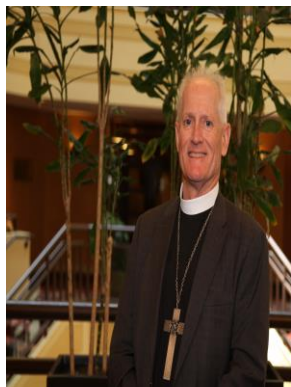


## President's Message



Recently I had the privilege and blessing of leading the Sunday morning Divine Services and teaching the Bible class at one of our congregations, as their pastor was away. O, what a joy to be with God's people in His house, and focused upon His Word! This should be the greatest of joys for us all, for in this gathering are brought together God and His people; the saints in heaven and we who are on earth; time and eternity. All are brought together in the eternal Son of God who became flesh for us. Paul sums it up this way in Eph. 1:3-10:

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."*

As Paul speaks of how God has blessed us in Christ, notice where he focuses: "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us."

The forgiveness of sins, lavished upon us: is this your focus? Over the course of my 38 years in the Holy Ministry I have heard many times the lament that we Lutherans – at least, we in the LCMS – focus a lot on sin. "Oh, how negative! How depressing!" To this I say, "Oh, contraire! How Biblical this is! How Christ-like! How positive and uplifting!" This assumes, of course, that our focus is not simply upon our sins but above all upon their forgiveness. This must be our focus, for this is the focus of our God and His Word.

Consider the Psalms. Ps. 103, one of my favorites, begins: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." It then proceeds to list a number of God's benefits, beginning with: "who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy." The forgiveness of our sins is the first blessing listed, for it brings with it every other blessing; indeed, all of the blessings that God desires to give us! Then, there's Ps. 32, which was the focus of my Sunday morning Bible study in the congregation I

**NED NEWS is published for members and friends of the LCMS churches throughout New England.**

**NED-LCMS STAFF**

DP Rev. Robert Beinke

Brenda Bacon

Samantha Foucher

Lydia Asante

400 Wilbraham Road  
Springfield, MA 01109  
Phone: 413-783-0131  
Fax: 413-783-0909  
[www.ned-lcms.org](http://www.ned-lcms.org)

**THE MISSION OF NED is to encourage and assist its congregations in their ministry of Word and Sacrament to build up the body of Christ and to make disciples of all peoples.**

Please keep all articles under 250 words. All submissions are considered available for use by the New England District for any district communication piece including digital and print.

**The next deadline is**

**April 15**

Email submissions to [NEDcommunications@ned-lcms.org](mailto:NEDcommunications@ned-lcms.org)

Digital photos need to be high resolution and unedited (no reformatting or cropping) NED Staff and Editors reserve the right to edit articles and submissions for clarity and space.

recently served. It begins: "Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit, there is no deceit." An entire Psalm focusing on forgiveness, and the blessings that come from it! This is a good Psalm to memorize and meditate upon often.

Then, there's Jesus in His ministry. How did He sum it up? "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:28) He spoke this to His 12 disciples to emphasize that such sacrificial service to ransom and save the lives of others was to mark their lives. So: if your pastor focuses predominantly upon your sins and their forgiveness in Christ... give thanks to God! He is doing what Jesus has told His pastors to do.

Remember when the Pharisees and Scribes grumbled because Jesus was welcoming sinners to Himself? He responded: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mark 2:17) A physician for sinners: that's who Jesus is, and so that's who faithful pastors proclaim. They begin with diagnosing the affliction – sin – so that the cure – Jesus, the forgiveness He won for us on the cross and gives to us through His Word and Sacraments – will be desired and received.

So, if your pastor regularly focuses on your sins, and then proclaims and gives their forgiveness in Christ: give thanks to God! He is serving you well! May God bless us with many more of such faithful servants!!

In Christ Jesus, our Lord,  
Pastor Bob Beinke, DP

---

## District President Bible Study Offered

Join Pres. Beinke for a weekly Bible study of the Scripture readings for the coming Sunday! This online study takes place on Thursday's from 7:00 - 8:00 PM on Go-To-Meeting at the following link: <https://meet.goto.com/445850965>.

