

Book of Reports and Memorials

May 2019

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD
Waukesha, Wisconsin

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
N16W23377 Stone Ridge Drive, Waukesha WI 53188-1108
© 2019 by Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Published 2019
Printed in the United States of America

Foreword

Convention theme

The theme of the 2019 WELS convention is “For the Generations to Come,” emphasizing the privilege and responsibility that we have to hold on to God’s saving truth for ourselves and to pass it down to those who will come after us. Convention worship, essays, and devotions will focus on that theme and highlight the challenges and privileges we will have as we carry out the mission that God has given to us.

Major items for consideration at the 2019 synod convention include the proposed ministry financial plan (budget) for 2019–21, the recognition of full fellowship with two Lutheran church bodies, and the plans for a concerted effort to assist congregations to remain spiritually healthy. Reports and recommendations from all synodical boards and commissions will be shared and discussed.

The *Book of Reports and Memorials*

This *Book of Reports and Memorials* (BORAM) is intended to summarize, both for convention delegates and for the synod’s entire constituency, the business that will come before the convention. It contains reports from all synodical entities, describing the synod’s activities during the past year and providing information about current efforts and future plans. It also contains memorials, which are formal requests to the convention to address specific issues. All delegates are encouraged to read through this entire book in advance of the convention.

Floor committees

The convention’s business will be addressed by floor committees. Each committee is assigned specific matters to address or a task to perform during the convention. All delegates are assigned to a floor committee. The floor committees, along with their chairmen, are listed on pp. 1 and 2.

Floor committees will function during the convention as determined by their assignment. Meeting rooms are assigned to committees as needed. Floor committee chairmen are responsible for scheduling the times of the floor committee meetings and for seeing to it that their committees are provided with the informational resources they need to complete their work. Advisory delegates are available to the committees as resources.

Delegates

Each voting delegate is expected to attend convention plenary sessions unless his floor committee is scheduled to meet during sessions. Advisory delegates may attend floor committee meetings upon invitation of the floor committee or by mutual agreement. A floor committee chairman may at any time request that the committee conduct its work without the presence of advisors.

Memorials

A memorial is a formal request for the synod to take specific action. Memorials will be assigned to the floor committee already dealing with the subject matter or area addressed by the memorial.

Sometimes memorials are submitted after the deadline for inclusion in BORAM. These are referred to as “unprinted memorials” because they are not printed in BORAM. Instead, they are printed and distributed to delegates during the summer and are assigned to appropriate floor committees for the same kind of consideration received by memorials printed in BORAM.

Schedule

The convention begins with a delegate orientation session on Monday, July 29, at 4 p.m. The opening worship service for the convention takes place on Monday at 6:30 p.m. in Martin Luther College’s Chapel of the Christ. The convention itself begins on Tuesday at 8 a.m. Some evening events are scheduled. Plenary sessions of the convention may be scheduled during the evening if necessary. The convention will conclude with a closing worship service on Thursday afternoon.

May God bless our gathering here, to his glory and for the good of his kingdom!

Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president

Organizational chart

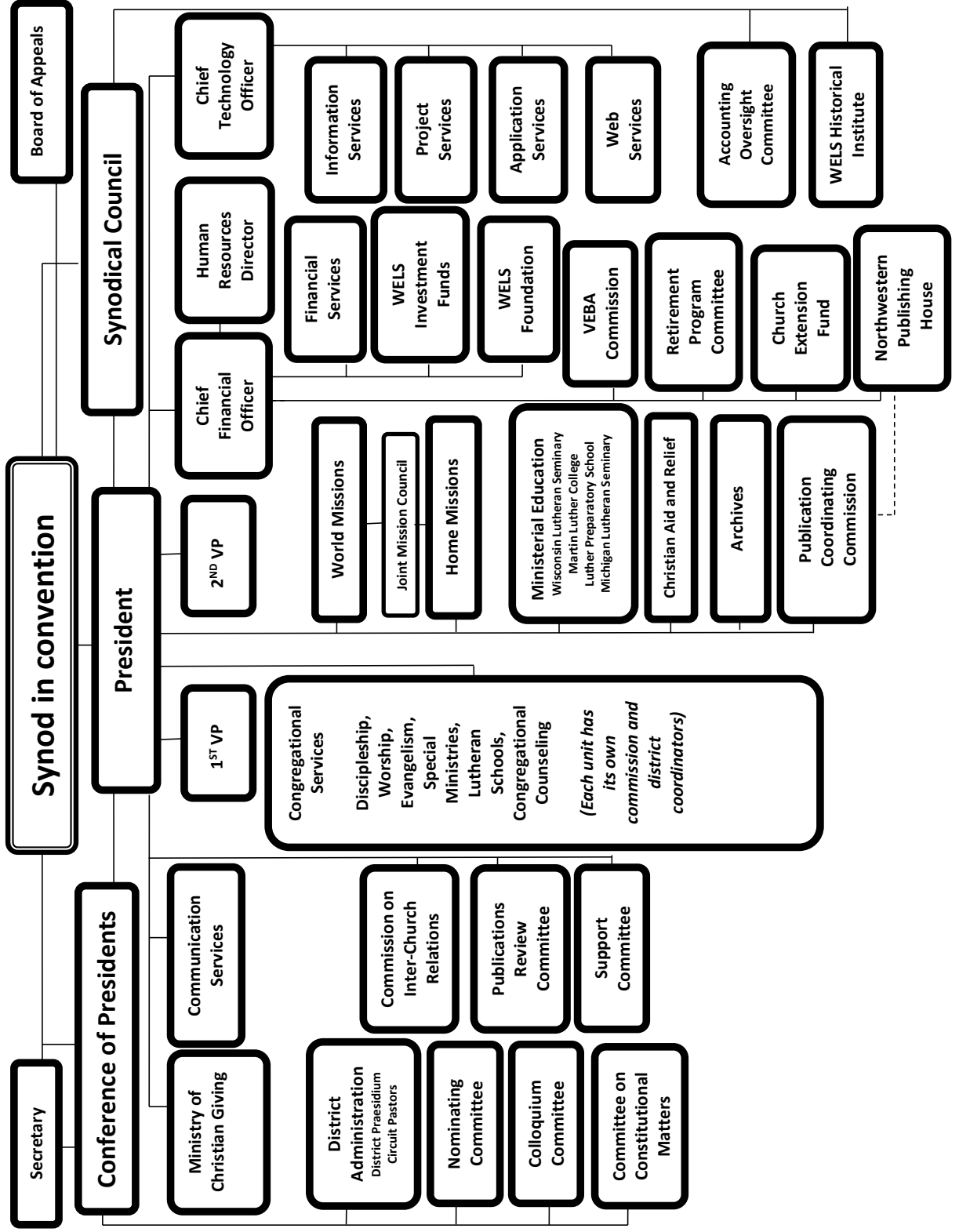


Table of contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Convention floor committees | 1 |
| Congregation and District Ministry | 3 |
| Conference of Presidents | 5 |
| Nominating Committee | 11 |
| WELS Support Committee | 14 |
| Translation Liaison Committee | 15 |
| Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee | 16 |
| Commission on Inter-Church Relations | 20 |
| Ministry of Christian Giving | 22 |
| Communication Services | 25 |
| Congregational Services | 28 |
| Appendix: Institute for Worship and Outreach | 32 |
| Commission on Congregational Counseling | 33 |
| Commission on Discipleship | 36 |
| Commission on Evangelism | 39 |
| Commission on Special Ministries | 41 |
| Commission on Worship | 46 |
| Commission on Lutheran Schools | 49 |
| Ministry Support | 57 |
| Synodical Council | 57 |
| Appendix 1: WELS Long-Range Plan 2017–25 | 63 |
| Appendix 2: 2015 convention compliance | 67 |
| Accounting Oversight Committee | 68 |
| WELS Archives | 69 |
| WELS Christian Aid and Relief | 71 |
| Support Services | 73 |
| Technology | 73 |
| Financial Services | 76 |
| Human Resources | 78 |
| Facility Services | 79 |
| Capital Projects Committee | 80 |
| Financial results and ministry financial plan | 85 |
| Financial results and ministry financial plan | 85 |
| Supplemental financial information | 100 |
| Schedule of financial position FY 2017–18 | 100 |
| Schedules of activities FY 2017–18 | 102 |
| Current called worker compensation guidelines | 104 |
| Missions | 109 |
| Board for Home Missions | 109 |
| Board for World Missions | 116 |
| Joint Mission Council | 122 |

Board for Ministerial Education 125

Subsidiaries and Benefit Plans 133

 WELS Historical Institute 133

 WELS Church Extension Fund, Inc. 137

 WELS Foundation, Inc. 139

 WELS Investment Funds, Inc. 141

 WELS Benefit Plans 142

 Northwestern Publishing House 145

Committee on Constitutional Matters 149

 Proposed bylaw revisions 149

Memorials 156

For more information, visit wels.net/2019synodconvention.

Convention floor committees

| Committee | Assignment | Chairman |
|------------------|---|--------------------------|
| #1 | President's Report | Pastor Duane Rodewald |
| #2 | Conference of Presidents WELS Support Committee Nominating Committee Translation Liaison Committee Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee Membership and attendance | Pastor Jay Bickelhaupt |
| #3 | Commission on Inter-Church Relations | Pastor Michael Schroeder |
| #4 | Ministry of Christian Giving and Communication Services | Pastor Timothy Dolan |
| #5 | Synodical Council WELS Long-Range Plan 2017-25 Convention Compliance Accounting Oversight Committee Archives Capital Projects Committee | Pastor David Bivens |
| #6 | Finance and ministry financial plan (budget) | Pastor Steven Gabb |
| #7 | Home Missions | Pastor Peter Prange |
| #8 | World Missions, Joint Mission Council | Pastor William Brassow |
| #9 | Ministerial Education | Pastor John Vieths |
| #10 | Congregational Services A (Congregational Counseling, Discipleship, Evangelism) | Pastor Timothy Otto |
| #11 | Congregational Services B (Special Ministries, Worship) | Prof. Peter Kiecker |
| #12 | Congregational Services C (Lutheran Schools) | Teacher James Henrickson |
| #13 | Support Services Technology Financial Services Human Resources Facility Services | Teacher Keith Bowe |
| #14 | Subsidiaries and Benefit Plans WELS Historical Institute WELS Church Extension Fund WELS Foundation WELS Investment Funds WELS Retirement Program Commission WELS VEBA Commission | Pastor Jonathan Kehren |

| | | |
|-----|--|---------------------------|
| #15 | Northwestern Publishing House and Publication Coordinating Commission | Pastor Matthew Zimpelmann |
| #16 | Christian Aid and Relief | Pastor Frederick Guldberg |
| #17 | Constitutional Matters Report of the Constitution Committee Proposed bylaw revisions | Teacher Paul Scriver |
| #18 | Elections Nominating Committee | Prof. Gregory Diersen |
| #19 | Resolutions | Prof. Brian Dose |
| #20 | Steering | Pastor Jon Buchholz |

