



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

NORTHWESTERN OHIO SYNOD  
2024: Year of Rest

## TOLEDO CONFERENCE CALL *MONTHLY*

May, 2024



Ascension Day  
May 9



UKRAINE



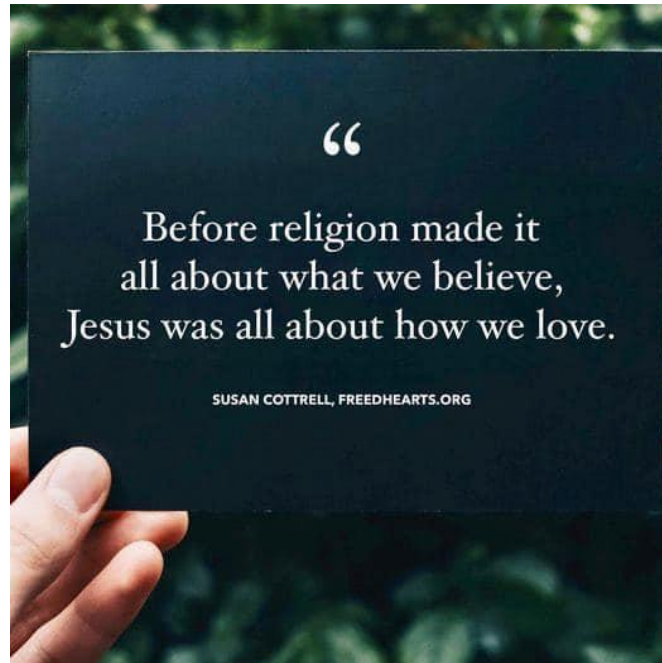
PALESTINE



ISRAEL

*“Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they will be called children of God.”*  
(Matt. 5:9 NRSVue)

## OPENER



## NEWS

### **TOLEDO LUTHERAN COLLEAGUES**

**Thursday, May 16, 2024 – 9:00-11:30 AM  
Glenwood Lutheran, 2545 Monroe St., Toledo  
Final gathering for 2023-2024**

### **Lutheran Social Services Northwestern Ohio Stock The Shelves - May 17th**

Lutheran Social Services  
2149 Collingwood Blvd.  
Toledo, OH

The third annual Stock the Shelves drive-thru donation event will be held on Friday, May 17th from 11:00am to 1:00pm at the LSS site in Toledo located at 2149 Collingwood Blvd in the Old West End.

This year LSS is inviting friends and community members to support the more than 900 individuals who rely on their pantry each month by serving as sponsors. To learn more, click below or contact Jeremy Schneider, the Mission Advancement Coordinator, at (419)243-9178.

PASTOR MARTIN BILLMEIER RECOGNITION SUNDAY at **St. Lucas Lutheran** will be held at 12 Noon on Sunday, May 19. Pastor Billmeier will continue service alongside Pastor Paul Myers at St. Lucas through the end of June.

PASTOR CHRIS HANLEY and ANNA BALZER during Sunday worship at Glenwood Lutheran on Sunday, June 9. More to follow. WOOHOO!

THANKS to “Blizzard Bill” and Katie Spencer for the donation to **St. Lucas Lutheran** of used restaurant equipment going to **Cindy’s Corner** ministry: 2 freezers, 2 table top steam tables, a pizza warmer, and a cooling station. The freezers will go to the food pantries at St. Lucas and **St. John Lutheran**, on S. Erie St.

THE TRINITY SISTERS GARDEN and PASTOR’S GARDEN are off to a great start at **Holy Trinity Lutheran** on Glendale Av. The Earth Day celebration held at the church in April welcomed Mormons, Hindus, Lutherans, and Methodists, 150 total.

CLASSROOM SPACE remains available for rent at **Faith Lutheran**, 2440 South Av., Toledo. Many rooms are walled, but few are chosen.

## CONCERNS

\*HOSTAGES held against international law by governments and terrorist organizations.

GRACE FULL FRIENDS is for those who are developmentally disabled. They participate in a lesson, prayer, singing, crafts, and snacks on Tues., April 16, 6:30-8:00 PM, at **Grace Lutheran**, 4441 Monroe St. Contact person is **Bob Haaf**, (419) 475-0374 or [rahaaf@aol.com](mailto:rahaaf@aol.com).

M.R.D.D. WORSHIP is held each Wednesday, 11 AM, at **Epiphany Lutheran**, 918 N. Reynolds Rd., Toledo. All are welcome. Normally, 40-50 people attend.

CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP meets on the first Monday of the month, 6:30 PM, at **Community of Christ Lutheran**, 6517 Finzel Rd., Whitehouse. The group is open to anyone providing care for a loved one. The group offers encouragement, suggestions from the experiences of others, and local resources. Contact person: Kristen Schuchmann, (419) 279-7759, The next meeting is set for Monday, May 6.

**TOGETHER IN CHANGE** is offered by **Hope Lutheran**, -Thursday, May 23, at 11:30 a.m. at **Reynolds Garden Cafe**, 1220 S. Reynolds Rd May 23 at 11:30 am. Please RSVP to the church office 419-536-8383. The main purpose is to get folks together who have experienced the loss of a significant other. Attendees don’t have to be a member of Hope Church.

## NEEDS

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES of Northwest Ohio provides **personal needs items** in four locations:

**Grace Lutheran**, 4441 Monroe St. (West Toledo)

**Faith Lutheran**, 2440 South Av., (South Toledo)

**Advent Lutheran Center**, 6735 Sylvania Av. (Sylvania)

**First St. John Lutheran**, 2471 Seaman St. (East Toledo)

For appointments in all the locations, call (419) 243-9178. Items provided include toothbrushes, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, bar soap, hand soap, shavers, toilet paper, feminine hygiene, laundry, and dish soap.

BACKPACKING food for local school children ends May 7 at **St. Petri Lutheran**.

CLOTHING CENTERS are looking for spring and summer items now.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S DEODORANTS are needed by the Personal Needs Pantry at **First St. John Lutheran** on Seaman St.

## STUDY

TEXT STUDY FOR PREACHERS meets every Tuesday, 8:30 AM, Bob Evans Restaurant at Spring Meadows.

PERICOPE STUDY GROUP meets virtually, Tuesdays at 1:30 PM. Those interested can contact Beth Ferne Johnson for the link, [sslcpastor@buckeye-express.com](mailto:sslcpastor@buckeye-express.com).

SOUTH TOLEDO LUTHERAN PARISH BIBLE STUDY will be led by **Pastor Aaron Baughman**, at 9:30 AM on Wednesdays in May. Locations: May 1: **Holy Trinity**. May 8: **Bethel**. May 15: **St. Petri**. May 22: **Faith**. May 29: **Walbridge Park**.

STUDY ON "The Prodigal God" by Timothy Keller began the week of April 29 at **St. Mark Lutheran** on Woodville Rd. and continues through May. This is a DVD guided study-book optional. All are welcome. Led by **Pastor Cindy Ritter** In Person Sessions are on Wednesdays at 9:30 am in the Ladies Lounge. Online Zoom Sessions are on Wednesdays at 7:11 pm.

THE BOOK CLUB of **Hope Lutheran** on Secor Rd. meets on Wednesday, May 15, 2 PM, in the library. This month the group will discuss *Tom Lake* by Ann Pratchett. Visitors are welcome..

THE BOOK CLUB at **Community of Christ Lutheran**, Whitehouse, resumes monthly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 1:00 PM. To be discussed on May 21 “Earth’s The Right Place for Love” by Elizabeth Berg. Newcomers are welcome.

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION is an informal get together in the Fellowship Hall at **Grace Lutheran** on Tuesdays at 10:30 AM. This started on April 2 and continues.

THE BOOK CLUB at **St. Stephen Lutheran**, Sylvania, meets on Thursday, May 23, for discussion of *Water From My Heart* by Charles Martin. Guests are welcome to join the conversations.

SUMMER DAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION is filling up quickly at **First St. John Lutheran**. Camp runs from May 28th through August 2nd and is for kids ages 3 through 10 (Must be potty trained). Camp is from 9:00 am to noon for preschool ages and 9:00 am to 3:00 pm for school age children. Extended care also is available from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm for \$5 per hour.

## **Pierstorf College Fund Accepting Applications through June 30th**

The Pierstorf College Fund was established in 1994 and is a one-of-a-kind Lutheran financial aid program for all Lutheran students pursuing a higher education who live in Ohio. Since 1994 they have awarded over \$13 million in loans to more than 4,000 students. First time borrowers may be new or returning college students. They do not ask for family income information. The pastor of the applicant is their sole reference.

### **KEY DATES**

May 1 – Phillip and James, Apostles

May 5 – Orthodox Easter

May 6 – National Nurses Day

May 7 – National Teachers Day

May 9 – Ascension Day  
Worship, 7 PM – St. Lucas Lutheran,  
745 Walbridge, Toledo

May 12 – Mothers’ Day

May 15 – International Day of Living With  
Others in Peace

May 16 – Toledo Lutheran Colleagues –  
Glenwood :Lutheran

May 17 – Stock the Shelves – L.S.S.

