

ELS Newsletter

Synod Convention Registration

This year there is a change in convention registration. Printed Synod Reports are no longer automatically provided with your registration and an electronic version will be distributed. However, you can still get a printed copy if you would like to have one.

Because of this change, **everyone attending (including emeriti) needs to register** this year and in future years. Please go to els.org/convention and look for the registration links. There is one link for pastors/teachers/delegates and another link for emeriti/professors/staff.

Please contact Elsa or Myrna with questions.

Lutheran Youth Honor Choir

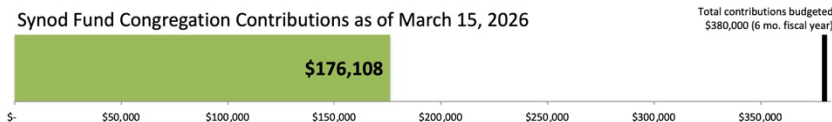
Lutheran Honor Choir Camp is five days of immersive study and performance in our rich Lutheran Musical Heritage. For more information and registration, visit els.org/honorchoir.

Interment Service

Yvonne Keeler, the late wife of Pastor Charles Keeler, will be interred at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery at 11:30 am on May 4, 2026. "Blessed are those who die in the Lord" (Revelation 14:13).

Upcoming Events

- April 5 – Easter Sunday
- April 28–29 – Board for World Outreach
- May 6 – Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary Commencement
- May 7 – Board of Trustees
- May 8 – Bethany Lutheran College Commencement
- May 29–June 1 – Triennial Convention of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference



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April 2026

As the children of Israel encamped at the base of Mt. Sinai the Lord came down to speak to them through Moses: "Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled." (Ex. 19) And with the menacing sounds and sights still in place God would then call Moses up on the mountain for 40 days as He gave him His Law.

Similarly on Mt. Calvary on Good Friday after Jesus suffered our eternal hell for breaking the Law of God and then breathed His last taking our death upon Himself, we read: "*the earth quaked, and the rocks were split.*" Mt. 27) *Then it came to pass on the third day there was peace declared!* For the next 40 days, Jesus repeatedly announced that peace between God and sinful mankind had been established.

Take note this Holy Week and Eastertide: we cannot hear the peace with God secured for us on Mt. Calvary with the understanding of faith unless we have first listened to the thunder of Mt. Sinai. God desires that His people continue to hear His Law and His Gospel faithfully preached. While some *shepherdless* followers of Christ throughout the world only get to hear the thunder of Mt. Sinai, we in the ELS are blessed to hear both the Law in all of its condemnation AND ESPECIALLY the sweet soothing proclamation of peace through the crucified and risen Christ, our holy Substitute and Savior. On account of His work in your place all your sins are forgiven and you are declared righteous before the Father.

Glenn Obenberger

Accredited for Excellence: Bethany's Counseling Program Prepares Servants for Gospel-Minded Care

Bethany Lutheran College's Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program has earned accreditation from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the gold standard in counselor education. This achievement affirms that the program meets rigorous national standards for curriculum, faculty qualifications, clinical training, and student outcomes.

CACREP accreditation follows a comprehensive review process that ensures graduates are well-prepared for licensure and professional practice. Students in Bethany's program complete extensive supervised clinical experiences, equipping them to serve individuals, families, and communities with competence and care in a variety of counseling settings.

Distinct from this professional accreditation, Bethany's CMHC program is also faithful to the college's Christian, Lutheran mission. While CACREP evaluates academic and clinical excellence, Bethany intentionally integrates a faith-informed perspective that reflects its confessional heritage. This Christ-centered foundation shapes how students carry out their vocation, service, and care for others.

This milestone reflects both the strength of the program's professional preparation and the college's ongoing commitment to providing an education that is academically rigorous and rooted in biblical truth.

We thank God for His blessings on this important milestone for our counseling program.

Open House at the Ottesen Museum

This year the annual meeting of the ELS Historical Society will be conducted on Saturday, June 20, after the decommissioning service at Lime Creek Lutheran Church in rural Lake Mills, Iowa. For the last several years, that meeting has been held the evening of Synod Sunday. This year, in its place on Sunday, June 21, the Historical Society welcomes you to an open house at the Synod's Ottesen Museum located at 4 Browns Court, next to the ELS Synod/Seminary building. The hours for the open house are from 6:30–8:30 pm. This will be a great chance for convention goers to visit the museum who are not able to do so during convention hours. We hope many will take advantage of this opportunity.

Lutheran Sentinel Editor

The Rev. James Braun, having suffered two significant medical events in 2025 found it necessary to resign as our copy editor for the Lutheran Sentinel. The Rev. Christian Eisenbeis has agreed to be appointed to this position and the Committee for Communication has ratified this selection. We thank Pr. Braun for his faithful service and pray for Pr. Eisenbeis as he assumes these additional duties on top of those in his other familial and professional vocations.

Decommissioning

On Saturday, June 20, 2026 at 10:30 AM, 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 provided Word and Sacrament ministry in this location and officially close the building. Following the service, there will be a meal and then a program. Please RSVP to attend the service and meal at FriendsofLimeCreek.org. A charter bus will be available for transportation between Mankato and Lime Creek for \$26.00 per seat. It will depart Bethany College at 9:00 AM and return after the program in the afternoon. If you plan to ride the bus, please also register for that at FriendsofLimeCreek.org.

Colloquies

Separate Colloquies were conducted for Rev. Dr. Steven Gjerde and Rev. Christopher Johnson of Zion Lutheran Church, Wausau, Wisconsin (formerly the LCMC) on February 23, 2026. Both of these men successfully completed Part 1 of the colloquy. Subsequently on Palm Sunday, March 29 they completed Part 2 with the result that the ELS Colloquy Committee unanimously resolved that these pastors are in agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in doctrine and practice and are recommended for permanent membership in the synod at the synod's 2026 convention.

On Holy Monday, March 30 Part 1 of a Colloquy was conducted for Rev. Kent Dethlefsen (former ELS pastor) and it was determined unanimously by the committee that he successfully completed Part 1. Part 2 is scheduled tentatively for April 20.