Congregation and District Ministry

The Congregation and District Ministry portion of WELS' ministry financial plan (budget) includes the Conference of Presidents (COP) and all entities overseen by the COP. These include:

Conference of Presidents

- Regular and special meetings of the Conference of Presidents and the Assignment Committee
- Travel and other expenses related to the district presidents' work
- Pastoral assistants provided to the congregations served by the district presidents

Support Committee

Grants and assistance provided to needy retired called workers and their spouses

Commission on Inter-Church Relations

- Regular and special meetings of the commission
- Travel expenses related to inter-church relations
- Annual support for the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC)
- Financial support for sister church bodies as appropriate

Ministry of Christian Giving

- Administration and staff salaries and office expenses
- Salaries and travel expenses for current and deferred Christian giving counselors
- Expenses of counselor training and consultation
- Cost of promotions and appeals

Communication Services

- Content production and management of WELS' web presence, including wels.net and social media outlets
- Graphic design, editorial, and video production services to create WELS communication pieces and to assist all areas of ministry, subsidiaries, and one affiliate with their communications
- Coordination of public responses and communications of the synod

Synod Nominating Committee

Selection of nominees for convention elections

Congregational Services

- Commission on Worship
- Commission on Evangelism
- Commission on Special Ministries
- Commission on Lutheran Schools
- Commission on Discipleship
- Commission on Congregational Counseling

Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee

Coordination of efforts to help called workers grow in faith, knowledge, and skill

Translation Liaison Committee

Evaluation of major Bible translations and communication with their editors and publishers, including suggestions for improvements to translations

Synod convention

District ministries and functions

- Costs related to the functions of the districts, district praesidia, and circuit pastors
- District conventions and other meetings
- District committees

Conference of Presidents

Floor Committee #2

The Conference of Presidents (COP) is composed of the 12 district presidents, elected by their respective districts, as well as the synod president and the two synod vice presidents, all of whom are elected by the synod convention. The synod president serves as the chairman of the Conference of Presidents. The synod secretary, also elected by the synod in convention, serves as a non-voting advisory member of the Conference of Presidents.

The Conference of Presidents meets three times annually for face-to-face meetings and via teleconference between regular meetings when necessary. The Conference of Presidents also meets at Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in May each year in its role as the Assignment Committee of the synod.

The Conference of Presidents is divided into three standing committees: Doctrine, Called Workers, and Congregations.

The Conference of Presidents is entrusted with the following broad responsibilities:

- Overseeing all matters of doctrine and practice to ensure that the synod, its congregations, its called workers, and other affiliated entities remain faithful to the Scriptures and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- Working to maintain and strengthen the synod's unity in doctrine and practice and in its purpose and mission.
- Assisting congregations in the calling process by providing candidates for divine calls and appropriate advice.
- Providing counsel to congregations either directly or through the circuit pastors of the district in matters dealing with ministry, governance, and relationships between congregations and called workers.
- Overseeing the various ways in which congregations and individual members provide financial support for the work of the synod, including ongoing instruction in Christian stewardship, encouragement of Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO), and planning for special offerings that may be held periodically.
- Overseeing and serving as the calling body for the work of the Ministry of Christian Giving, as well as for all units of WELS Congregational Services. It also oversees, through the synod president, the other areas included in Congregation and District Ministry, including Communications Services, the Commission on Inter-Church Relations, and the Support Committee.
- Communicating and promoting the synod's mission and ministry in the districts.
- Providing counsel to the synod president as he carries out his responsibilities.
- Overseeing the planning of the synod convention.

The Conference of Presidents spends significant time at each meeting reviewing issues relating to calls and vacancies, addressing issues that affect congregations and called workers, and discussing specific matters of doctrine and practice. The group functions primarily as a "conference" to provide a forum for district presidents to confer with each other and to provide and receive guidance and input from one another.

The Conference of Presidents works in close cooperation and consultation with the Synodical Council. Three district presidents, along with the synod president and two synod vice presidents, serve as members of the Synodical Council.

Overseeing matters of doctrine and practice

Each district president, along with his district officers, is entrusted with overseeing doctrine and practice in his district, including carrying out discipline of called workers when Christian love and faithfulness to God's Word require it. To assure as much consistency as possible from district to district, the Conference of Presidents devotes considerable time in its meetings to discussing practical situations, providing a forum for mutual advice and encouragement.

From time to time, the Conference of Presidents as a group addresses doctrinal issues or matters of practice that affect the entire synod in an effort to strengthen the doctrinal unity we enjoy. This may involve clarifying and communicating doctrinal positions, addressing specific issues after in-depth study, and producing (or overseeing the production of) documents that summarize scriptural doctrines and evangelical practice. The results of efforts are intended to be pastoral and evangelical in nature, not in any way formulating new canon law in a legalistic way.

The Conference of Presidents is fully committed to the biblical principle of Christian freedom in matters of adiaphora (things neither commanded nor forbidden by Scripture); at the same time it continues to encourage called workers and lay leaders to exercise their Christian freedom with wisdom, brotherly love, and extensive consultation

with others in our fellowship who may be affected. The Conference of Presidents continues to encourage open and brotherly discussion of such things as worship style, outreach efforts, and congregational organization. The Conference of Presidents believes that such discussion, when done in a spirit of Christian love and based on an ongoing study of the Scriptures, is essential to maintaining our synodical unity, a correct understanding of Christian freedom, and our clear identity as a confessional Lutheran church body.

The Conference of Presidents has recognized its responsibility in this area of its work and has maintained a high standard in producing and approving doctrinal studies and practical policies. But while the Conference of Presidents is responsible for supervising, maintaining, and strengthening unity of doctrine and practice, a practical reality for members of the Conference of Presidents and its Doctrine Committee is that, due to the press of other duties and responsibilities, the length of time needed to produce sound scriptural study documents or doctrinal statements can be unduly extended. To provide assistance in addressing doctrinal and practical issues in a timely manner and in keeping with the gifts the Lord provides to his Church, the Conference of Presidents has recognized that at times it can better carry out such work through the use of ad hoc committees appointed to address a specific subject, rather than the appointment of a standing doctrinal commission or by assigning the work exclusively to the Doctrine Committee of the Conference of Presidents. Work produced by such committees is then submitted to the Conference of Presidents for approval and for public distribution.

Assignment of ministerial candidates

In its role as the Assignment Committee of the synod, the Conference of Presidents continually monitors the number of candidates graduating from Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. The vast majority of assignments are made in May, with a smaller number assigned after the mid-year graduation at Martin Luther College.

The Assignment Committee also assigns third-year seminary students to their place of vicarship. These assignments are made by the Conference of Presidents after extensive consultation with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and WELS Board for Home Missions. Since the vicar year is actually a part of the seminary's program of education, the seminary provides extensive input into the vicar assignment process to ensure that the candidates are placed in locations where they can receive thorough training in the practical aspects of the pastoral ministry. Candidates who are identified as having gifts for evangelism/outreach are often assigned to supervising pastors with proven gifts for the same so that the vicar's evangelism/outreach gifts may be further developed. The "Vicar in a Mission Setting" program has worked well to provide outreach-ready graduates for assignment.

Continuing education for called workers

A resolution adopted by the 2009 convention called for the establishment of a flexible program of continuing education for called workers. The Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee began to develop such a program shortly thereafter. Significant progress has been made and will be outlined in a report from the Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee to the 2019 convention. That report can be found on p. 16.

Funding for the synod's mission and ministry

While the Synodical Council is responsible for formulating and recommending the synod's ministry program and the financial plan that supports it, the Conference of Presidents is responsible for funding the ministry program adopted by the synod in convention.

The Conference of Presidents operates under the principle that the foundational support for the mission and ministry of the synod is the Congregation Mission Offering (CMO). Other sources of financial support, such as gifts from individuals, bequests, grants from foundations, etc., are great blessings and play an important role in providing the resources necessary to carry out the synod's work. Gifts from these sources can vary widely from year to year; CMO, on the other hand, has been a more consistent and predictable source of financial support.

The Conference of Presidents works to encourage congregations to increase their CMO commitments and to meet or exceed those commitments by the end of the year. Over the past ten years, the total CMO received has not kept pace with inflation; in fact, it has been relatively flat and actually decreased in 2018. In recent years, however, despite the lack of growth in CMO, unexpected gifts, the use of undesignated special funds, and efforts by areas of ministry and departments to economize have made it possible to avoid serious reductions in ministry. The Conference of Presidents has discussed ways to foster Spirit-worked generosity and to encourage increased CMO to enable the synod to maintain and even to expand its mission and ministry.

The vast majority of congregations provide financial support for the synod's work through CMO and other gifts. There are some congregations, for various reasons, that provide little or no CMO support for the work we do together as

a synod. The district presidents and circuit pastors will continue to encourage these congregations to participate in the joy of supporting our synod's work to the extent that they are able. The Conference of Presidents has been working with the Ministry of Christian Giving and WELS Communication Services to develop ways to communicate with congregations regarding the importance of CMO, including the production of video messages from each district president to the congregations of his district.

The Conference of Presidents has decided to discontinue the Mission and Ministry Sunday. In its place, the Conference of Presidents is working with the Commission on Congregational Services to encourage congregations to use the *10 for 10* stewardship plan during the fall months. Part of that plan will be information featuring the work that we do together as a synod and an encouragement for congregations to increase their support of that work.

Need for called worker recruitment

Vacancies in both pastor and teacher positions have been increasing in recent years, and the current supply of candidates has not been able to keep pace with the need. The Conference of Presidents continues to encourage increased efforts by pastors, teachers, congregations, parents, and grandparents to recruit young people for full-time ministry.

The pastoral vacancy rate has remained near eight percent for the past year. It is encouraging to note that within the next several years, the classes at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Martin Luther College will be getting larger. These larger classes should provide some significant relief to the vacancy situation within four years.

Congregational Services

In 2017 the name of the Congregation and Ministry Support Group was changed to Congregational Services. Congregational Services is directly accountable to the Conference of Presidents. It includes six commissions: Lutheran Schools, Worship, Evangelism, Discipleship, Special Ministries, and Congregational Counseling. Directors of these commissions are called by the Conference of Presidents, and members of the commissions (except for the chairmen) are appointed by the Conference of Presidents. The chairman of each commission is elected by the synod in convention. Each of these commissions will report to this convention. Rev. Jonathan Hein has been appointed by the Conference of Presidents as the coordinator for Congregational Services.

In 2017 two commissions (Adult Discipleship and Youth and Family Ministry) were combined into a single Commission on Discipleship. Rev. Donn Dobberstein serves as the director.

Rev. Eric Roecker accepted the call to serve as director of the Commission on Evangelism, succeeding Rev. Michael Hintz, who retired after many years of faithful service.