May 19 – Matthias, Apostle

May 19 – Pentecost

May 26 – Holy Trinity

May 27 – Memorial Day

May 31 – Visit of Mary to Elizabeth

June 1 – Northwestern Ohio Synod  
Assembly

FILM SHOWING. on Saturday, May 11th 1:00-4:00 p.m. drop In at the Gathering Place of **Holy Trinity Lutheran**, 1825 Glendale Av. for a movie of “RUTH” A Musical Production filmed at The Sight & Sound Theaters in Lancaster PA and Branson Mo. There will be intermission with snacks. Bring a food item for the Food Pantry.

COMMUNITY GARDEN NEWS: from **St. Lucas Lutheran** on Walbridge. ADOPT A GARDEN BED There is a sign up sheet in the narthex. Adopt one or several community garden beds for the growing season this year. Plants from Toledo Grows arrive on May 16-17.

COMMUNITY MEAL is offered on Thursday, May 16 4:30-5:30 PM at **Faith Lutheran**, 2440 South Av., The menu includes Mexican casserole, rice, and beans. This free meal is served drive-through only.

PUB THEOLOGY continues Thursday, May 16, 7:00 PM, at Frontera’s, 5375 Airport Highway. This is an outreach of **Providence Lutheran**, Holland, and **Pastor Todd Milner**.

MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE OF REMEMBRNACE is planned for Monday, May 27, at **First St. John Lutheran** on Seaman St. The service begins in the sanctuary at 8:30 AM and moves outdoors to the cemetery

WALBRIDGE PARK WORSHIP, Sundays, 8:00 AM, provided by **Holy Trinity Lutheran**, begins on Sunday, June 2, and continues through the summer. This is a beautiful location and worship experience. Visitors are encouraged.



**LOOKING BEYOND...**

FAITH AND FAMILY NIGHT will take place at the Toledo Mudhens baseball game on Sunday, June 30. This event is already on the respective calendars at **Community of Christ Lutheran** and **First St. John Lutheran**.

ELCA YOUTH GATHERING: **July 16-20, 2024**

St. Olaf College  
Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts  
*July 29 - 31, 2024*

## OPPORTUNITIES



See more upcoming events and register by visiting our website: <https://hopewoodoutdoors.org/programs/>



**MESSIAH LUTHERAN**, Point Place: We are currently searching for a **musician** to fill the seat at the organ and/or piano. All serious inquiries can be sent to Pastor Mark Kuhlman at [pastormarkmessiahelcatoledo@gmail.com](mailto:pastormarkmessiahelcatoledo@gmail.com)!

### SUBSTITUTE ORGANIST

Adam Miller will be in the area this summer, May - August, and would be available to sub. Contact him at [adamiller55@gmail.com](mailto:adamiller55@gmail.com) or (734) 693-7176

## COMMENT

When I think back to my ordination vows, it seems to me that I promised to keep my eyes open for prospective pastors, particularly among the young, and to encourage them in that direction. Over the years, there was one such young man whom I began to encourage. However, he and his family left the church and I had no further contact with him.

Toledo Lutheran Colleagues met recently at Epiphany Lutheran, in part to learn the congregation's history. What impressed me, again, is the history of some twenty men and women nurtured and sent off into the ministry. Two sitting pastors had much influence on the young.. However, the congregation, also, took its role seriously. That rekindled memory of my own home congregation when at least once a month, someone would stop me on a Sunday morning to ask me if I was still thinking of the ministry. Epiphany's latest pastoral prodigy was present at our meeting. The presider asked David Frye about



encouragement he received from congregant. He replied, “There were people in the congregation who knew I would become a pastor before I knew it!” For whatever future time I have left, David’s words will stick with me more than any other words spoken at that gathering. How unfortunate the congregations that never felt God’s direction to encourage their young to consider the ministry.

Kurt Meyers

CLOSER

#### ASCENSION DAY: WHERE DID JESUS GO? (AND WALTER, ALSO?)

In my first call, I became the second pastor of an ALC, 1960s mission package congregation, planted in north central New Jersey. (Both the LCA and LC-MS already had established congregations in the area.) This new, struggling congregation had three origins of members. First came the lifelong residents of this area with its seven, beautiful, inland lakes. Second were those who grew up in the five boroughs of New York City and moved 35 miles west to escape the complexities of the “Big Apple”. Third were people from all over the country whose companies had brought them to their main offices in NYC. Nearly half of these people were 7AM-7PM commuters to and from their workplaces in New York. Thus, weekday church events could never begin earlier than 8 PM. Each of these groups had their own ideas about what church should be like, especially at the holidays. The folks from the Midwest wanted Christmas to be just like it was back in Iowa, Wisconsin or Minnesota. The Staten Islanders were firm in their unique traditions. The locals --- not so rigid. There was a lot of push/pull --- and disagreement.

