

## ELS Assignment Committee

This Assignment Committee will meet on April 20, 2026. This spring we should have one candidate of theology from Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary to be placed in his first call on May 6. We should also have four vicars to be placed under the supervision of one of our pastors in the parish for the coming school year. If there are ELS congregations seeking either a candidate or a vicar, please submit requests soon (deadline Feb. 28, 2026). A candidate request should be sent to the office of the synod president (a blank call with the usual supporting documents including cover letter, salary and benefits package—at least according to the home missionary scale see Synod Report 2025, Res. #5, p. 112, should all be sent with a formal request from your calling body). A vicar request should be sent to the office of the BLTS president.

## Bethany Lutheran College Shares Plans for Centennial Celebration

Bethany Lutheran College has announced initial details surrounding its upcoming centennial celebration, marking 100 years of Christ-centered education. The two-year commemoration will begin in June 2026 and continue through mid-2027, reflecting both the college's founding by faithful pastors and congregations in 1926 and its formal establishment as a school of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in 1927.

Plans include special recognitions of the founders, campus and community events, alumni gatherings across the country, fine arts and athletic celebrations, historical displays, and a Centennial Gala that will look ahead to Bethany's next century of ministry. The centennial will culminate with a special event held in conjunction with the 2027 ELS Synod Convention.

We give thanks to God for a century of blessings at Bethany Lutheran College!

## Upcoming Events

February 3–5 – Pastoral Retreat

February 9–10 – Board of Regents

February 10–11 – Board of Trustees

February 12–13 – Board for Home Outreach

February 17 – Board for Christian Service

April 5 – Easter Sunday

Synod Fund Congregation Contributions as of January 15, 2026



# ELS Newsletter



Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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February 2026

The Church's Breath of Life:  
She Inhales Gospel,  
Exhales Her Prayers.

"The fiber of the liturgy is the Gospel... liturgy breathes the life of the Gospel into the body of the church... the church inhales deeply of the life-giving breath of the Spirit. But in the liturgy the church also exhales, that is she offers up to God her prayers... True prayer cannot exist without faith, but faith that does not pray is dying. In other words, when the Giver of all life opens our mouth to receive the good gifts of His Holy Word, out of that same mouth flow petitions and praises... Healthy organisms not only inhale; they also exhale... Though we like to be in control of our relationship with God, Jesus teaches us that genuine worship of the Father is done 'in' the Spirit and the Son (who is the Way, and the Truth and the Life). True worshippers always worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth... In this liturgical setting the church receives forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation *from* the Father *through* the Son *in* the power of the Spirit, and there she also offers her sacrifice of worship *in* the Spirit *through* the Son *back to* the Father." (*Dying to Live: The Power of Forgiveness*, by Harold Senkbeil, Concordia Publishing House: St. Louis, MO, 1994, pp. 122-124.)

You may recall this line from one of our hymns: "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath" (ELH #387, v. 4). The above quote gives us the fuller context of that expression. So, while prayer is never to be thought of as a means of grace, which alone is the Gospel in Word and Sacrament, it is a vital part of our Christian life and worship. So, our Lord urges us to pray. Refusing or neglecting to pray has dire consequences to our faith life. Regularly be revived with the breath of eternal life in the Gospel and exhale your prayers in praise and adoration of your Savior God.

Glenn Obenberger

## Decommissioning

On Saturday, June 20, 2026 at 10:30 a.m., the Friends of Lime Creek Society is planning a decommissioning service for the Lime Creek Lutheran Church building (rural Lake Mills, Iowa). This is the historic location where thirteen pastors, desiring to remain faithful to God's Word rather than compromise, met to reorganize our Synod in 1918. We are inviting convention delegates and anyone interested to attend, as we thank God for the many years He has provided Word and Sacrament ministry in this location and officially close the building. Following the service, a meal will be provided. A charter bus will be available for round trip transportation between Mankato and Lime Creek for \$26.00 per seat. It will depart Bethany College at 9:00 a.m. and return at 5:00 p.m. Please register in advance to attend the service and meal, and to reserve a seat on the bus, at [FriendsofLimeCreek.org](http://FriendsofLimeCreek.org)

## Harmony Among the ELS Clergy

*[Continued from the January 2026 Newsletter.]*

It was the general opinion of the council and the president that we have sufficiently achieved removing this as a critical issue in the ELS. The office of the president is implementing plans by which we will seek to maintain and facilitate the ongoing gains of good fraternal discussions among the ELS clergy.

1. The June 2025 two-part podcast is available for all at <https://els.org/lutheransunplugged/>
2. We plan to repeat recording one or two similar podcasts with other pastors every June and make available throughout the year.
3. We plan to encourage intentional organic times of fraternal interactions among our pastors outside their natural friendship groupings. These will happen at pastoral conferences and retreats. The president will ask the chairmen of these gatherings to facilitate these intentional interactions.
4. The praesidium will assign four pastor groupings from the ELS clergy roster of those willing to participate and ask these men intentionally to become more acquainted with one another, through individual conversations with one another and group conversations via zoom. This listing will be adjusted annually.
5. The praesidium will video record 5-7 minute devotions regarding the desire of our Lord that we continually seek unity among us being aware that our enemy always seeks divisions among us. These will be sent out to the general public by the Communication Director monthly under the banner "Called by One Vocation."

## Installations

The Rev. Matthew Moldstad was installed as pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Frankenmuth, Michigan on Sunday, January 4. The Rev. Paul Schneider performed the Rite of Installation, with the Rev. Jeffery Luplow preaching the sermon and the Rev. Max Kerr serving as liturgist.

Pictured are: Brian Diring (WELS), Kurtis Freimuth, Max Kerr, Paul Schneider, Jeff Luplow, Matt Moldstad, Dan Basel, Nicholas Lilenthal.



On Epiphany, Rev. David Jay Webber was installed as the new world missions administrator for the ELS. The preacher for the service was his son-in-law, Rev. Andrew Soule. The officiant for the installation was Rev. Kyle Madson, the secretary of the ELS.



On Sunday, January 18, 2026, Rev. Paul Kuehn was installed as associate pastor at Abiding Shepherd Lutheran Church in Cottage Grove and Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. The liturgist was Rev. Nathaniel Abrahamson (Abiding Shepherd), the preacher was Rev. Ben Pederson (Cross of Christ, Coon Rapids, Minnesota, WELS), and the rite of installation was conducted by Rev. Dr. Daniel Hartwig (Circuit Visitor/Trinity, West Bend, Wisconsin). The service was followed by a meal to warmly welcome Rev. Kuehn, his wife Danielle, and their four children ranging from 2nd-11th grade.

(L to R): Rev. Piet Van Kampen, Rev. Ben Pederson, Rev. Paul Kuehn, Rev. Nate Abrahamson, Rev. Dr. Daniel Hartwig