Student debt at the ministerial education schools

The Conference of Presidents continues to monitor the level of student debt incurred by those who are preparing for the public ministry in our synod. Such debt can have a serious impact on the financial situation of called workers as they graduate and begin their service. Discussions have been held with Martin Luther College (MLC) regarding ways that the debt burden can be reduced. The COP expressed support for MLC's Congregational Partnership Program, which encourages congregations to participate in providing financial assistance to their members who are studying for the public ministry, with MLC then providing matching funds to increase the amount provided. Begun as a pilot program in 2016, the program has proven to be successful and popular. It will be expanded in the coming years.

Bible translations

The Holman Christian Standard Bible has undergone a significant revision. It has now been renamed the Christian Standard Bible (CSB). The Conference of Presidents appointed a committee to conduct and oversee a thorough review of the revised translation and to submit its conclusions when completed. While identifying areas in which the CSB could have been better, the committee concluded:

Reading through nearly a hundred evaluations of a Bible translation reveals that WELS pastors and professors often disagree with each other about good translation choices as much as they disagree with the translators. In a world with many English translations of the Bible, no single translation is likely to please everyone.

That being said, the translators of the Christian Standard Bible have produced a translation that is highly faithful to the original texts and speaks in clear, readable English. We can identify passages in which we believe their renderings fall short, but it is clear that the translation team regarded the entire Greek and Hebrew Scriptures as the very words of God and strove to reproduce them in

English without letting their personal beliefs and opinions unduly color their work. The CSB has adopted the motto “faithful and true” from Revelation 22:6. To the degree a translation that is the product of imperfect humans can reproduce the faithful and true words of God, the translators of the CSB have been successful in their mission.

We believe that we can recommend the Christian Standard Bible for reading, preaching, and teaching in our church. [Emphasis added]

The Evangelical Heritage Version (EHV), a new translation of the entire Bible, has been completed. The review of the EHV, overseen by the same committee that reviewed the CSB, had mixed reviews in some areas but reached an overall positive conclusion regarding the translation’s accuracy and faithfulness:

Our synod constitutes a small percentage of those who profess Christianity. As both our clergy and laity interact with other Christians, reach out to the unchurched, and make use of materials produced by other church bodies, it is advantageous to be familiar with those English translations which enjoy the widest use and acceptance within Christendom. We believe the best of them continue to be useful for our teaching, preaching, evangelizing, and publishing. Though the choice of translation has become less unified in English-speaking Christianity as a whole, the well-rendered readings in the [English Standard Version], the NIV, and the CSB will continue to be the way most Christians know God’s message. It serves us and God’s kingdom at large to work with these ourselves.

The EHV presents us with another tool for communicating God’s Word. As a new translation, it doesn’t always have the “spit and polish” one perceives in translations that have gone through several editions. There is room for improvement in its English style and overall consistency. In some places its translators have produced fresh renderings that surpass the clarity and fluency of other translations. As a work produced by WELS and [Evangelical Lutheran Synod] clergy, it is not surprising that we find its handling of passages sometimes at the heart of doctrinal debate comfortable and familiar. We can generally cite these renderings with confidence. On some issues, such as the best way to handle language relating to gender in modern English, reactions among our own people will continue to reflect the diversity of opinion that exists.

Several of our reviewers expressed the hope that the EHV will continue to go through an editing process in anticipation of future editions. We the undersigned agree that this would benefit the translation. At the same time, **we find the translation accurate and faithful, and can recommend it for use in our church.** [Emphasis added]

The members of the committee were Prof. Samuel Degner (Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary), Rev. Bruce McKenney (Lake Mills, Wis.), Rev. Adam Mueller (Tucson, Ariz.), Rev. Mark Voss (Oakland, Mich.), and Chairman Rev. John Vieths (Norman, Okla). Our thanks to them and the reviewers for their faithful service.

The entire body of the reviews of the CSB and the EHV can be found at synodadmin.welsrc.net/download-synodadmin/cop-resources/.

Special committees

- As it works to answer questions relating to the God-given roles of men and women, the Conference of Presidents has found that our WELS doctrinal statements on the subject could, in places, be misunderstood or misapplied. To avoid confusion and to enhance the clarity of our statements, the Conference of Presidents appointed a committee to review our doctrinal statements and other published materials dealing with the roles of men and women and to provide recommendations for improvement. The committee has been working for more than a year and is making good progress. The committee intends to provide a Bible study on the topic in fall 2019. The completed statement will be available to the district conventions in 2020, with feedback requested, and then presented in final form to the synod convention in 2021.
- Recognizing the importance of having students at our terminal ministerial education schools well-versed in the principles of Lutheran worship and convinced that those principles be taught and modeled across our ministerial education curriculum, the Conference of Presidents encouraged the formation of a special committee to help coordinate the development of the worship curriculum in our schools and to recommend improvements where necessary. The committee’s work is continuing.
- A study committee was appointed to review and brought recommendations for changes in the teaching ministry recertification process. The process applies to those who have been out of teaching for some time and desire once

again to serve as teachers. The Conference of Presidents accepted the recommendations of the committee, which will help to streamline the process for those seeking to serve. Because this process is used to determine whether someone is eligible and available to serve (and does not really involve recertification), the name of the process has been changed to the “Call Eligibility Review.”

- A committee was appointed to review the current teacher call process. One area it addressed was the teacher call window. It recommended to the Conference of Presidents that the call window for teachers be changed so that it runs from October 15 through April 15. The Conference of Presidents approved this change, which will begin in the fall of 2019, on a two-year trial basis.
- Matters relating to human sexuality and gender issues have become even more controversial in our society in recent years. Our congregations, schools, and members will likely face increasing pressures in these areas. The Conference of Presidents believes that our synod will be well served to have a clear statement of our biblical position on human sexuality and gender issues in the face of these pressures and even attacks. A committee has been appointed to draft a statement that will articulate biblical truths on these topics and our synod’s commitment to uphold them.

New roles for the COP Doctrine Committee

To foster our unity in doctrine and practice in WELS and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations has held regular meetings with the ELS Doctrine Committee. The Conference of Presidents and the Commission on Inter-Church Relations both recognized that the COP Doctrine Committee would be better suited to carry on these meetings with the ELS Doctrine Committee, since the COP Doctrine Committee has a similar task within WELS as the ELS Doctrine Committee has in the ELS. This change will take place in fall 2019.

The COP Doctrine Committee has also begun to hold regular meetings with the faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to ensure ongoing good communication between the group charged with overseeing doctrine and practice and the school that trains future pastors. In addition, Prof. Earle Treptow, incoming president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, has consented to serve as an advisory member of the COP Doctrine Committee.

WELS pension review

The Conference of Presidents was consulted by the special committee that is reviewing the WELS Pension Plan. The COP offered its input in several areas and encouraged the committee to continue and complete its work.

COP liaison with WELS-affiliated ministries and organizations

There are dozens of ministries and organizations carried out by WELS members. These WELS-affiliated ministries have previously been referred to as “parasynodical” organizations. The Conference of Presidents believes “WELS-affiliated ministries” is a more accurate way to describe these organizations and what they do. Because WELS-affiliated ministries carry out their work among our WELS members and congregations, the Conference of Presidents believes that it should foster close communication and cooperation between these ministries and the Conference of Presidents. A three-man standing special committee of the Conference of Presidents has begun to have regular contact with the leaders of these ministries to accomplish this goal on an ongoing basis.

Assistance for the presidents of large districts

The largest districts of the synod have hundreds of congregations and called workers. This means there is an increasing workload on the presidents of those districts. To better serve congregations and called workers, the presidents of the Western Wisconsin, Southeastern Wisconsin, and Northern Wisconsin Districts were asked to offer suggestions as to how they might be assisted in their work. It was the understanding that, given the fact that the circumstances in the districts may vary, the form of assistance may not be the same in each. The Conference of Presidents is continuing to address this need and will provide assistance to each as appropriate.

Revisions to the bylaws

The Conference of Presidents and the Synodical Council have submitted to this convention recommendations for changes to the bylaws. The complete list of recommended changes can be found on pp. 149-155 and will be addressed by Floor Committee #17 (Constitutional Matters).

Discipline process

During the last two years, the Conference of Presidents has also been reviewing the process by which discipline is carried out by congregations and districts and the terminology used when discipline takes place. As a result of that study, the Conference of Presidents is considering several changes to clarify and improve the process. Because of the complicated nature of carrying out evangelical discipline, and out of a desire to have a process that is clearly defined and fair to all, the Conference of Presidents will not be ready to propose changes at this convention. Rather,

any proposed changes or refinements of the process will be shared with the district conventions in 2020, and, after district reactions and input, will be brought to the 2021 synod convention.

Our thanks and our welcome

In summer 2018 Rev. Charles Degner and Rev. John Seifert concluded their service as the presidents of the Minnesota District and the Michigan District, respectively. We thank them for their faithful service and pray for God's blessings in the years to come. We also thank their wives for supporting and encouraging them in their ministry.

The Conference of Presidents also welcomed Rev. Dennis Klatt, who was elected to succeed Degner as president of the Minnesota District, and Rev. Snowden Sims who was elected to succeed Seifert as president of the Michigan District. We pray that God will give them wisdom, courage, and a pastor's heart as they serve as district presidents and members of the Conference of Presidents.

A look ahead

The Conference of Presidents will continue in its role of providing supervision of doctrine and practice, as well as in assisting congregations in the calling process.

In addition, the Conference of Presidents will:

- Monitor the progress of the Hymnal Project.
- Work with Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to recruit and train future called workers at an affordable cost.
- Address questions relating to congregational polity and organizational structure.
- Continue to explore ways to improve coordination and communication between the synod and WELS-affiliated ministries and organizations.
- Encourage congregations to grow their Christian stewardship and in their financial support of WELS and its mission.
- Look for ways to assist the synod in maintaining its identity as a confessional Lutheran synod and to communicate our synod's beliefs to the outside world in a clear and loving manner.
- Work with the Commission on Congregational Counseling and other entities of Congregational Services to help congregations grow stronger and healthier through the means of grace.
- Continue its review of the synod's disciplinary process and terminology and bring recommendations to the 2020 district conventions.
- Continue to review the calling process and identify ways in which it can be improved.
- Work with Congregational Services to address challenges to struggling congregations.

The Conference of Presidents invites all members of the synod to join in thanks to a gracious God, who has blessed our synod with his pure Word, who has permitted us both to hear and proclaim the saving gospel, and who has united us as one in Christ—in faith, in mission, and in Christian love.

Rev. Mark Schroeder, reporter

Rev. Mark Schroeder, president and chairman
Rev. James Huebner, first vice president
Rev. Joel Voss, second vice president
Rev. Jon Buchholz, Arizona-California District
Rev. Douglas Free, Dakota-Montana District
Rev. Philip Hirsch, Nebraska District
Rev. Michael Jensen, Western Wisconsin District
Rev. Dennis Klatt, Minnesota District
Rev. David Kolander, Southeastern Wisconsin District
Rev. Donald Patterson, South Central District
Rev. Snowden Sims, Michigan District
Rev. John Steinbrenner, Pacific Northwest District
Rev. Donald Tollefson, North Atlantic District
Rev. Charles Westra, South Atlantic District
Rev. Joel Zank, Northern Wisconsin District

Advisory:

Rev. Robert Pasbrig, secretary

Nominating Committee

Floor Committee #2

These candidates have been chosen by the synod Nominating Committee to be presented to the delegates of the 65th biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The delegates will elect one man for each position listed unless otherwise indicated. Incumbents are noted by an asterisk (*). To view position descriptions and nominee biographies, visit wels.net/2019synodconvention and scroll to “Resolutions and elections.”