One morning, my telephone rang. A man who identified himself as Walter was calling from California. He told me that his company was transferring him to their New York office. Out in California, he and his family had poured over maps and decided to relocate to the area of New Jersey where I was serving. Secondly, they took out an ALC Handbook and spotted our congregation in the area to which they would move. Sight unseen, they would join our congregation and --- church was very important to them. In a week, Walter was flying east to begin the move process. He hoped to meet me and could I line him up with a reliable real estate agent? (Walter wanted to rent, not own.)

Right on schedule, Walter appeared in my office. We had a great visit. For lunch, we went to a local restaurant where the real estate agent whom I recruited would meet us. That, too, was a great visit. After lunch, I went on my way and the other two set off house-hunting.

The next morning, Walter called me from his hotel room. Everything was falling into place. He thanked me for his visit, said that a house had been lined up for his family, and that they would move into their new home in 4 to 6 weeks. I couldn’t have been more eager for this new family to come on board. Gifts from God!

Four weeks went by. Nothing. Six weeks. Nothing. At eight weeks, Walter called up. “Kurt. Since you and I met, my family has had some long, hard conversations. I am leaving my job after 15 years. We are moving back home to North Dakota to start over, again. We will probably open our own business there.”



Now, I understand Jesus. He came to us on assignment from “his company”. He completed his assignment and went back up north to North Dakota! Happy Ascension Day, May 9!  
- Kurt Meyers -



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#### ARTICLE: CONGREGATIONS; PAST AND FUTURE

Pastor Kevin Maxey – Hope Lutheran

Last week I attended the Toledo Conference gathering of rostered leaders in the ELCA at Epiphany on Reynolds. The group meets most months, September through May and the last couple of years we have spent time exploring the story of each congregation. Epiphany is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and traces its roots to being a mission congregation started by our mission partner Salem. Epiphany also sent members and dollars to found Providence Lutheran on Airport Highway as growth took more and more people westward.

As we have heard the story of the different congregations around Toledo, I have found the experience to be very enlightening. As one who has never served or been a member of these congregations has meant that it feels a little like looking in from the outside. In most of the congregations a long-time member or leader has shared the history and how that history is framed is always interesting. I also find myself interested in the assessment of the current state and mission of the congregation.

At Epiphany one of the stories that was shared was from the time prior to Toledo

expanding into Adams Township when the congregation hosted kindergarten for the children during the week and the Sunday School had nearly 900 children and was split into two sessions each Sunday with a class even meeting in the boiler room.

I think part of my interest in hearing the stories these last years comes out of St. Luke in Newburgh, Indiana, where I served as a pastor. My time there came after the congregation had existed for 10 years after the merger of two small congregations and the relocation to a place of rapid growth. There were three distinct groups with three distinct stories of the congregation. There was a group from each of the two congregations that came together and a third group who had joined since the new congregation began and didn't have any connection to the predecessors. It was common to hear "at \_\_\_\_ we always did it this way." The third group finally grew tired of hearing how it had been done and would gently say, "We are St. Luke not \_\_\_\_."

A common thread in every congregation and in every story is the challenges that the congregation has experienced and might now be experiencing. Every story is filled with challenges and while there have been some challenges that many congregations have faced that are often tied to congregational life cycles, most of the challenges are very diverse.

During the Easter season the stories from Acts replace the Old Testament readings in the lectionary. I have been reminded that Acts, which is the Gospel of the Holy Spirit, is about sharing the stories of the challenges the young church experienced and how the Spirit guided the church through those challenges. There has never been a time which the Christian church has been without some challenge. To be sure the challenges have changed but they have been challenges none the less.

In the last few years, I have heard many comments about the status of the church and the challenges we now face following the pandemic. We (the universal church) indeed are facing challenges we haven't experienced before, but we are facing them with the same Holy Spirit that has nurtured the church for 2,000 years. God has been faithful and sustained the church in each and every challenge it has ever faced. We may face new challenges but we do so with the Holy Spirit at our side.

## **SOURCES**

ELCA CHURCHWIDE Chicago: <http://www.elca.org>

ELCA NORTHWESTERN OHIO SYNOD, Findlay: <http://nwos-elca.org>

LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION, Geneva: <http://www.lutheranworld.org>

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF, Baltimore: <http://lwr.org>

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES, Toledo: <http://www.lssnwo.org/>

GENACROSS LUTHERAN SERVICES, Toledo: [GenacrossLutheranServices.org](http://GenacrossLutheranServices.org)  
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