

# ELS Newsletter



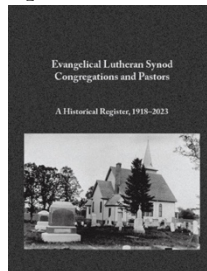
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## The Minnesota Human Rights Act

In both the MN House and Senate there have been committee hearings on the matter of restoring the religious liberty exemption clause in the Human Rights Act. Both committees turned down proposals of restoration. If this is not restored before it is passed, our MN churches and church operated schools remain open to lawsuits. Claims of gender identity discrimination will likely result, since our churches and schools will refuse to embrace gender identity ideology in their practices. On behalf of our synod, the ELS President cosigned some letters with other concerned MN religious institutions which were sent to the MN legislators outlining our concerns and asking for remediation. We will remain vigilant in the hopes the religious exemption clause will be restored in the MN Human Rights Act with a clear inclusion of First Amendment protections for our churches and schools. Pray to the Lord of all mercy that we be spared from all such possible harassment and persecution.

## Historical Register Available

A new book, including historical information about ELS congregations, pastors, and teachers, is now available for purchase. Learn more and see a sample at [els.org/archives](https://els.org/archives).



## Prayer for Missions

Almighty and gracious God, we pray that you would bless our home mission, Divine Mercy Lutheran Church, in Weatherford, Texas. Protect, encourage, and bless missionary James Kassera, his family and his congregation. Be with them as they proclaim Christ's Victory this Easter season, and enable many in their community to hear this message and rejoice in faith. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

## Upcoming Events

- April 1 – BORAM report deadline
- April 16–17 – Board for World Outreach
- April 17 – Board for Home Outreach
- May 6–7 – Board of Regents
- May 8 – Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary Commencement (4:00 p.m.)
- May 9 – Board of Trustees
- May 10 – Bethany Lutheran College Commencement (10:30 a.m.)



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April 2024

Dear Members and Friends of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod,

*Greetings in the name of our Crucified and Risen Lord Jesus Christ!*

On the Sundays after Easter, we usually have as our focus in our Gospel lessons the impending ascension by our Lord to the right hand of the Father and the subsequent sending out of the Holy Spirit in full measure upon the Church on Pentecost. Jesus' ascension is filled with promises to the Church in which believers have trusted for two millennia.

"[Jesus] made five promises we might call ascension promises ... as we leave the presence of God on Sunday into the same crazy world in which the apostles ventured.

- [1] I will always be with you to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:20).
- [2] I will send you the Spirit (John 14:25-27).
- [3] I will prepare a place for you (John 14:1).
- [4] I will rule all things for your benefit (Matthew 26:64).
- [5] ...I will come back for you (John 14:28; Acts 1:11).

When we leave church with this blessing [The threefold Aaronic Blessing: "*The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord ...*"] and pass by the font one last time, we are comforted that Christ will fulfill his promise to us. He hasn't let us down yet." (*The Baptismal Life*, by Michael Berg, NPH, 2022, p. 111.)

Ascension Day this year is on Thursday, May 9. So, throughout April and early May in your divine services, listen for these promises Jesus intends for us Christians to rely on, even to this day and be comforted in His saving name.

Glenn Obenberger

## Installation

Rev. Michael Lilienthal was installed as pastor at Our Savior's and Rock Dell Evangelical Lutheran Churches (Belview, Minnesota) on Sunday, March 10. Rev. Gene Lilienthal preached for the service and circuit visitor Rev. Aaron Ferkenstad performed the rite of installation.



(L to R) Shawn Stafford, Dan Faugstad, Andrew Soule, Andrew Palmquist, Gene Lilienthal, Josh Mayer, Carl Busse, Michael Lilienthal, Johann Caauwe, Michael Muhlenhardt, Christian Walz, Adam Manian, Tom Kuster, Aaron Ferkenstad

## Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of Kenya Update

The ELS Board of Trustees agreed to fund a trip to our 2024 Convention by two ELDK representatives: Rev. Pres. Gwachi Evans and Rev. David Ombogo. The two offerings for the Synod Sunday and Communion/Memorial service will be designated to help defray the expense of their travel and stay for the Convention. However, the ELS-ELDK Liaison Committee reports that since these two men have not been to the U.S. in the past, their appointment with the U.S. consulate is on Jan. 16, 2025. Therefore, the invitation will be extended to the 2025 convention, but the offerings mentioned above in 2024 will still be designated for that visit in a year from now.

## Our Bethany Lutheran College

A special event was held on the Bethany campus on March 7, 2024, where alumni, friends, and Mankato area business leaders attended the inaugural **Celebrate Bethany** fundraising event. Among the featured speakers were Bethany President Gene Pfeifer, Senior Development Officer Art Westphal, and ELS President Glenn Obenberger offered remarks and prayer before the meal. We are blessed to report that over **\$118,000** was donated to help close out fundraising for the new Bethany Activity Center.



The Bethany Activity Center (BAC) officially opened on May 1, 2023. While serving the Bethany campus for a variety of purposes, the building is also a Mankato community asset. Usage of the BAC includes community members from the Mankato area who are walking on the track on a daily basis. The Mankato Area Youth Baseball Association and the Mankato Area Girls Fastpitch Association are using the turf for practices. Local high school track and field teams (Mankato East and West) have also booked about three weeks of early season practices. And the River Valley Running Club and Twin Valley Pole Vault Club are both using the facility on a regular basis for training. If you are in the Mankato area, please stop by and visit the BAC anytime.

**Thank you** to all who attended and supported the inaugural Celebrate Bethany Fundraising Gala. It is our hope that the relationships formed through this new gathering will create additional partnerships that benefit Bethany students to lead and serve in our community and most importantly shine a light on our mission of The One Thing Needful—the precious Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## April is the Month of the Military Child

Often, we remember our Warriors and the sacrifices they make for our freedom and security, without thinking about the impact their service has on their families. Military Families, including Military Children, make sacrifices too. Children support their Warrior parents by going without them during a long training or deployment. Families move often, making long-distance childhood friendships normal. It is important for us to remember and support the whole Military Family along with the Warrior. For ideas on how you can recognize and thank the wonderful Military Children in your congregation or school this April, visit [www.LutheranMilitary.org](http://www.LutheranMilitary.org).