The study is of the readings from the 3-year series, year B, which most of the congregations of the District are following. Pastor Beinke may be away on March 14, so check the district website, President's Page to see if it is canceled. If Thursday is a national holiday the class will not meet.



## Support Our New England District Schools

The New England District (NED), comprised of the LC-MS churches in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island and Maine, has four congregations with day schools (preschool through grade 8):

Immanuel Lutheran School, Danbury, CT  
Immanuel Lutheran School, Bristol, CT  
First Lutheran Christian School, Holyoke, MA  
Trinity Christian School – Keene, NH

These schools offer a solid education within the context of our faith for the children in their communities. The majority of students enrolled are from non-member families, giving the sponsoring congregations an amazing opportunity to reach beyond their walls and share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A congregation with a school for primary education commits to, among other things, providing and maintaining the facilities, hiring staff, purchasing curriculum and enrolling students. The congregation also accepts the responsibility to financially support its school, as tuition only covers a portion of these costs.

We now have an opportunity to join our sister congregations in supporting the mission work of our NED schools:

- Please lift up our schools in your prayers, giving thanks to God for this ministry to students and families.
- Consider a tax-deductible financial gift. The NED has established a dedicated account for monetary contributions that will go directly to the schools. Funds will be distributed annually through the NED Board of Directors with recommendations from a newly-established School Funding Committee. If you would like to contribute, please go to [www.ned-lcms.org](http://www.ned-lcms.org), follow the “Donate” instructions and designate your gift for “Support Our Schools”, or you can mail a check directly to the New England District office and note “Support Our Schools” in the memo field.

Each NED congregation will receive more information next year about the schools and the giving opportunity will be on-going. Thanks be to God for congregations that preach and schools that teach the wonderful identity we have as God’s children and His guidance for our lives!

**IMMANUEL LUTHERAN SCHOOL**  
**18 Clapboard Ridge Road**  
**Danbury, Connecticut**  
**Founded – 1881**

Mission Statement – A firm foundation in a changing world. 1 Corinthians 3:11

Enrollment – 66 Students

(15-member students and 51 non-member students)

12 teaching staff – 2 support staff

Interesting Facts – Our student alumni include a nationally-known physician and author!



---

**Rev. Stephen Sweyko Installed at Williamstown L/C, Graniteville, VT**



## **NED Life Coordinator Update**

### **40 Days for Life**

The 2024 Spring *40 Days for Life* campaign is ongoing in New England and around the world, beginning February 14, through and including Mar 24.

For information about *40 Days For Life*, visit <https://www.40daysforlife.com/en/about-overview.aspx>

### **Connecticut March for life**

The Connecticut March for Life will be held on Wednesday, March 20th, 2024, with the rally at 12 noon and the March for Life around Bushnell Park at 1pm. Join us at Bethany Lutheran Church in West Hartford, CT at 10:00am for a service before the March. Pastries and coffee served at 9:00am For information, visit <https://marchforlife.org/connecticut/>

As always, please pray that Pregnancy Resource Centers remain open and that staff and clients remain safe from violence and harm.

In Christ,  
Marla Zeneski, NED Life Coordinator

---

## **Orphan Grain Train – New England Sends Shipment to Lithuania**

The Lithuanian shipment was sent to a Mission there that has a Women's Crisis center and also aids Ukrainian refugees in the area. Included were almost 1400 Boxes and items of Men's, Women's, Children and Infant clothing, Blankets, Quilts, Linens, Shoes, Coats, Gloves, Hats, Scarves, Belts, Diapers, Hygiene and School supplies, Bicycles, and Sewing machines and supplies. The container was taken to a port to be loaded on a ship for transport overseas to Lithuania. The estimated weight of the items shipped was almost 19,000 pounds with a valuation of almost \$240,000. The Mission receiving the container will then distribute the items to those in need.