Board for World Missions

Pastor

Glen Hieb, Cleveland, Ohio*
Timothy Satorius, Annandale, Va.
Nathan Wagenknecht, Anchorage, Alaska

Board for World Missions

Teacher

Craig Breitreutz, Twin Lakes, Wis.
Martin Plocher, Manitowoc, Wis.
Chris Pluger, Watertown, S.D.

Board for World Missions

Layman

Keith Dickson, Virginia Beach, Va.
Paul Sauer, Hortonville, Wis.
Mark Schulz, Milton, Wis.*

Board for Ministerial Education

Teacher or staff minister

Shawn Herkstroeter, Fond du Lac, Wis.
Scott Loberger, Manitowoc, Wis.
Daniel Markgraf, Cincinnati, Ohio

Layman (vote for two)

Brent Nemmers, Allen, Texas
Brian Scheele, Plymouth, Neb.*
David Schroeder, Watertown, Wis.

Michigan Lutheran Seminary

Chairman (parish pastor)

Curt Backhaus, Tomah, Wis.
Gregory Gibbons, Livonia, Mich.*
Harmon Lewis, Alpharetta, Ga.

Luther Preparatory School Governing Board

Chairman (parish pastor)

John Bortulin, Mukwonago, Wis.
Timothy Spaude, Greenfield, Wis.
Aaron Steinbrenner, Hartford, Wis.

Commission on Congregational Counseling

Chairman (pastor, teacher, staff minister, or layman)

Kent Holz, Clarksville, Tenn.
John Koelpin, Dallas, Texas
David Scharf, New Ulm, Minn.*

Commission on Worship

Chairman (pastor, teacher, staff minister, or layman)

Aaron Christie, Waukesha, Wis.

Jonathan Micheel, West Valley City, Utah

Jon Zabell, Green Bay, Wis.*

Commission on Special Ministries

Chairman (pastor, teacher, staff minister, or layman)

Edward Frey, Nampa, Idaho

Joel Gaertner, Cudahy, Wis.*

Richard Waldschmidt, Greenfield, Wis.

Commission on Discipleship

Chairman (pastor, teacher, staff minister, or layman)

John Boggs, Royal Palm Beach, Fla.*

Alexander Groth, Cincinnati, Ohio

Joel Heckendorf, Reno, Nev.

Northwestern Publishing House Board of Directors

Parish pastor (vote for two)

Nathaniel Biebert, Austin, Texas

James Janke, Janesville, Wis.

Bruce Mueller, Gary, S.D.

Jared Oldenburg, Castle Rock, Colo.

Randall Ott, Greenleaf, Wis.

Daniel Schroeder, Modesto, Calif.

Luke Werre, Sun Prairie, Wis.*

Aaron West, Spokane, Wash.

MLC professor

Brian Hennig, New Ulm, Minn.

Jonathan Schaefer, New Ulm, Minn.

Jeffrey Schone, New Ulm, Minn.

Layman (vote for two)

Ronald Jorgenson, Clarkston, Mich.

Jeremy Korell, Blair, Neb.

Dwight Luedtke, Troutville, Va.*

Brian Schellpeper, Overland Park, Kan.

Board of Appeals

Chairman

Kenneth Cherney Jr., Mequon, Wis.*

Jonathan Kolander, Orangevale, Calif.

Jonathan Voss, Remus, Mich.

Pastor

Thomas Jeske, Omaha, Neb.*

Daniel Lindner, Minneapolis, Minn.

David Rosenau, Yalaha, Fla.

Teacher or staff minister

Nathan Kieselhorst, Watertown, Wis.*

Erik Landwehr, Miami Springs, Fla.

Paul Leifer, Puyallup Wash.

Layman

Bill Muhr, Chesapeake, Va.

Fred Pfothenauer, Rogers, Minn.

Mark Werre, Viola, Wis.

Shawn Wietbrock, Lindenhurst, Ill.

Paul Wright, Mason, Ohio

Rev. Robert Pasbrig, reporter

Rev. Robert Pasbrig, chairman

Rev. Dennis Belter, Northern Wisconsin District

Rev. Michael Kober, South Atlantic District

Rev. Henry Koch, Minnesota District

Rev. Bruce McKenney, Western Wisconsin District

Rev. David Meyer, North Atlantic District

Rev. Jonathan Nitz, Southeastern Wisconsin District

Rev. David Reichel, Dakota-Montana District

Rev. Joshua Stahmann, Arizona-California District

Rev. Jason Strong, Pacific Northwest District

Rev. Steven Wagenknecht, South Central District

Rev. Thomas Westra, Michigan District

Rev. David Wietzke, Nebraska District

WELS Support Committee

Floor Committee #2

Our calling

You must rise in the presence of gray hair and show respect in the presence of an elder, so that you fear your God. I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19:32). Our Lord calls us to respect and honor our elders and in this way also reflect the love and honor we have for him. In our Wisconsin Synod, one small way we seek to show such honor to our elders is through the WELS Support Committee. This committee has the privileged task of providing some financial assistance to retired called workers and/or surviving spouses who don't have adequate financial resources for everyday living expenses. The following factors guide our committee as we seek to carry out our calling.

- The fund is not an entitlement program.
- The fund is not an extension of the synod's pension plan.
- The financial assistance received is a charitable gift from the synod to those in need.
- The fund is not established to provide temporary assistance for those who resigned from the ministry.
- The fund does not grant financial assistance to those who need assisted living and nursing home care.
- The fund is not intended to be the main source of income. Assets and other means of income are expected to be used first, with Support Committee assistance supplementing those resources.

Our current situation

The committee is composed of five district first vice presidents of WELS. The first vice president in every district is the contact person for the Support Committee. Each year the district vice presidents reach out to local pastors, circuit pastors, and district officers to request their help in making sure the Support Committee is made aware of retired called workers and/or their surviving spouses who may need financial help. Once a possible recipient is identified, a simple application form is used to help determine the level of need. The Support Committee then reviews all the applications received and must approve them before assistance begins. The annual amount budgeted for this work is \$250,000. In 2018, there were 18 individuals or couples throughout the synod receiving support. This resulted in a monthly expenditure of \$14,315 and an annual expenditure of \$171,780. It also often happens that during the course of the year new requests are made to the Support Committee. What a blessing that our Lord allowed our synod to take care of all those who sought assistance in 2018.

A look ahead

The Support Committee continues to provide assistance to retired called workers and/or their surviving spouses as long as synod finances make it possible. At the beginning of 2019, 19 individuals and/or couples were receiving support, calling for a monthly expenditure of \$16,775 and an annual budget for approved requests of \$201,300. The subscriptions to *Forward in Christ*, *Meditations*, and *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* are also provided to those recipients who request them. The Support Committee thanks Northwestern Publishing House for covering the costs of these subscriptions.

Rev. Glenn Schwanke, reporter

Rev. Glenn Schwanke, chairman

Rev. Brett Brauer

Rev. Joel Leyrer

Rev. Joel Nitz

Rev. Phillip Sievert

Translation Liaison Committee

Floor Committee #2

Our calling

The Translation Liaison Committee (TLC) is in its sixth year of operation, with four parish pastors and three professors appointed by the Conference of Presidents. Its work is “to evaluate major Bible translations; to communicate with their editors and publishers; to offer, when appropriate, suggestions to improve such translations; and to share its findings with the synod at large” (2013 *WELS Proceedings*, p. 68).

Our current situation

Christian Standard Bible

The TLC has continued to maintain contact with representatives of the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) since its publication in 2017 as a revision of the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB). As mentioned in last year’s *Report to the Twelve Districts*, two representatives of the CSB visited Northwestern Publishing House and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in October 2017, in meetings arranged by the TLC.

In November 2018, we were informed that the CSB oversight committee will be meeting in the summer of 2019 for the first time since they completed their work in 2016. CSB leaders are making plans for a very modest revision of the CSB in the next few years. In connection with this effort, the TLC was invited to send a few suggestions for improvement—not hundreds, but our “top ten or so.”

In view of this new development, the TLC has shifted its focus to work on the CSB again. At the time of this report, it looks as though we will send about 20 to 25 simple editorial matters to the CSB oversight committee in May, plus suggestions for revision in about 10 passages or so. When we are finished, we will post our recommendations at bibletranslation.welsrc.net.

In this process, the TLC has been helped by the work of the WELS CSB Review Committee, chaired by Rev. John Vieths. We have looked at all of the passages specially mentioned in the report of the Review Committee, as published in the 2018 *Report to the Twelve Districts*. We have also perused the raw data submitted by the nearly 100 WELS reviewers, since this information was shared with the TLC with the names of the reviewers removed.

The way things have gone with the CSB seems to reinforce the usefulness of the TLC. In 2014–15, the TLC shared hundreds of pages of suggestions for the HCSB, and a high percentage of these suggestions were incorporated in the CSB. Then in the 2018 review by WELS pastors, the scores given to the CSB for English style and acceptability for use in WELS publications were significantly higher than the scores for the HCSB in 2012. The CSB scores were comparable to the scores given to the NIV in 2012, and the Review Committee ended its report with this statement: “We believe that we can recommend the Christian Standard Bible for reading, preaching, and teaching in our church.”

It remains to be seen to what extent the CSB will be used in WELS and in other places. CSB representatives are optimistic, stating that sales of the CSB have exceeded the expectations of the publisher. Besides its use in Broadman & Holman publications, Baker Book House is using the CSB and has recently published a CSB Study Bible.

New International Version

There is no change in the message received from members of the Committee on Bible Translation (CBT), the committee that oversees the text of the New International Version (NIV). This committee meets every summer to consider improvements in the NIV, although there are no immediate plans for the next revision. The CBT continues to welcome suggestions from WELS with the promise that all our suggestions will be considered.

So far the TLC has submitted 61 suggestions for improvement in the NIV—33 in May 2016 and 28 in June 2018. This year we will send another 10 to 15 suggestions, a lower number due to our work with the CSB. There is a wide variety in these suggestions, from simple editorial matters to matters of doctrinal significance. As part of our work, the TLC is trying to give attention to those passages that have received criticism in WELS since the publication of the revised NIV in 2011. Our recommendations are posted at bibletranslation.welsrc.net.

A look ahead

After completing our quick work with the CSB this spring, we presume that we will keep going with recommendations for the NIV in 2019–20, since we have by no means exhausted our efforts there. WELS members who have suggestions for the NIV or the work of the TLC in general are invited to share them with any committee member.

In our work as a committee, we are thankful to the Lord for the abundant access to his Word that he has given us with high-quality English translations. It is a privilege and honor to try to improve still further the way that Word is communicated in English.

