. While this was a bold and courageous stance, we know from his writings it was not done without trepidation. We are hearing much today of possible governmental threats that may be coming to American Christian churches. We pray that if and when such threats are made against us, God will provide us the same grace and strength to make our bold confession and not falter.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. (Heb. 10:23)

In His saving name,

Glenn R. Obenberger

2021 Synod Convention

The 2021 Synod Convention will convene June 20–24, 2021 on the campus of Bethany Lutheran College. Those eligible to vote will be positioned with proper social distancing in the south gymnasium. Visitors and advisory members of the synod will be located in the north gymnasium with proceedings live-streamed on a screen. The Synod Sunday service will be held in Trinity Chapel with overflow in the gymnasium. The Communion Service on Tuesday will be held at Mt. Olive. **Note: Because the 2020 Convention needed to be canceled, we will very possibly need to still conduct business on Thursday morning, June 24; delegates and pastors should prepare accordingly.**

The convention will observe the 75th anniversary of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary under the theme “The Good Shepherd Sends Shepherds.” Three essays will be presented by Professors Timothy Schmeling, Gaylin Schmeling, and Brian Klebig.

The convention webpage at els.org/convention/ will be updated with the schedule and details when the *Book of Reports and Memorials* becomes available. (Printed copies of the *Book of Reports and Memorials* will also be mailed to each congregation.)

ELS Historical Society

“The Ministry Marches On” will be presented at the 2021 meeting of the ELS Historical Society on Sunday, June 20 at 2:30 pm in the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center at Bethany Lutheran College. An interview panel of three pastors will represent three time frames of early, mid-century, and today while answering questions about various aspects of the pastoral ministry. This subject is chosen to complement the 75th anniversary of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. All are invited to attend this free presentation.

Apologetics Conference

The third annual ELS Apologetics Conference will be open to the general public starting the evening of Wednesday, June 23, and continuing through Thursday afternoon. The conference theme is “Why Does Moses Matter to Christians? Examining the Meeting Point of Ancient Inscriptions, Archaeological Discoveries, and the Hebrew Scriptures.” For updated information or registration, visit blc.edu/event/2021-apologetics-conference/.

Explanation Review Committee

The Explanation Review Committee (ERC) has been tasked with reviewing and updating our 2001 *Explanation of Luther’s Small Catechism*. So far in its work the committee reports that there are no substantive changes in content but there is some reordering especially of the chapters under the Third Article of the Apostles Creed. The committee has been working on this project for two years and its internally-set goal is to complete its first run through the material by the end of 2021.

Our Bethany Lutheran College

Bethany Lutheran College (BLC) held its first in-person commencement ceremonies in nearly seventeen months on May 7 and May 8, 2021. Due to the restrictions on crowd size and social distancing guidelines, instead of having one event, there were two ceremonies held on Friday for the Class of 2021, and another was held on Saturday for members of the Class of 2020 as they were not able to have an in-person ceremony one year ago. Major Robert Reagles (USMC), a 2004 BLC graduate, was the speaker for Friday’s events, and Rev. David Thompson, a 1975 BLC graduate, 1982 Bethany Seminary graduate, and current member of the Board of Regents, was the speaker for the Saturday ceremony. Mr. Josh Birkholz, Bethany Class of 1994, was presented with the 2021 Distinguished Alumni Award. We wish the Lord’s blessings for these new graduates as they move on to their careers or continued education.

Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary Commencement

The Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary commencement service will be held on May 5 at 4:00 p.m. Due to the pandemic, attendance at the service is limited. You are welcome to join the service online at <http://www.blts.edu/live-streaming/>.

Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference

The tenth triennial convention of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference will be an online convention. If you are interested in viewing the sessions, go to celc.info/2021-online-conference and register as a “friend of the CELC who would like to watch the convention online.” The first session will be on May 25, 6:00–8:00 a.m. CDT.



Retirement – Matching Program

Since the beginning of the retirement matching program in 1998, overseen by the ELS Boards of Christian Service and Trustees, by God’s grace the ELS has been able to contribute more than \$1M to our pastors’ and teachers’ retirement accounts. We are happy to be able to continue this program for another year for \$350 synod match for called pastors and full/part-time teachers (half-time \$175).