---

## **Official Acts of the New England District LCMS**

### **Non-Calling with coverage arranged at this time**

1. **Shepherd of the Hills**, Morris, CT (being served by Rev. Kevin Mongeau).
2. **Prince of Peace, Coventry**, CT (being served by Rev. Greg Dwyer).
3. **Trinity, West Roxbury**, MA (being served by Rev. Steve Vekasy).
4. **St. Paul's**, Naugatuck, CT (being served by Rev. Greg Wismar).
5. **St. John**, Waterbury, CT (being served by Rev. Joel Kotila).
6. **Trinity**, Springfield, MA (being served by Rev. James Kerner).
7. **Hope**, Storrs, CT (being served by guest pastors, as available).

**Zion**, Bridgeport, CT (being served by the Pastors in Trumbull, Orange, & Meriden

### **Calls Extended**



Rev. Adam Teferi, Massachusetts was issued a Call from Bethel Oromo Lutheran Church, Acton, MA. (Accepted)

Rev. Evandro Kopper, Missouri was issued a Call from Saint James Lutheran Church Canton, MA. (Not yet decided)

Rev. Joshua Schiff, Connecticut was issued a Call from the U.S. Army Board of International Mission. (Accepted; installed on November 19, 2023)

Rev. Kyle Wright II, Illinois was issued a call from L/C of the Savior, Bedford, MA (Not yet decided)

### INSTALLATIONS/ORDINATIONS

Rev. Stephen Sweyko was installed as Sole Pastor of Williamstown Lutheran Church, Graniteville, VT on December 10, 2023.

### Changes Within the District

Rev. Walter Reuning was Called to Glory. (February 1, 2024)

Jonathan Wessler, Director of Parish Music at First Lutheran Church, Boston, MA was added to the roster of Commissioned Ministers. (effective January 4, 2024)

Rev. Robert Mikulastik was Called to Glory. (November 3, 2023)

Rev. Kenneth Johnson voluntarily resigned from the roster. (effective November 2, 2023)

Bethel Oromo Lutheran Church, Acton, MA applied for membership and was added to the roster of LCMS congregations. (effective October 31, 2023)

## DISCOVER A LIMITED-TIME INVESTMENT THAT WORKS FOR YOU AND THE LCMS

The **NEW 5% 18-month fixed-rate term note** is perfect for anyone who loves The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and wants to see its ministries thrive.

When you invest with Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF), you earn a competitive interest rate, and you can feel good knowing your investment supports LCMS churches, schools, organizations and church workers.

At LCEF, we call that Lutherans helping Lutherans.

Invest today to join thousands of Lutherans honoring their values and commitment to strengthen, sustain and start LCMS ministries. New money only.

Start today at [lcef.org/values](https://lcef.org/values).



**Lutheran Church Extension Fund**  
> where investments build ministry

# 5%

## 18-MONTH FIXED-RATE TERM NOTE



**BRENDA BACON**

LCEF District Vice President | New England  
413-783-0131 | [Brenda.Bacon@lcef.org](mailto:Brenda.Bacon@lcef.org)

LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, LCEF investments are not FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. LCEF will offer and sell its securities only in states where authorized. The offer is made solely by LCEF's Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks. Rates as of August 2023. Balance restrictions apply. Rates subject to change. Visit [lcef.org](https://lcef.org) for details.



## Lutheran Women's Missionary League New England District

It is with great joy that I share the news that the LWML-NED has met and exceeded its 2022-2024 biennium Mission Goal of \$75,000. Thank you to all who shared their God given blessings so that others might hear the lifesaving message of the Gospel. We have now fully funded all sixteen of our Mission Projects that support mission and mercy work here in New England and throughout the United States and the world. All thanks, praise, and glory to God!

### **LWML-NED 30<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention**

When: Friday and Saturday, April 26 & 27, 2024

Time: Friday, 1 p.m. – Saturday, 3 p.m.