Prof. Thomas Nass, reporter

Prof. Thomas Nass, chairman

Rev. Brett Brauer

Prof. Kenneth Cherney, Jr.

Prof. Joel Fredrich

Rev. Geoffrey Kieta

Rev. Glenn Schwanke

Rev. Paul Zell

Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee Floor Committee #2

Our calling

The Continuing Education for Called Workers (CECW) Committee coordinates our synod's efforts to assist called workers to grow in faith, knowledge and skill in order to carry out the unique vocations (callings) God has given to each. Helping them grow includes not only assisting them toward professional growth in their public ministry callings but also encouraging them toward growth in their most important calling (the calling to faith in Jesus), as well as all their other callings God may have given to each (spouse, parent, member of a congregation and synod, etc.).

The CECW also works to help synodical leaders and calling bodies have a clear understanding of why it is wise for calling bodies, and our whole synod, to invest in the growth of all their called workers. Growth for our called workers is certainly not about self-centered goals (advancing their career, gaining recognition, increasing compensation). Growth for our called workers is about growing in the gospel for themselves and growing into a clearer glimpse of God's mercy wherever God has called them to represent him (home, church/school, in the community). As our synodical theme reminds us, we are helping them let Christ's love be ever more clearly seen. That is what their calling is all about. To that end the CECW also seeks to urge lay leaders to understand that it is equally important for us as a synod to invest in the growth of current called workers as it is to invest in preparing the next generation of called workers.

The CECW includes representatives from our terminal schools (Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary) as well as those who are part of Congregational Services. By the synod's constitution, our chairman is the first vice president of the synod, and we report to the Conference of Presidents. Our report is divided into the CECW's work for teachers/staff ministers and for pastors.

Teachers and staff ministers

Our current situation

Martin Luther College (MLC) and the Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS) provide many opportunities for called teachers and staff ministers to grow both spiritually and professionally. Highlighted are some joint and independent projects.

Joint work

- **New Teacher Induction**—All beginning teachers are guided during their first two years of teaching by a trained instructional mentor. This past school year 168 beginning teachers were mentored by 115 mentors in 122 schools.
- **21st-Century Principal Initiative**—Authorized by the 2017 synod convention, experienced teachers are being fully-trained for the principal role in three-year cohorts. The first cohort of six men is beginning its third year and will be ready to receive principal calls beginning fall 2019. The second cohort of six men is in its second year of training. The third cohort is just beginning, and its size was not known at the time of this report. Our goal is to recruit cohorts of 15 men.
- **Teaching Ministry Certification**—The shortfall of teaching ministry candidates from Martin Luther College has prompted a greater need for more secularly-trained teachers to complete WELS ministry certification. The Conference of Presidents (COP), the Commission on Lutheran Schools, and Martin Luther College are working in concert to identify, train, and encourage non-certified teachers to complete ministry training.
- **WELS Principal Credential**—A process has been developed at the request of the Conference of Presidents and is being implemented to help principals identify themselves as meeting the WELS Principal Standards so district presidents and calling bodies can better match candidates to needs.

Martin Luther College

Last year more than 1,000 WELS teachers and staff ministers enjoyed spiritual and professional growth opportunities through MLC. Opportunities include webinars, in-services, and courses offered online, on-location as satellites, and on-campus.

- **Master of Arts in Theological Studies**—Started in 2018 at the request of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, this program for teachers and staff ministers has eight participants, though many more are taking courses for continuing education.
- **Master of Science in Educational Administration**—Designed to fully train WELS principals and early childhood directors, this program has 50 students enrolled.
- **Master of Science in Education**—This flexible program provides 76 graduate students with training in areas of special education, educational technology, instruction, and leadership.
- **Certificate programs**—These programs provide focused study in Evangelism, Chaplaincy, Mentoring and Coaching, Educational Technology, and Online Teaching.
- **Micro-credentials**—MLC is complementing the CLS Ministerial Growth and Evaluation Program with means for teachers and principals to gain formal recognition for informally acquired skills with digital badges earned when specific competencies are demonstrated. Series of micro-credentials are being offered for Learning-Focused Instruction and Learning-Focused Supervision.

Commission on Lutheran Schools

- **Continuums of Principal and Early Childhood Director Growth**—To mirror the benefits of our Continuum of Teacher Growth, two unique continuums of growth for principals and early childhood directors are under development to be utilized for personal reflection and goal setting.
- **Early Childhood Emerging Leader Cohort**—This has been designed to gather a cohort of early childhood teachers to help prepare them for roles as directors in WELS early childhood ministries through specific training and with the support of paired mentors who have director experience.
- **Principal Training Program**—Endorsed and promoted by the Conference of Presidents, this program helps address our growing principal shortage. Identified candidates with the gifts to serve as a future principal are assigned to be mentored by a host principal and receive onsite training with an option of graduate courses in administration. After three years, the candidate returns to the assignment committee and may be assigned to a leadership position in a WELS school.

A look ahead

As we look forward together, we pray the Lord will bless these efforts:

- **Fully-trained principals in every WELS school**—We will maximize existing programs and efforts to provide sufficient numbers of fully-trained principals for schools who provide them with the necessary administrative time and fair compensation.
- **Implementation of the Ministerial Growth and Evaluation Program synodwide**—Through continued training and support, all principals and teachers will understand and incorporate the teaching, observation, coaching, and evaluation strategies of this program.

- **Ministerial qualifications for all WELS teachers**—Continued communication, coordination, and cooperation will result in all teachers in Lutheran schools having the biblical and doctrinal understandings necessary to minister to children and their families in an increasingly confused world.
- **Special education support for every WELS school**—Through a coordinated and varied approach, we will provide the understanding and resources to enable WELS schools to effectively serve an increasingly diverse student population.

Pastors

Our current situation

Many things reported elsewhere in this *Book of Reports and Memorials*, especially under Congregational Services, provide rich opportunities for pastors to be growing in faith and in their unique vocations. However, a considerable part of the work of encouraging the ongoing growth of pastors in our synod has been entrusted to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) and Grow in Grace (the seminary's institute for pastoral growth). Grow in Grace seeks to partner with pastors for growth in all their callings under four main goals. Here is the current situation in pastoral growth under each goal.

Events and courses

Grow in Grace seeks to deliver Christ-centered, accessible, and ministry impacting events and courses in the four theological disciplines. A revised Master of Sacred Theology program offers courses to pastors in nine areas of focused study designed to meet a pastor's unique gifts and the unique needs of his calling body. To make courses more available, WLS will be encouraging pastors to attend Summer Quarter in Mequon in even numbered years. Then, in odd numbered years, there will be district-wide satellite courses offered in as many districts as possible. This year, we are in the midst of that first year of district-satellite events that, we pray, will find several hundred pastors benefiting from the more formal growth opportunity presented by a for-credit course offering. At each district-wide satellite, pastors have a choice of taking one course from a menu of at least two and as many as six courses. Leaders in each district participated in selecting the menu of courses for their district. Pastors can either take the course for credit or, if they wish, they can simply audit the course.

Retreats and mentoring

Grow in Grace seeks to provide collaborative opportunities for pastors to learn from one another and to gather with peers celebrating similar ministry milestones.

Pastor Partners mentoring, formally adopted by the synod in 2015, provides new seminary graduates with three years of focused encouragement from a trained pastoral mentor. While mentoring remains optional for each seminary graduate, 100 percent of WLS graduates requested a mentor in 2018. Of the more than 100 pastors who have now been mentored, we have seen the resignation of only one pastor who was active in mentoring. God is blessing us with retaining a higher percentage of new pastors than we have seen since the 1980s.

Each spring, Celebration of Ministry Retreats invite pastors and wives to a time of worship, Bible study, and fellowship. Four retreats are offered at key ministry milestones—a year-3 retreat, a year-10 retreat, a year-25 retreat, and a year-35 retreat. In 2019 we were blessed with seeing more than 75 percent of the pastors who were invited registering for the retreats.

Strengthening ministry

Grow in Grace seeks to deliver gospel-rich resources that assist pastors to partner with others in honestly evaluating all their callings and to plan for growth with confidence.

Grow in Grace has produced three essay/workbook resources to help pastors plan for growth. *Guard What Has Been Entrusted to Your Care* encourages pastors to guard the gifts of time, faith, health, and brothers/sisters. *Reclaiming Our Christ-Centered Lutheran Devotional Heritage* helps pastors strengthen their devotional life. *Fan God's Gifts into Flame* helps pastors approach planning for growth from a biblical perspective.

Growth resources

Grow in Grace seeks to deliver informal resources useful for individual or group study that assist pastors to grow in all their callings.

The Shepherd's Study is an online collection of reviews on books in every area of theology. A team of parish pastors provides the reviews. The reviews are prepared for publication by two parish pastors who lead this effort. About 30 pastors partner in this effort.

The Four Branches Review is an e-newsletter shared with all pastors each month that offers a brief article of interest in each of the four areas of theological study. A team of four writers for each quarter prepares the articles in each of the four areas of theological study while another parish pastor serves as editor. About 20 pastors partner in this effort.

One last note on the current situation would also be appropriate. While measuring pastoral resignation numbers is not the only way to measure how well we are doing as a synod in encouraging and strengthening pastors, it is worth noting that in the current decade God has blessed our synod with a 25 percent decrease in pastoral resignations as compared to the previous decade. It is our prayer that God would use our work, and the work of many others in our synod, to help an ever-increasing percentage of pastors to thrive under the cross in pastoral ministry for multiple decades. The blessings of such increased longevity in gospel ministry can hardly be overestimated as God uses such ministry to bless the souls within our synod's congregations, the pastors and their families themselves, and the other sheep those pastors assist us in reaching.

A look ahead

Grow in Grace hopes to spend the next two years solidifying and expanding many of the initiatives already mentioned.

Since Pastor Partners mentoring and the Celebration of Ministry retreats have proved a blessing to hundreds of pastors (and thousands of souls they serve), we will continue to look for ways to strengthen that support system so that it can continue to be a blessing for many more pastors (and their wives) in the years ahead. We hope to evaluate a trial mentoring situation that is about to conclude in which we provided a mentor for both the new pastor and his wife for the first three years after seminary graduation. We hope to learn what worked well in that arrangement and what could be improved as we consider whether there is wisdom in such an expansion of our Pastor Partners mentoring initiative to better support both pastors and pastors' wives.

We will continue to work hard to reach our goal of offering multiple courses each odd numbered year in all 11 districts beyond the Southeastern Wisconsin District, thereby potentially reaching several hundred pastors with a course every other year. Our goal in 2021 will be to have such a district-wide satellite in each of those 11 districts.

We will be seeking to strengthen our on-campus Summer Quarter each even numbered year. One way we will be seeking to accomplish that is by providing a special invitation to pastors who are out five to six years into the ministry. In 2020, the classes we will be focusing on are the seminary graduating classes of 2014 and 2015. In partnership with their calling bodies—and with scholarships and travel grants making the trip to Mequon more affordable—we hope to enable a significant percentage of those two WLS classes to attend Summer Quarter together. The goal is to capture some of what has made our San Antonio retreats so popular by enabling Summer Quarter to have a bit of a class-reunion atmosphere for those younger pastors.

