

President's Newsletter



Office of the President

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Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

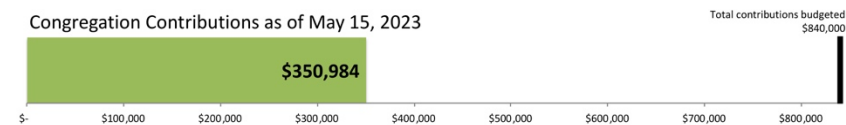
Three seminary graduates were assigned as pastors during the 2023 Commencement Service held on the tenth of May. Two vicars were also given assignments. Cody Anderson was assigned as pastor to Christ Lutheran Church in Klamath Falls, Oregon. Caleb Helmen was assigned as pastor to Richland Lutheran Church in Thornton, Iowa and Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (WELS) in Mason City, Iowa. Max Kerr was assigned as pastor to Holy Scripture Lutheran Church in Midland, Michigan. Joel Hansen was assigned as a vicar to Bloomington Living Hope Lutheran Church (WELS) in Bloomington, Minnesota. Matthew Lehne was assigned as a vicar to Saude Lutheran Church (Lawler, IA), Jerico Lutheran Church in New Hampton, Iowa and Redeemer Lutheran Church in New Hampton, Iowa. We ask the Lord's blessings on these men and the congregations they will serve.



Graduates (top) Caleb Helmen, Cody Anderson, Max Kerr.
Vicars (bottom) Joel Hanson and Matthew Lehne.

Upcoming Events

- June 6–8 – Triennial Convention of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference
- June 18–22 – Synod Convention
- July 20–21 – Board for Home Outreach
- July 27–30 – LYA Convention



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Dear Members and Friends of the ELS:

Greetings in the name of the One who impacts all that we think, do and say by coming to us throughout our lives with His blessings!

Recently someone outside our ELS complimented us that there is an observable sacramental piety among us. What does that mean? Generally, our pastors and members recognize the way in which our Lord works among us, i.e., sacramentally. He comes to us in Word and Sacraments forgiving us our countless sins, bestowing eternal life upon us and granting us everlasting salvation in the name of Jesus. While we respond sacrificially with words and deeds giving praise and glory to Him who is at work in us, these are but the salutary responses to those gifts. Receiving God's grace in our divine services, this power of the Gospel then works in us throughout the week in our daily vocations as we interact with our neighbors.

At the end of April I was privileged to address the ELS Lay Circuit Conference in Iowa on the subjects of "Cultivating a Sacramental Life" and "Cultivating Vocational Evangelism."¹ Because God dwells among us daily with His peace for us in Christ, we get to play a life-long role in His mission that all people might be saved. This is not some onerous, burdensome demand, but a natural result of our sacramental living, which moves us to love our neighbor as ourselves. He prepares us to answer them if asked about the hope we have within. This is why St. Paul reminds us: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly... whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father, through Him." (Col. 3:16–17)

In Jesus' name,

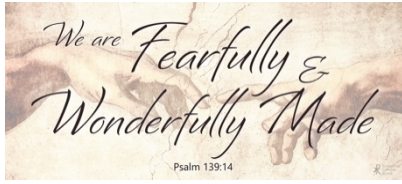
Glenn Obenberger

¹ A presentation I would be willing to make in your congregation per your pastor's request.

Convention 2023

Synod Convention will be held June 18–22. The convention schedule and a digital copy of the *Book of Reports and Memorials* are available at <https://els.org/convention/>. Even if you are not serving as a delegate, please join us for these special events:

- Synod Sunday Service – Sun, June 18, 4:00, Trinity Chapel
- Anniversary Observance – Mon, June 19, 1:00, Gymnasium
- ELS Military Monument Dedication – Tues, June 20, 11:30
- Communion/Memorial Service – Tues, June 20, 5:00, Trinity Chapel
- Bethany Activity Center Dedication – Wed, June 21, 11:30



Two important studies of the ELS were recently completed by committees. The Sunday School Committee and Commission of Congregations at Critical Mass (CCCM) reports are both available online at www.els.org/convention.

Catechisms to Go

3500 copies of the 2001 ELS *Catechism and Explanation* are currently stored in boxes on Bethany's campus. The Board for Home Outreach would like to send all 3500 copies home with you after this year's convention at no cost to your congregation. The board encourages you to give these catechisms away to your prospects (and maybe enclose a bookmark with your church's information on it, too). You may sign up for as many copies as you like at the BHO booth during convention. You may also order copies prior to convention by emailing Christian Eisenbeis at ceisenbeis@blc.edu.



Clergy from Minnesota and Iowa gathered for the Great Plains Pastors Conference on May 24th on the campus of Bethany Lutheran College.

BLC Education Graduates

Two Bethany Lutheran College education graduates chose to receive placements to teach in ELS schools. In a service on May 10, Cianna Hoppe was assigned to teach grades 5–7 at Lakewood Lutheran Church & School in Lakewood, Washington, and Sarah Strom was assigned to teach Kindergarten at Mount Olive Lutheran Church and School in Mankato, Minnesota.



(l to r): Pastor Joshua Skogen, Dr. Carrie Pfeifer, Sarah Strom, Cianna Hoppe, Dr. Gene Pfeifer.

Bethany Lutheran College

The 2023 Bethany Lutheran College (BLC) spring semester commencement ceremony was held on Friday, May 12. Ninety-five graduates received their bachelor of arts, bachelor of science in nursing, and for the first time in the history of the institution, a master of arts in clinical mental health counseling degrees.

Dr. Joshua Mears was speaker. Mears attended Bethany and graduated in 2005 with a degree in psychology and a minor in religious studies. Mears has served Bethany as an



adjunct faculty member both for the Bethany Seminary and for the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. He has also served as a member of the Board of Regents at Bethany since 2017.

During the commencement ceremony, President Emeritus Dan Bruss received the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award. Bruss served as the ninth president of Bethany and is a 1973 alumnus of the college.

Joining Mears and Bruss on the commencement stage was Dr. Gene Pfeifer, President of Bethany Lutheran College, Dr. Jason Lowrey Vice President of Academic Affairs, Rev. Donald Moldstad, College Chaplain, and Rev. Herbert Huhnerkoch, Chair of the Bethany Lutheran College Board of Regents.