Where: Trumbull Marriott Hotel

180 Hawley Lane, Trumbull, Connecticut

LWML room rate is \$149 for up to 4 in a room

Registration Fee: \$190

Keynote Speaker: Katie Schuermann, author, speaker, and musician

**Focus Forum Presenters:** Rev. James Krikava, Associate Executive Director of the LCMS Office of International Mission, Rev. Gregory Wismar, pastor emeritus of Christ the King Lutheran Church, Newtown, Connecticut and former Chairman of the LCMS Commission on Worship during the production of the LSB, Kathy Pavelock, National LWML Vice President of Communication  
Katie Schuermann

Gifts from the Heart collection for Birthright, Danbury, CT. Items needed: diapers and onesies (size newborn, 0-3, 3-6 months), receiving blankets, infant towels and washcloths, baby shampoo, baby powder, baby bottles, and Walmart gift cards.

Sharon Dever, LWML-NED President  
[president@lwml-ned.org](mailto:president@lwml-ned.org)

---

**Please send articles and photographs for the next issue of the NED News into [NEDcommunications@ned-lcms.org](mailto:NEDcommunications@ned-lcms.org) by April 15.**

Please keep all articles under 250 words. All submissions are considered available for use by the New England District for any district communication piece including digital and print. Digital photos need to be high resolution and unedited (no reformatting or cropping) NED Staff and Editors reserve the right to edit articles and submissions for clarity and space.

# New England District Circuit and Regional Breakdown

## REGION I

REV. PETER GREGORY, VICE-PRESIDENT

### CIRCUIT NO. 1

○ CIRCUIT VISITOR — Rev. David Mueller, Good Shepherd, Peterborough, NH

Pastor Christopher Bartell, Regeneration Lutheran, Exeter, NH  
 Pastor Edwin Harkey, Trinity Lutheran, Keene, NH  
 Pastor Don Colageo, Immanuel Lutheran, Manchester, NH  
 Pastor George Ruwisch, Grace Lutheran, Nashua, NH, also serving Pastor Lesley Chen, Associate Pastor  
 Pastor Dagan Siefert, Our Redeemer Lutheran, New Ipswich, NH  
 Pastor David Mueller, Good Shepherd, Peterborough, NH  
 Pastor Ed Schneeflock, Christ Lutheran, Troy, NH  
 Pastor Ben Akers, Hope Lutheran Church, Bangor, ME  
 Pastor Timothy Sandeno, Redeemer Lutheran, Gorham, ME  
 Pastor Ben Akers, Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Waterville, ME  
 Pastor Stephen Sweyko, Williamstown Lutheran Church, Williamstown, VT  
 Pastor Matthew Rasmussen, Community Lutheran, S. Burlington, VT

### CIRCUIT NO. 2

○ CIRCUIT VISITOR — Pastor Paul Gramit, Trinity Lutheran, Clinton, MA  
 Pastor Eric Sahlberg, Mt. Calvary Lutheran, Acton, MA

Pastor Adam Teferi, Bethel Oromo Lutheran, Acton, MA  
 VACANT, Lutheran Church of the Savior, Bedford, MA  
 Pastor David Jacoby, Messiah Lutheran, Fitchburg, MA  
 Pastor Jeremy Pekari, Messiah Lutheran, Lynnfield, MA, also serving Messiah Lutheran is Specific Ministry Pastor Dave Brezina  
 Pastor Steve Vekasy, Trinity Lutheran, W. Roxbury, MA  
 Pastor Joseph Nollet, Our Savior Lutheran, Topsfield, MA  
 Pastor Peter Gregory, Our Savior, Westminster, MA

### CIRCUIT NO. 3

● CIRCUIT VISITOR — Pastor James Hopkins, First Lutheran, Boston, MA, also serving Rev. Miquel Barcelos, Associate Pastor