We recognize that there are many opportunities we need to study and pursue in making greater use of digital technology to deliver growth resources in forms such as podcasts and brief videos. This could greatly expand our ability to reach even more pastors with what is produced for their growth and encouragement.

Grow in Grace will also be partnering with the Commission on Congregational Counseling (CCC) to provide readily accessible materials that pastors could use in partnership with lay leaders and ministry peers to evaluate how they are serving their Savior in all their various callings. Such tools would provide a welcome match to what the CCC has produced to assist lay leaders in congregations to evaluate their congregation's ministry.

Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee

Rev. James Huebner, chairman and first vice president of WELS

Rev. Bryan Gerlach, director of WELS Commission on Worship

Prof. Richard Gurgel, director of continuing education, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Rev. Jonathan Hein, coordinator of WELS Congregational Services

Prof. John Meyer, director of continuing education and graduate studies, Martin Luther College

Prof. Lawrence Olson, director of staff ministry, Martin Luther College

Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of WELS Board for Ministerial Education

Teacher James Rademan, director of WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools

Commission on Inter-Church Relations

Floor Committee #3

Our calling

The WELS Bylaws charge the Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR) to “serve under the Conference of Presidents by representing the synod in doctrinal discussions with other church bodies who are, or are not, in fellowship with the synod” and to “keep itself informed on the doctrinal trends in other church bodies.” This function is in keeping with the object and purpose of the synod: to “extend and conserve the true doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church” (WELS Constitution, Article IV).

To carry out its calling, the Commission on Inter-Church Relations meets twice each year for regular meetings. Members and representatives of the CICR assist individuals and churches around the world who are seeking to take confessional Lutheran stances. Finally, commission members stay abreast of happenings in other Lutheran church bodies around the world through periodical reading and with visits to church conventions, conferences, and symposia.

Our current situation

Organizational improvement

WELS continues to receive more and more inquiries from established and emerging churches around the globe who are looking for fellowship with WELS and for assistance in educating pastors in their countries. In the past, the Commission on Inter-Church Relations, the Board for World Missions (BWM), and the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary have fielded these requests on a case by case basis. Because of the need for more coordination in this area, WELS President Mark Schroeder has appointed Rev. Paul Prange to be the administrator of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations. Prange’s responsibilities include coordinating the work of the BWM (oversight of ministry plans and financial matters), the CICR (theological and doctrinal support), and the PSI (theological education as requested). The Commission on Inter-Church Relations will continue to place liaisons on the World Missions administrative committees and teams and continue to assign contact men to maintain the relationship between WELS and independent sister church bodies. Prange will continue to serve as the administrator for Ministerial Education and the chairman of the Joint Mission Council.

As more and more church bodies clarify their doctrinal stances and confessional relationships with WELS are established, the Commission on Inter-Church Relations encourages these bodies to join the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC).

The Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference

WELS is a member of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC), which consists of 32 confessional Lutheran church bodies throughout the world that are in fellowship with one another.

The tenth triennial convention of the CELC will be held May 29–June 1, 2020, in Seoul, South Korea. The convention will be hosted by Seoul Lutheran Church. The CELC Planning Committee has asked the Commission on Inter-Church Relations to work together with them to urge church bodies within our fellowship who have not joined the CELC to become members of this worldwide organization, and several churches are expected to be applying for membership. At the 2020 convention, the CELC Planning Committee will also be proposing a number of changes to the constitution, including a change to eliminate the distinction between full and associate membership in the conference. More information can be found on the CELC website at celc.info.

The CELC Planning Committee is in the process of creating a travel assistance fund for representatives of CELC member churches who need help paying for the travel costs involved with participation in CELC conventions. Interested individuals can donate to this fund at celc.info.

North America

Evangelical Lutheran Synod

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) is our sister synod in America with whom we have been in fellowship since its organization in 1918. The CICR interacts with the ELS on a regular basis in order to foster the unity of faith that we treasure with this church body.

Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod

The CICR continues to monitor developments in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS), with whom WELS suspended fellowship in 1961. The latest in a series of informal meetings between leaders of WELS, the ELS, and the LCMS was held in November 2018. Topics of discussion were creation and fellowship. While all three churches' representatives at these informal meetings agree that fellowship between the ELS and WELS on the one hand and the LCMS on the other is not imminent, all three agree that there is benefit in continuing the informal talks.

Church of the Lutheran Confession

Prof. John Brenner, chairman of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations, has been involved in talks with the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) for the past few years. In 2015 he was involved along with leaders from WELS, the ELS, and the CLC in drafting a document entitled "Joint Statement Regarding Termination of Fellowship," which, it was hoped, would be an initial step in the path to establishing fellowship between WELS/the ELS and the CLC. Although the drafters of the statement, including the representatives of the CLC, agreed on the principles articulated in the document, the CLC's General Pastoral Conference in 2017 recommended that the 2018 CLC convention not adopt the statement.

The 2018 CLC convention said, "We acknowledge with joy that the 'Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship' is a scripturally sound presentation of doctrinal principles." But the convention did not formally accept the statement, saying that it "does NOT resolve all of the issues involving the doctrine of fellowship." It should be noted that the statement was never intended to resolve all issues but was to serve as a necessary first step. So, the CLC neither formally accepted nor rejected the statement but instead resolved to make a final decision on the statement at its 2020 convention. The CLC 2018 convention expressed the hope that discussions could continue in the meantime.

South America

The Commission on Inter-Church Relations is closely monitoring the many positive developments in Central and South America as the Lord blesses the work of the WELS Latin America team through its Academia Cristo website and courses.

Europe

Commission on Inter-Church Relations representatives have attended the CELC Europe conferences as well as retreats and symposia sponsored by European churches of our fellowship. The CICR is pleased that the BWM has taken responsibility for working with the church body of our fellowship in war-torn Ukraine.

Asia

In November 2018, CICR member Rev. Thomas Fricke was privileged to attend the CELC Asia-Oceania conference. Sponsored by South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM) in Hong Kong, the conference brought together people from CELC church bodies in Japan, Indonesia, India, South Korea, East Asia, Australia, and Hong Kong as well as from anticipated CELC member churches in the Philippines and Taiwan.

The Commission on Inter-Church Relations recommends that the 2019 convention delegates make a formal declaration of church fellowship with Christian Lutheran Evangelical Church (CLEC) in Taiwan. Begun by WELS in 1968, it has grown to four congregations with two national pastors and two evangelists.

Africa

The Commission on Inter-Church Relations recommends that the 2019 convention delegates make a formal declaration of church fellowship with the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ–Kenya (LCMC–Kenya).

Swedish missionaries brought Lutheranism to Kenya in 1948, and in 1963 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya (ELCK) became an independent church body. Over time, however, the ELCK began to tolerate false teachings in its fellowship, and a group of Kenyan pastors broke away and began searching for a confessional Lutheran church body. In 2015, Rev. Mark Anariko Onunda of the LCMC–Kenya met with the Doctrinal Committee of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa–Zambia (LCCA–Zambia) and with WELS representatives. Onunda presented a formal request for fellowship. After three years of subsequent doctrinal discussions, the LCCA–Zambia has made a formal declaration of church fellowship with the LCMC–Kenya.

A look ahead

Prof. James Danell has been elected to serve as the next chairman of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations, replacing Dr. John Brenner, who finishes his term on July 1. We thank Brenner for his years of faithful service.

Rev. Paul Prange, reporter

Dr. John Brenner, chairman
Prof. Bill Tackmier, secretary
Rev. Jonathan Balge
Rev. Bart Brauer
Prof. James Danell
Rev. Thomas Fricke
Rev. Steven Lange
Rev. Benjamin Tomczak
Dr. Keith Wessel
Prof. Bradley Wordell

Ex officio:

Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president

Advisory:

Rev. James Huebner, WELS first vice president

Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations

Ministry of Christian Giving Floor Committee #4

Our calling

WELS Ministry of Christian Giving (MCG) serves on behalf of the Conference of Presidents (COP) to encourage every WELS member to “excel in the grace of giving” through Christ. We consider it a privilege to help God’s people offer gifts to Jesus for his work in their congregations, synod, and other WELS organizations.

The MCG assists the Conference of Presidents with its responsibility to fund the Lord’s work through our synod. This funding is provided through Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) as well as direct gifts to WELS from individuals, groups, and foundations.

- In the area of CMO, our efforts are focused on supplying congregations with encouraging information on ministry opportunities and needs as they prayerfully set their annual commitments as well as sending quarterly reports of their offerings to WELS.
- In the area of direct gifts from individuals, we regularly mail and e-mail appeals that explain our gospel work and encourage support of synodical ministries. We also provide information to donors about Christian estate planning and other planned giving options that allow them to give in a way that is beneficial for them, their families, and the ministries close to their hearts. Also, the MCG supports Christian giving counselors (13.4 full-time equivalents as of March 1, some counselors are semi-retired) across all 12 districts of WELS to assist God’s people with gifts of any kind. Their services are free and confidential.
- Gifts from foundations often result from consultation between the MCG director, other synod leaders, and the foundations regarding funding of new ideas and enhancements to ministry.

Our current situation

Congregation Mission Offerings

The Ministry of Christian Giving coordinates with Communication Services to share Congregation Mission Offering updates and ministry impact through WELS media on an ongoing basis. Each year the MCG oversees the process of collecting congregational offering subscriptions beginning in late summer and lasting through the first Friday of February. This involves mailed and e-mail communications as well as direct follow-up coordinated with our MCG district chairmen. We are happy to report a record-setting 99 percent participation in the subscription setting process for 2019 (the average participation rate over the past ten years has been 95 percent).

In addition to the typical mailed and e-mailed information, this past biennium we’ve worked with Communication Services to help the COP produce videos illustrating how God’s work through WELS touches each district. We thank

God and commend our congregations for their steady offerings year after year, which is a thankful response to Christ's love. (For details on pledged and received CMO in the 2017–19 biennium, see the Financial Results and Ministry Financial Plan on p. 85.)

Christian giving counselors

Through face-to-face visits and presentations, our Christian giving counselors (CGCs) invite faith-prompted support of WELS ministries. During the past 11 fiscal years (FY08–FY18), Christian giving counselors have averaged 288 meaningful face-to-face donor visits and have nurtured an average of \$493,392 in immediate gifts per full-time equivalent (FTE). This is an 11 year total of \$66.6 million in immediate gifts. Christian giving counselors have also nurtured an average of \$2,397,147 in deferred expectancies per year, for an 11-year total of \$340.6 million.

