

ELS Newsletter



Evangelical Lutheran Synod
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Circuit Visitors:

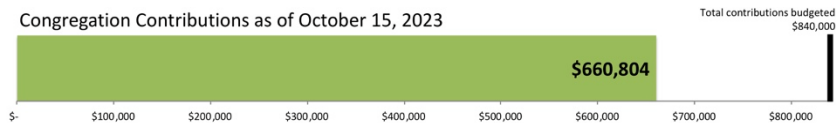
The synod directed in its "Tell of Jesus and His Love" strategic plan that "Every congregation receives at least one visitation by 2025." On account of COVID, I have reset that goal to be accomplished by 2026. We have four brand new circuit visitors, so Rev. Paul Schneider, a well-seasoned circuit visitor, accepted the position to be the monitor and mentor for all the circuit visitors in this endeavor. ELS pastors and congregations need to request such visits so that this goal can be achieved in a timely manner. These visitations are fraternal to help encourage our pastors and congregations in their work together in the Kingdom of our Lord. This was something begun in the Reformation and has been part of our Lutheran tradition ever since.

ELS Giving Counselor

Mr. Paul Manning, a member of Our Savior Lutheran Church (ELS), Naples, Florida, has accepted the offer by the ELS Board of Trustees to serve as the ELS Giving Counselor. Paul will be working with Rev. Daniel Basel this fall before Dan is installed as pastor at Faith, Hillman & Trinity, Rogers City, Michigan, in February 2024. Paul will be moving to Mankato and setting up his office at 6 Browns Ct starting November 1, 2023.

Upcoming Events

November 2-3 – Board for Home Outreach
November 14-15 – Board for World Outreach
November 16 – Board of Trustees
November 17 – Synod Review Committee



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November 2023

Dear Members and Friends of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod,

Greetings in the name of Christ Jesus, who is your Jonah, so that you might be saved aboard His ship, the Church, left unharmed by the monsters of the deep.

Picking up from last month, I want to put before you these words of peace and confidence in Christ from the same source I quoted in October:

"Whatever happens, nothing can sink the whole fleet, which is to say, nothing can sink the one ark of the Church. By faith in Jesus you belong to that one ark. And that one ark is Jesus' ark. He commands the winds and the sea and they must obey him. He is the Jonah who threw himself overboard to give us peace, who turned death's stomach so that all who go in will come out, who came walking back to the boat on the face of the angry waters and is with us."

Be at peace my fellow redeemed. No matter how the sea rages all around you and seems invincible, your Lord Jesus will land you safely on those heavenly shores as promised.

In Jesus' name,
Glenn Obenberger

Our Bethany Lutheran College

Bethany Lutheran College's Fall 2023 enrollment continues the positive growth trend that began already in 2018. Two enrollment records are notable:

Full time students now number 671 which bests the previous record of 651 in 2021. A record 905 students in total are being served by the institution in Fall 2023 which is an increase of nine percent over the previous high mark of 832 set in 2022. The total enrollment figure includes all undergraduates (683), graduate students in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program (48), high school students enrolled at Bethany through Minnesota's Post-Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) or through an online partnership with schools both locally and throughout the nation (165), and a small number of non-degree seeking students (9). Bethany also continues to have a robust international student enrollment which stands at 126 students from 28 countries.

Bethany's President Dr. Gene Pfeifer remarked, "We are very pleased that students are increasingly choosing Bethany Lutheran College. While some today may be questioning whether a college education is worth the cost, Bethany's mission to engage students with the Gospel message of Jesus as our Savior continues to provide great value. Our intent is to provide students the opportunities they need so they may be equipped for vocations and productive lives in today's complicated world while providing them with a college experience offered through the lens of a Christian worldview."

Anniversary Observed

On October 22, Peace Lutheran Church of North Mankato, Minnesota, observed the 25th anniversary of her first Divine Service. All of the congregation's previous and current pastors participated in the Service:

Robert Otto (1998–2000), Bradley Kerkow (2000–2011), Timothy Harwig (2011–2022), Matt Moldstad (2017–present), and Ben Wiechmann (2022–present). The Services were followed by a video history presentation and a reception.



Pacific Northwest Mission Rally

On September 23, 2023, Parkland Ev. Lutheran Church, in Tacoma, Washington, hosted the 2023 ELS Circuit 12, Women's Mission Society Rally. Preacher: Rev. Steven Sparley and Officiant: Rev. Samuel Gullixson, Accompanist: Mr. Brad Hall. The theme was, Train up a Child, Proverbs 22:6. We were pleased and honored to have had Board for World Outreach Administrator, Rev. Thomas Heyn, who presented the synod's mission work as well as how other cultures work to "train up a child" in the faith. Additional pivotal speakers were Rev. Tony Pittenger and his wife, Mrs. Melissa Pittenger, who spoke on some of the latest findings in child development with practical ways for parents and caregivers to nurture the faith of their children. Principal at Parkland Lutheran School, Mr. Brent Sorn and his wife, Mrs. Lacey Sorn, a teacher at Evergreen Lutheran High School, spoke on how Lutheran schools can support families in nurturing the faith of young people. Maggie Zickrick gave a brief look at grandparents raising grandchildren in the Christian faith. Rev. Dan Basel spoke on planning and added thoughtful support to the "train up a child" theme. Saturday afternoon, Rev. Peter Bockoven did the afternoon itinerary and Rev. Jesse Jacobson did the Compline service on Friday night.

We thank the many faithful people who attended the Circuit 12, 2023 Pacific Northwest Women's Mission Rally, and we look forward to seeing everyone in Sutherlin, Oregon, at the 2024 rally.