VACANT, St. James Lutheran, Canton, MA  
 Pastor James Butler, St. Luke's Lutheran, Dedham, MA  
 Pastor Paul Lantz, Lutheran Church of the Cross, Hanover, MA  
 Pastor Steve Law, Lutheran Church of Wollaston, Quincy, MA  
 Pastor Jake Dickerhoff, Lutheran Church of The Way, Raynham, MA  
 Pastor Leon Schultz, St. Paul Lutheran, Providence, RI  
 Pastor Aaron Stinnett, Our Redeemer Lutheran, Smithfield, RI

## REGION II

REV. SCOTT SCHUETT, VICE-PRESIDENT

### CIRCUIT NO. 4

□ CIRCUIT VISITOR — Pastor Michael Coons, Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Enfield, CT

Pastor Anthony Mandile, St. Paul's Lutheran, New Hartford, CT also served by Specific Ministry Pastor Kevin Mongeau  
 Pastor Jim Rice, Trinity Lutheran, Easthampton, MA  
 Pastor Randall Bessette, First Lutheran, Holyoke, MA  
 VACANT, Trinity Lutheran, Springfield, MA  
 Pastor D. David Riley, St. John's, Westfield, MA  
 Pastor Randall Pekari, Our Savior, South Windsor, CT  
 Pastor Adam Moore, Good Shepherd, Suffield, CT  
 VACANT, Lutheran Church of the Deaf, W. Hartford, CT

### CIRCUIT NO. 5

■ CIRCUIT VISITOR — Pastor Volker Heide, Lutheran of Madison, Madison, CT

VACANT, Hope Lutheran, Storrs, CT  
 VACANT, Christ Lutheran, Amston, CT  
 Pastor Christopher Chandler, Trinity Lutheran, Ashaway, RI  
 Served by Pastor Greg Dwyer, Prince of Peace Lutheran, Coventry, CT  
 Pastor Christopher Chandler, Faith Lutheran, Groton, CT  
 Pastor Scott Schuett, Redeemer Lutheran, Lebanon, CT  
 Pastor Greg Dwyer, Zion Lutheran, Manchester, CT  
 Pastor Mark Valigorsky, St. Matthew's, New Britain, CT  
 VACANT, Our Redeemer Lutheran, New London, CT  
 Pastor Paul Scheyder, Christ Lutheran, Niantic, CT  
 Pastor Jason Reitz, Bethany Lutheran, W. Hartford, CT

## REGION III

REV. JOEL KOTILA, VICE-PRESIDENT

### CIRCUIT NO. 6

△ CIRCUIT VISITOR — Pastor Mark Clow, Grace Lutheran, Middletown, CT  
 Pastor Kevin Karner, Immanuel Lutheran, Bristol, CT

Pastor Scott MacDonald, St. John's Lutheran, Meriden, CT  
 Served by Pastor Kevin Mongeau, Shepherd of the Hills, Morris, CT  
 Served by Pastor Greg Wismar, St. Paul Lutheran, Naugatuck, CT  
 Pastor Christian Bunzel, Trinity Lutheran, New Milford, CT  
 Pastor Joel Kotila, Holy Trinity Lutheran, Terryville, CT  
 Pastor Robert Hass, Zion Lutheran, Wallingford, CT  
 Pastor Joel Kotila, St. John's, Waterbury, CT

### CIRCUIT NO. 7

▲ CIRCUIT VISITOR — Pastor Rob Morris, Christ the King, Newtown, CT

Pastor Nathan Erb, Holy Cross Lutheran, Trumbull, CT  
 VACANT, Zion Lutheran, Bridgeport, CT  
 Pastor David Rowold, Cheshire Lutheran, Cheshire, CT  
 Pastor Ryan Oakes, Immanuel Lutheran, Danbury, CT  
 Pastor Philip Bartelt, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, New Fairfield, CT  
 Pastor Evan Scamman, St. Paul Lutheran, Greenwich, CT  
 Pastor Gem Gabriel, St. Peter's Lutheran, Norwalk, CT  
 VACANT, Zion Lutheran, Orange, CT

