

2026 Bjarne W. Teigen Reformation Lectures

October 29–30, 2026

Did Luther Have an Agenda? Luther's Liturgical Writings

1. **Luther's Divine Services**—Dr. Joseph Herl, Concordia University Nebraska, Seward, Nebraska
2. **Luther's Hymns**—Prof. Dennis Marzolf, Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota
3. **Luther's Reforms and a Lutheran Theology of Worship**—Dr. Jon Vieker, Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, Missouri

Registration available online: blc.edu/reformation-lectures

ELS Youth Missionary Fund

The *Hugh Brooks Mission Fund* was established Rev. Matthew & Rebecca Brooks in memory of their dear son Hugh who died from heart complications before he was a year old. This wonderful memorial fund exists to assist ELS teens and college students with financial help to participate in mission projects within our fellowship. Youth leaders and/or parents of our young people are encouraged to contact our ELS *Board for Youth Outreach* chairman, Josh Mayer, through their congregational pastor to learn more about how their youth might make use of these funds in kingdom work. *"Establish the work of our hands for us. Yes, establish the work of our hands."* (Ps. 90:17)

Upcoming Events

October 15 – Planning & Coordinating Committee
October 18 – 50th Anniversary of Pinewood (Burlington MA)
October 19–20 – Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum
October 23 – Synod Review Committee
October 29–30 – B.W. Teigen Reformation Lectures
November 8–9 – Board of Regents
November 11 – Board of Trustees
November 12–13 – Board for Home Outreach
November 17–18 – Board for World Outreach



ELS Newsletter



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October 2026

When October rolls around, Lutherans start thinking about...? ~~Halloween~~. Reformation. Granted, the actual date we celebrate isn't until the end of the month, but it's a fine thing to consider how we Lutherans became, well, *Lutherans*.

What was Martin Luther up to? Keep in mind what we call the movement Luther started on Oct. 31, 1517: the *Reformation* of the church. Luther definitely believed there were things about the church of his day that needed to be changed, but he didn't scrap it all and begin from scratch. In short, he kept what was good and got rid of the bad. (Liturgy? Good. Indulgences? Bad.)

What a contrast to how God works with us! We frail creatures, because we inherit the sin of our first parents, are all bad in God's eyes. Nothing good that's salvageable. So he takes us, drowns us and raises us from the dead in baptism, and makes us new, living creatures. For the sake of our Savior, because of everything he did for us, we are transformed into God's children.

It's good to celebrate the Reformation Luther began and continued in the 1500s. It's also good to celebrate the *transformation* God has made in us, a transformation that means we get to live forever.

Michael K. Smith

ELS in Action Video

Join host Nate Abrahamson and visit Weatherford, Texas for "Mornings with Mommy." Visit: www.els.org/elsinaction



Anniversary in Weatherford, Texas

Divine Mercy Lutheran Church of Weatherford, Texas, celebrated the 10th anniversary of the congregation's incorporation on Sunday, September 13. Rev. Brad Kerkow served as the lector for the service and Pres. Michael K. Smith preached the sermon. A wonderful lunch of Texas barbecue was served after the service. Pastor James Kassera serves as pastor of Divine Mercy. We ask the Lord's continued blessing on this mission of the ELS!



Anniversary at Holy Cross

Holy Cross in Madison, Wisconsin (pictured at right, top) celebrated her 100th anniversary on September 27. It was a very joyful and meaningful event as we looked back at the past and forward to the future—thanking God for his steadfast grace and blessings through the years. Pastor Mark Bartels preached for the festival service, which was followed by a lunch and program.



Anniversary in Portage and Wisconsin Dells

On September 27, St. Paul Lutheran Church (pictured at right, middle) in rural Portage and Newport Lutheran Church (pictured at right, bottom) in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, celebrated their 175th anniversaries! Pastor Dan Larson preached for the services and a lunch followed at Newport.

Our Bethany Lutheran College

Bethany Lutheran College's 100th academic year is a special opportunity to give thanks for the Lord's blessings and for the faithful support of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. For generations, ELS congregations and members have supported Bethany through their prayers, encouragement, and generosity, helping the college remain steadfast in its commitment to the "One Thing Needful." That partnership is especially meaningful as we celebrate our centennial under the theme ENDURES: From Foundation to Future.



As Bethany begins the 2026–27 academic year, we do so with encouraging momentum and gratitude. Gifts to the Bethany Fund directly support our students through Christ-centered programs, financial aid, campus life, and opportunities for Christian service. This year's Bethany Fund goal is \$900,000, and the continued support of synod members will play an important role in helping Bethany carry out its mission.

Thank you to the congregations and members of the ELS who have faithfully supported Bethany. As we celebrate 100 academic years, we ask for your continued prayers and support as we prepare students for lives of Christian faith and service and look with confidence toward Bethany's future.

Circuit Visitors Conference

The Circuit Visitors of the synod met September 10–11 in Eagan, Minnesota for their annual conference. Presentations were received from Dr. Joshua Mears on crisis counseling, Rev. Aaron Hamilton on excellence in worship, Rev. Brad Kerkow on the “Everyone Outreach” program, and Rev. Larry Wentzlaff on proactive congregational counseling.



Pictured: Kurt Kluge, Bernt Tweit, Daniel Hartwig, Josh Skogen, Steve Sparley, Kyle Madson, Michael Smith, Peter Faugstad, Paul Schneider, Ken Mellon, Gene Lilienthal, James Braun, Jesse Jacobsen, Aaron Hamilton, Micah Ernst

General Pastoral Conference

The General Pastoral Conference met September 30–October 2 in Bloomington, Minnesota. The conference serves as continuing education for all pastors in the ELS and includes papers on various topics and updates on work from around the synod.



Installations

Rev. Jacob Kempfert was installed at Peace Lutheran Church, North Mankato, on August 30, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. A delicious potluck meal followed the service. For the service: Rev. Ben Wiechmann was the liturgist, Rev. Patrick Ernst preached, and Rev. Ken Mellon, circuit visitor, performed the installation.

Pictured, right top (left to right):

Back: Tim Schmeling, David Thompson, Andrew Soule, Brad Kerkow, Tim Hartwig, Kyle Madson

Middle: Craig Ferkenstad, Ben Wiechmann, Shawn Stafford, Don Moldstad

Front: Gaylin Schmeling, Ken Mellon, Patrick Ernst, Jacob Kempfert, Luke Ulrich, Mike Muehlenhardt, John Petersen



Rev. Colin Anderson was installed as pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church of Ames, Iowa, on Sunday, September 20, 2026.

Pastor Josh Skogen served as officiant, Pastor Kyle Madson served as lector and Pastor Peter Faugstad preached for the service. We ask the Lord's blessings on the Bethany congregation and Pastor Anderson's service there!

Pictured, right bottom (L to R):

Back: Pastors Caleb Helmen, Kyle Madson, Peter Faugstad, Josh Skogen, Ted Gullixson. Front: Pastors Martin Hoesch, Sean Scheele, Colin Anderson, David Thompson, Abraham Faugstad, Mark Faugstad.

