

Lime Creek Decommissioning

On Saturday, June 20, 2026 Friends of Lime Creek Society (<https://friendsoflimecreek.org/>) made it possible for a large gathering to worship in the church for one last time to decommission it as a regular sanctuary for divine services. Rev. Glenn Smith of Grace Lutheran Church, Lake Mills, IA served as liturgist; Rev. Glenn Obenberger the ELS president preached the sermon on John 4:16-26 under the theme: **God Always Dwells with Men on Earth**; Rev. Peter Faugstad, ELS Circuit 7 Visitor officiated over the Rite of Decommissioning.

The ELS Historical Society met for its annual meeting after a meal and provided a program with the following speakers: Neal Shaffer, chairman of the ELSHS; Pres. Obenberger; Dr. Gene Pfeifer, president of Bethany Lutheran College; BLC Chaplain Don Moldstad and Herman Harstad, both grandsons of two of the 13 pastors at the reorganization of the Synod in 1918; Lamar Peterson, former student of Lime Creek Lutheran School.

2026 ELS Convention Essay

The Rev. Alexander Ring gave an excellent essay under the theme: "Our Father, By Whose Name All Fatherhood Is Known: *Fathers reflecting our Father in heaven.*" It would make a nice study for congregational Bible Classes or even Men's groups. It could possibly serve as an evangelism outreach tool by attracting younger people in search of such a study on the topic of fatherhood. You can find the printed copy at https://els.org/wp-content/files/convention/2026_convention_essay.pdf or the video presentation and discussion at <https://vimeo.com/1205532092>. Pastor Ring is well qualified as a father, pastor, and teacher.

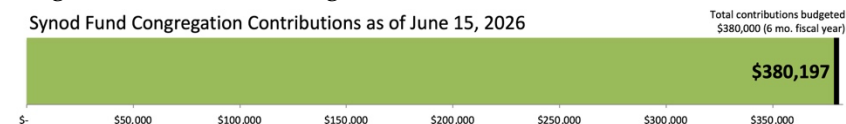
Upcoming Events

July 9–10 – Board for Home Outreach

July 23–26 – LYA Convention

August 6 – Board of Trustees

August 17 – Board of Regents



ELS Newsletter



Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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"What do you want to be your legacy?"—I have been asked this as I am approaching my retirement this summer. It might be nice to be remembered as the person who helped the ELS identify and clarify its flavor as a Confessional Lutheran church body in America. When I had the "flavor" committee produce its five-point document (<https://els.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/ELS-Flavor.pdf>) and I would speak of it, many among us would agree but there were the occasional snickers and smirks. If I am not remembered that is fine, since the glory is not unto us but to God. Yet I pray the ELS flavor remains and impacts generations to come for Jesus' sake.

Without mentioning it specifically, the four pastors received into permanent membership through colloquy in June, made it clear in their own words that this Gospel-centered flavor drew them to the ELS. Here is an example from Rev. Dr. Gjerde writing to me shortly after we conducted his colloquy:

"The [Colloquy] meeting... felt like 'coming in from the cold.'... [N]ot only the clergy but also the lay members of the committee were impressive in their concern, commitment, and knowledge. I'm thankful for a synod that tends its confession with such seriousness, but also, with such joyful confidence and grace—the Gospel must predominate.' It was that combination of Norwegian-Synod orthodoxy and *gospel-ly* spirit that I now remember sensing in the forgotten corners of Luther Seminary and faded history pages of my vicarage site (Cresco, Iowa), haunting those places like a spirit's fading echo. How good to hear it [in] fresh, clear tones—it does feel like coming home, in a way no other fellowship has, and not for cultural reasons but evangelical ones."

This flavor is not a matter of pride, but of gratefulness to our Lord who keeps us so faithfully centered on that "One Thing Needful!"

Glenn R. Obenberger

Bethany Baseball Reaches New Heights in Historic Season

The 2026 season was one of the most successful in Bethany Lutheran College baseball history. The Vikings finished with a 28-6 record, won their fourth consecutive UMAC regular-season championship, and captured a second straight UMAC tournament title to earn a berth in the NCAA Division III Tournament.

Facing some of the nation's top programs, Bethany continued its remarkable run. The Vikings earned their first-ever NCAA Tournament victory with an 8-2 win over Luther before upsetting defending national champion UW-Whitewater twice on its home field to claim the regional championship. The dramatic regional title game was decided in the 11th inning when Kyle Carlberg's sacrifice fly scored Xavier Palmer for the winning run.

Bethany advanced to its first NCAA Super Regional, where the Vikings came within one victory of reaching the Division III World Series. Although the season ended there, the team set a new standard for the program and provided many reasons for gratitude to God for His blessings throughout a memorable season.



Installation

The Rev. Jeffery Merseeth was installed as the pastor at Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church, Princeton, Minnesota on Sunday, June 14, 2026. The Rev. Robert Lawson served as liturgist; the Rev. John Merseeth (Jeffery's father) was the preacher and Pres. Glenn Obenberger officiated at the Rite of Installation.

(Back row, L to R)
Pastors Joshua
Mayer, Robert
Lawson Sr., Glenn
Obenberger,
Timothy Zenda.
(Front row, L to R)
Pastors Nile
Merseeth, John
Merseeth, Jeffery
Merseeth, Preston
Heuer, Paul
Webber.



Prayer for Newly Elected ELS Officers (Pres. Michael Smith & VP Peter Faugstad)

O Lord God, the Father of lights and the fountain of all wisdom, who has promised through Your Son, Jesus Christ to be with Your Church to the end of the world: We humbly ask You with Your favor to behold Your servants Michael and Peter. Give them grace faithfully and wisely to discharge their duties in their offices. Guide them by Your Spirit in all their vocational activities always directing their hearts and minds into accordance with Your perfect will. By this same sanctified guidance keep us, the members of our ELS congregations, from all misunderstandings, from all dissension, and from every breach of the law of love. Through the administration of these duly elected officers, prosper every effort among us to make Christ known to the many neighbors You place in the lives of Your people. Keep Your called leaders' vision clear, sympathies broad, steadfastness firm, zeal unabating to the end that all they do in these offices, whether in word or deed, may all be done for Your glory and the welfare of Your Church in the name of Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.