In the first eight months of fiscal year 2018–19, WELS Christian giving counselors (12.6 FTEs) conducted 2,316 free, confidential visits with God's people and 240 presentations on Christian stewardship, Christian estate planning, or WELS mission and ministry that helped facilitate \$4 million in gifts received for WELS and \$29.3 million in deferred expectancies for congregations, the synod, and other WELS organizations. For the 2017–19 biennium, WELS annually invested approximately \$1.5 million in our giving counselors and about \$500,000 in our office staff so we may serve Jesus, his gifted people, and our areas of ministry. In view of the 11-year totals for immediate gifts and deferred expectancies mentioned above, we thank our Lord for the generous return he's given our investment in the Ministry of Christian Giving.

Rev. Dennis Kleist, who served as a Christian giving counselor focusing on Christian estate planning in the Northern Wisconsin District, retired on Dec. 31, 2018. Rev. Thomas Mielke accepted the call to serve as his successor. Rev. Jonathan Stern also retired on Dec. 31 and accepted a call to serve the Arizona-California District as a Christian giving counselor focusing on current gifts in a semi-retired capacity as of Jan. 1. Rev. Daniel Wagenknecht accepted the call to serve the South Atlantic and South Central Districts as a Christian giving counselor focusing on current gifts as of March 1. Wagenknecht's call was the result of a review of the Ministry of Christian Giving by a WELS special committee. This committee's finalized report in early 2017 included the recommendation to add a Christian giving counselor. The Conference of Presidents and Synodical Council approved that recommendation for the second year of the 2017–19 biennium.

Special offerings

The Conference of Presidents approves special offering partnerships between the Ministry of Christian Giving and areas of ministry that are shared by WELS Christian giving counselors with individual donors. Michigan Lutheran Seminary's 2017–18 *Tomorrow's Ministry Begins Here* campaign received gifts totaling \$322,000 for tuition assistance, capital projects, and reserve funds. The 2018–19 synodwide campaign, *For the Generations to Come*, will help WELS Congregational Services strengthen the evangelism and member retention endeavors of our congregations. As of mid-April, God has blessed this effort with more than \$435,000 in gifts towards the \$1 million goal.

A special synodwide emphasis was launched in December 2018 to encourage gifts totaling \$2 million to purchase land in Hanoi, Vietnam, to build and outfit a theological training center and provide two years' worth of support to train members of the Hmong Fellowship Church. God has moved his people to offer more than \$971,000 for this opportunity as of mid-April.

Appeals

The MCG works closely with our WELS areas of ministry and ministerial education schools to send about 14 mailed appeals and up to 12 e-appeals per calendar year. Each of the synod's four main areas of ministry is featured in two of the mailed appeals and several e-appeals, while other initiatives (e.g., Commission on Inter-Church Relations, Christian Aid and Relief, Mission and Ministry, and WELS Endowments) receive one mailed appeal slot per year. Two of the annual appeals encourage charitable gift annuities managed by WELS Foundation. The appeals coordinate with other WELS media including *WELS Connection* and *WELS Connection Close-up*, *Forward in Christ*, WELS' websites, and the "Together" e-newsletter. Appeals have produced an average net income of one million dollars per year since FY08.

WELS endowment funds

The MCG is working toward building up \$300 million in WELS endowment funds for the benefit of Ministerial Education and Missions. As of early 2018, the WELS endowments had \$24.3 million in immediate gifts with another \$58.4 million expected from deferred gifts arranged by donors working with Christian giving counselors. The 2018 distribution from these endowments totaled \$867,962, including \$479,772 to Missions and \$388,190 to Ministerial Education.

We also encourage gifts to the WELS Operating Endowment Fund, which as of the end of 2018 had a balance of \$1,538,127. In 2018 this fund distributed \$60,552 to WELS.

Communication of planned giving opportunities

At the suggestion of the WELS Foundation Board and through their generous financial support approved by the Conference of Presidents and Synodical Council, WELS Ministry of Christian Giving hired Sharpe Group in late 2017. The purpose was to assess our planned giving communication efforts and create a five-year planned giving communication plan to enhance our service to WELS donors and the long-term financial stability of WELS areas of ministry and WELS-affiliated ministries.

Goals of the planned giving communication program include increasing the number of known commitments to WELS ministry as well as seeing a growth in the number of matured (i.e., received) gifts in the coming years. The contents of this communication plan—when thoroughly implemented—will positively affect the long-term revenues of WELS along with encouraging increased participation in ministry programs. In addition to increasing the number of planned gifts to WELS, Sharpe Group recommends regular nurture of the more than 3,200 families who have previously arranged deferred expectancies with the assistance of our Christian giving counselors.

As of mid-March 2019, Sharpe has reviewed our program and concluded we are doing many things well. They have some additional recommendations to enhance our planned giving communications. We have enhanced our database with available information to help us better serve our constituents. We have begun a planned giving newsletter, *Grace of Giving*, to share ministry updates and planned giving options. The MCG office will also be adding a staff member to assist with the additional duties recommended.

Database upgrade

In addition to the database enhancements through Sharpe Groupe, MCG's Raiser's Edge database underwent an upgrade. MCG worked with Blackbaud, supplier of Raiser's Edge, to move and back up data to their secure servers. Part of the package of enhancements includes web-based access to data, which is useful to counselors while they travel. The upgrade also provides data enhancements to ensure up-to-date contact information for constituents.

Development counsel to other organizations

The Ministry of Christian Giving annually offers development training to Christian giving counselors, Ministerial Education mission advancement staff, Missions administrators, and anyone serving a WELS/ELS-affiliated ministry in development. One goal of such training is to encourage a consistent approach to God's people that's Christ-centered and donor-sensitive and that minimizes potential donor fatigue and the impression that we're competitors or trying to "get" something from our fellow Christians. Fourteen people participated in our January 2019 training.

WELS-affiliated ministries can arrange a part-time "collaborative partnership" with the MCG where our counselors represent their organizations on visits with members. This allows both WELS and its affiliated ministries to broaden their audiences of prospective supporters. Current collaborative partners of the MCG are Arizona Lutheran Academy, Costa Maya Ministries, and Friends of China.

Statistical report

Under the direction of the Conference of Presidents, the MCG continues to gather data for and produce the annual WELS Statistical Report. We provide instructions to churches at the beginning of each year and directly follow up with them through MCG district chairmen. As with CMO, the congregational participation rate in the process set a record this year at 97 percent of churches submitting statistics (over the last ten years the rate of participation has climbed from about 80 percent up to more than 95 percent). WELS statistics help us see how we are collectively ministering with the gospel and assist us in forming plans to better share Jesus with God's blessing.

A look ahead

Following are our goals and plans for 2019 and beyond:

- We will work with Communication Services and the Conference of Presidents to communicate with congregations regarding 2020 Congregation Mission Offering subscription setting.
- During the 2019–21 biennium, the MCG is partnering with Martin Luther College to present the "Equipping Christian Witnesses" synodwide campaign encouraging recruitment of future called workers as well as financial gifts for tuition assistance programs and campus facilities projects.
- We will continue to encourage gifts to WELS endowments with an annual appeal, counselor visits, and presentations.

- Fully implementing the activities recommended by Sharpe Group will require the hiring of an additional MCG office staff member. Additional office staff duties would include coordinating new and revised communications as well as targeting specific lists and analyzing results based on different approaches (market research and data analysis). These messages will be educational and inspirational rather than direct solicitations because those receiving the planned giving communications are already strong supporters of WELS. The MCG office would also expand to assist with efforts to strengthen the database's capabilities in expectancy reporting and segmented planned giving donor communications, per Sharpe's recommendations.
- Our next WELS Christian Giving training for WELS/ELS advancement personnel will take place Jan. 13–17, 2020. Contact the Ministry of Christian Giving to register or receive more information (800-827-5482 or mcg@wels.net).

The Ministry of Christian Giving is privileged to serve God and you by helping to fund the ministries that touch the hearts of WELS members. We are happy that these gifts in response to Christ's love are helping us as a synod to fulfill our calling of proclaiming Jesus' name to more and more people.

Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, reporter

Mr. Robert Tupper
Mr. Mark Handeland

Advisory:
Rev. Kurt Lueneburg

Communication Services Floor Committee #4

Our calling

Communication Services exists to assist the Conference of Presidents in communicating WELS' mission to the members of the synod. It is responsible for a clear and consistent communication of the synod's mission from the synod's national office and for exploring, supporting, and expediting innovative media usage and shared communication for WELS ministries and congregations. It is also responsible for reviewing and authorizing all new communications originating in the synod's national office. The staff consists of five full-time employees and one part-time.

Our current situation

The Communication Services staff is focused on working on the synod's major communication initiatives. The most important initiative is to coordinate the various WELS communication platforms so that they have a single, recognizable look and feel. The department's goal is also to layer key communications to address key topics simultaneously across main communication channels. The goal of Communication Services is to work with each area of ministry to identify their priorities and then to communicate these priorities to laypeople and called workers alike through this cross-promotion, multi-platform strategy.

As *Forward in Christ*, WELS' official monthly magazine, enters its 106th year of publishing, we want to make sure that we are keeping the magazine relevant and compelling, something that WELS members look forward to receiving every month. In the past 20 years, circulation of *Forward in Christ* magazine has eroded from 60,000 to the current 36,000, and we would like to increase our readership—so that more members can grow each month in their knowledge of their Savior and their synod. To that end, WELS Communication Services and Northwestern Publishing House worked with two independent firms to develop and execute subscriber surveys that will help us better understand who our readers are, what they are looking for, and what their thoughts are on different aspects of the magazine's content and design. We also surveyed non-subscribers to learn their viewpoints. The survey was distributed in early 2019 and received more than 5,000 responses.

Many of the magazine's stories are posted on wels.net and on our social media platforms to reach a broader member and unchurched audience. To subscribe to *Forward in Christ*, contact Northwestern Publishing House at 1-800-662-6093, ext. 5613 or order online at nph.net/fic.

WELS Connection, the monthly video viewed in more than 900 congregations, is entering its 32nd year of providing stories that highlight the important work happening as a result of our Congregation Mission Offerings to the synod. Northwestern Publishing House handles the subscription process and offers two annual subscription rates: \$95 for the downloadable version and \$105 for a DVD that is mailed three times per year. The monthly video is also posted on wels.net and the WELS Facebook page the month after it is viewed by the local congregation, further expanding the audience reach of these stories.

WELS Connection Close-up, the print companion piece to the video presentation, has a print run of 110,000 per month, showcases an area of ministry each month, and presents to our members an actionable opportunity and response.

"Together," a bi-weekly e-newsletter, is e-mailed to more than 9,000 subscribers the first and third Tuesday of each month. The stories are posted on wels.net and more than 300 congregations also use the print version as a bulletin insert. This newsletter reports on the news and events within our synod that every WELS member should know. In 2017 we began using the Center for Mission and Ministry visitor center to produce a bi-weekly "Together" video update. We highlight important and interesting synod news in a short video that features an interview with a newsmaker. The "Together" video update is shared with all current subscribers to the print version of the e-newsletter on the second and fourth Tuesday each month.

