

Ukraine Crisis Fund

We thank you for your generous offerings to this fund. We have our network in place for getting your dollars to our partners in Poland where food, clothing and medical supplies can be purchased and transported to our Gift of Life centers in Ukraine. Several shipments have already been sent and received. The latest shipment included energy bars, cheese, canned meat, soup, health supplies, and various undergarments and diapers. Medical Clinic on Wheels resumed operations in providing medical and dental care for the thousands of displaced refugees. The April 2022 issue of *Thoughts of Faith* contains additional information and can be accessed at <https://tof.org/home/newsletters-2/>.

The distribution of aid includes Christian literature to assure recipients of God's love for them in Christ together with invitations to our Lutheran churches nearby. The need for your offerings continues. May the Lord continue to bless his people in these difficult times.

Freedom of Speech Upheld in Finland

In December, through the office of the president, the ELS signed (along with other CELC member churches) *A Protest and Call for Free Religious Speech in Finland: An International Lutheran Condemnation of the Unjust Criminal Prosecution of the Rev. Dr. Pohjola and Dr. Räsänen, and a Call for All People of Good Will to Support the Freedom of Religious Expression in Finland*. We were urged to join the LCMS along with many of its international partners in signing this document. Bishop Pohjola and Dr. Räsänen were charged with "hate speech" for sharing their faith-based views regarding marriage and sexual ethics. By March, the Finnish court upheld the right to free speech and dismissed all charges against them.

Upcoming Events

- May 3-4 – Board for World Outreach
- May 9-10 – ELS Board of Regents
- May 11 – Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary Commencement
- May 12 – Board of Trustees
- May 13 – Bethany Lutheran College Commencement
- May 18 – Great Plains Pastoral Conference
- June 26-30 – Synod Convention



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President's Newsletter



Office of the President

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May 2022

Dear Members and Friends of the ELS:

Being separated for the most part from my mother by thousands of miles for over three decades, I would find myself unwittingly whistling the spiritual "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child." This song was likely born out of the scourge of slavery when children were cruelly torn from their mothers. For me, of course, it did not have that kind of pain associated with it, and I always knew my mother would regularly pray for me and I for her, whether separated or not. This is now my first Mother's Day without her in this life. But even though separated in death, Jesus promises that we will not be left as orphans but united through His loving presence here and in the glories of heaven. Consider using this Mother's Day prayer:

Gracious heavenly Father, who sent forth Your Son to be born of a woman, the blessed Virgin Mary, and who by His holy incarnation caused her to be the very Mother of God, thereby crowning and honoring all motherhood; grant Your perpetual favor and blessing upon all of our mothers, that they in turn may be a blessing to all their children. Bless the memory of those of our mothers who have passed on from this vale of tears, and leave us not comfortless. Be with widows; be with those who have the misfortune of raising children without a father; be with the barren to whom in Your infinite wisdom You have not granted children, that they each may find joy in the life You call them to live. Amen.

In Jesus' name,

Glenn R. Obenberger

Convention 2022

The 2022 Synod Convention will be held on **June 26–30**. The theme will be “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word.”

- The *Book of Reports and Memorials* for the 2022 Synod Convention will soon be in the mail. Packets are mailed to the pastor’s address and include copies for both pastor and delegates.
- The convention schedule and a digital copy of the *Book of Reports and Memorials* will be available at <https://els.org/convention/>.
- The program “When the Christian Is Called to Arms” will be presented by the ELS Historical Society on Synod Sunday, June 26 at 7:00 pm at Bethany Lutheran College. The program will tell the stories from five different eras in which ELS members served in the military service and provide a brief history of how the ELS has prepared and supported her members in the military. Everyone interested is welcome and encouraged to attend.

Fiftieth Anniversary

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Bloomer, Wisconsin observed the 50th anniversary of her 1970 organization on April 24, 2022. The Rev. Aaron Ferkenstad preached the anniversary sermon as a son of the congregation, and the congregation’s pastor, the Rev. Robert Otto served as liturgist. Pictured are Robert Otto, Craig Ferkenstad, Roger Holtz, and Aaron Ferkenstad.



Military Monument

The site preparation for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Military Monument has been completed, awaiting the spring thaw so the concrete pads, which will support the granite, can be poured. The military seals have been ordered. The granite has been ordered from a local contractor and the bronze sculptures are in the process of being completed by Artist Jason Jaspersen. Through the sales of inscriptions on pavers, benches, pillars, as well as monetary donations by generous contributors, \$300,000 has been received. Another matching pledged gift of \$20,000 is expected. Due to high inflation, the cost of materials for the monument has increased. If you would still like to donate, please go to: <https://els.org/monument> or make a cash donation, please send it to: ELS, 6 Browns Ct, Mankato MN 56001.

Bethany Announces New Partnership With Scheels



Bethany Lutheran College (BLC) is pleased to announce a new partnership with Scheels, a privately held, employee-owned and operated sporting goods and entertainment department store headquartered in Fargo, North Dakota. Through a naming rights agreement, Scheels Field at Bethany Lutheran College becomes a key component of a new activity and athletic complex on the Bethany campus that will also feature an 84,000 square foot Activity and

Wellness Center currently under construction. Scheels Field at BLC will be home to Bethany Vikings Soccer, intramural activities and events, and will also host a range of other community sporting events including high school contests while welcoming thousands of athletes and spectators each year to the campus.

Dedication

On Palm Sunday (4/10), President Obenberger preached at Ascension Lutheran Church, St. Helens, Oregon, and dedicated its new baptismal font and altar railing. He preached on the historic Gospel lesson from Matthew 21 under



the theme: **Blessed Is He Who COMES in the Name of the Lord, Not Just Came.** It coordinated well with these furnishings being dedicated for holy use marking two of the places where Jesus regularly comes to His people here and now with His blessings of forgiveness, life and salvation.

Visits

Since April, 2021 President Obenberger has had the pleasure of attending 61 divine services in different ELS congregations (does not include multiple visits in same location); preached at 27; attended 5 ELS funerals, 1 ELS wedding.