The synod's official website, wels.net, continues to provide timely content for both synod members and non-members who want to learn more about WELS and what we believe as confessional Lutherans. The annual number of page views continues to remain strong at approximately 4.5 million. About 77 percent of users are new visitors, with unique users totaling more than 650,000. More than half of the users access the website via a mobile device, and we offer a WELS app that has been downloaded more than 32,500 times. One of the more popular sections of the website is the Question and Answers content. Through February 2019, Martin Luther College Professor James Pope has answered 1,843 questions. Cumulatively, 19 percent of the questioners identified themselves as belonging to churches other than WELS or the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The questioners are from many different denominations and non-denominational churches in the United States and beyond.

Communication Services remains committed and able to continue developing content for all other essential internal communication tools, including *Book of Reports and Memorials*, the synod convention delegate booklet, *Report to the Twelve Districts, Proceedings* (the official record of each synod convention), live streaming major WELS events, and video reporting of convention proceedings.

Here is a list of recently completed projects:

- WELS Communication Services produced two new welcome videos for the more than 1,000 people that annually tour the visitor center located in the lower level of the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry. The visitor center includes a visual timeline of WELS' history as well as informational kiosks on areas of ministry. Guests will see one of two videos (children or adult's version) highlighting WELS ministry and receive a tour of the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry. The visitor center and headquarters tour allows us to introduce visitors to our synod's history and to educate our members on the important work the Lord allows WELS to accomplish through his grace.
- Working with the Ministry of Christian Giving, Communication Services prepared the print and video materials for the synodwide campaign *For the Generations to Come*. The campaign raised awareness of the need to provide free congregational resources for our churches. You may find these materials on welscongregationalservices.net.
- Ms. Briana Lambrecht, our creative services coordinator, designed the new Congregational Services Resource Center website under Rev. Jonathan Hein's direction. Production of the video content is ongoing, using the studio in the lower level of the Center for Mission and Ministry. The new website, welscongregationalservices.net, launched in June 2018 prior to the district conventions.
- A multi-faceted promotional plan resulted in more than 600 congregations ordering more than 70,000 copies of the evangelism movie *To the Ends of the Earth*. Additional resources were produced, including worship materials; adult, small group, teen, and children Bible studies; an Advent by Candlelight program; and personal reflections. Video clips of the movie were used during a new three-week Interactive Faith Bible study taught by Rev. Eric Roecker, director of WELS Commission on Evangelism.

- The 2018 WELS International Youth Rally was held at Bowling Green State University. Nearly 2,100 attendees took part in daily worship, devotional sessions, keynote presentations, educational workshops, networking opportunities, and fun activities. Communication Services created a logo for the event along with the layout and design for all print materials, including a promotional booklet, poster, and worship folder insert. We also provided daily social media coverage of the week's activities. The next WELS International Youth Rally will be held in June 2020 in Knoxville, Tenn.
- Thousands of WELS members continue to attend the WELS Night at Miller Park baseball game every summer. This annual event is a chance to meet WELS members throughout the Midwest in a casual setting while promoting our synod to the greater-Milwaukee area. The date for the sixth annual WELS Night at Miller Park is Fri., July 12, 2019.
- Communication Services provides monthly digital display graphics for churches and schools to inform members of WELS events and programs supported by their Congregation Mission Offerings. This ministry media kit is e-mailed to every congregation the first week of each month.
- Communication Services, in coordination with the Ministry of Christian Giving, recently produced a new planned-giving newsletter, *Grace of Giving*, which explains the free services available to our members through the Ministry of Christian Giving and WELS Foundation.
- Communication Services recently created the promotional content needed for the Grace Hmong Outreach in Vietnam synodwide campaign featuring the unprecedented world mission opportunity to build a theological training facility in communist Vietnam.

A look ahead

The following major initiatives are planned for the next biennium.

- Working with both Martin Luther College (MLC) and the Ministry of Christian Giving, we will promote and encourage our members to participate in the two-year "Equipping Christian Witnesses" campaign. We will feature stories of the progress of the MLC initiatives routinely in *Forward in Christ*, *WELS Connection*, and the "Together" e-newsletter.
- We created all promotional print items and continue to feature ongoing stories in "Together" and *Forward in Christ* for the Church Extension Fund's special rates campaign to attract new investors. The 2017 campaign added \$18 million in new investments and dozens of new investors. The current campaign hopes to add another \$12 million.
- Social media is an ever-increasing communications platform and tool to reach our members on a consistent, almost daily, basis. Our Facebook page, facebook.com/welslutherans, has more than 80,000 followers and we are posting devotional and informational content daily in an attempt to encourage more interaction and sharing from our followers. We recently created a website and social media guide addressing frequently asked questions regarding church/school websites and social media content. We also have a Twitter page, @welstweets, with more than 2,700 followers and an Instagram account and Vimeo channel. We use social media as a communications and promotional tool for all major synod conferences and events. It is a great way for parents, family, and friends of the participants to keep up-to-date on events happening in their synod.
- *Your gifts, God's blessings: An annual report to our members* is distributed to every WELS congregation each January, and a copy is included in the Ministry of Christian Giving annual statement to each synod donor. Free print copies of the report are available from Northwestern Publishing House. You may access the online version at wels.net/annualreport. Christian giving counselors are provided a PowerPoint presentation that summarizes the information in the annual report.
- Complete LiveStream coverage is planned for the 2019 and 2020 Lutheran Women's Missionary Society conventions in Iowa and Georgia.

The workload on our current communication's staff remains at capacity. If not for the servant's attitude and incredible work ethic of the talented and dedicated individuals of the Communication Services team, many of these projects would not have been completed in a timely manner.

Mr. Lee Hitter, reporter

Congregational Services

Our calling

WELS Congregational Services (CS) exists to encourage and equip congregations for faithful and fruitful gospel ministry. Congregational Services serves under the Conference of Presidents (COP). It consists of six commissions which give focused attention to specific areas of congregational life. Commissions work with district coordinators and utilizes Congregational Counseling reports to identify common needs within WELS parishes and schools. Those commissions then provide resources, training, and personal assistance to help meet those needs.

Congregational Services is also the entity that, on behalf of the COP, analyzes statistical trends within WELS. Congregational Services coordinates synodwide initiatives that, God-willing, mitigate identifiable challenges.

For the synod to carry out its global mission, it needs to have the support of a broad swath of healthy congregations. WELS' ministerial education system, world mission efforts, and home mission work are all predicated upon having a broad base of congregations to support those efforts. Thus, by serving local congregations, Congregational Services hopes to also assist in the worldwide gospel efforts of WELS.



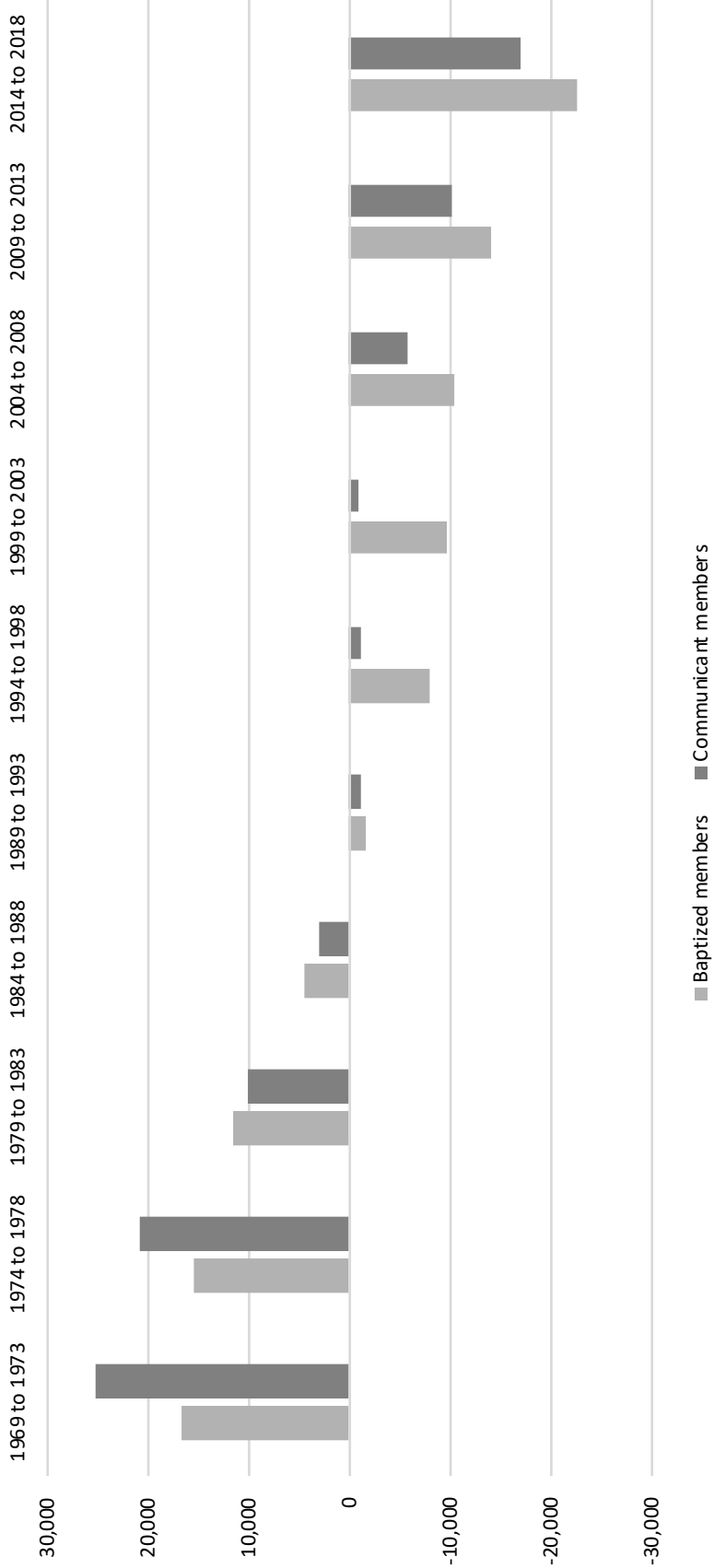
Our current situation

In WELS

At the 2017 synod convention, Rev. Jonathan Hein, coordinator of WELS Congregational Services, at the request of the COP, presented a comprehensive demographic study that illustrated the challenges all Christian churches are facing in 21st-century, post-Christian America. The study illustrated that while WELS is faring better than many Christian churches, the synod is at something of a crossroads.

WELS has lost members every year except one since 1991. The 2017 study illustrated that as the synod ages, those losses will increase. That has proven true in the last biennium. In 2017, WELS lost 1.26 percent of its members (363,997 to 359,426). In 2018, WELS lost 1.51 percent of its members (359,426 to 353,753), the highest one-year loss in WELS history.

WELS' gains and losses—5-year groupings



You can see the trend clearly when you group WELS' membership in five-year groupings. Here are the percent of members lost in those groupings:

1989 to 1993: 0.38 percent
1994 to 1998: 1.91 percent
1999 to 2003: 2.33 percent
2004 to 2008: 2.60 percent
2009 to 2013: 3.60 percent
2014 to 2018: 5.96 percent

Using various well-established statistical trends (baptisms, adult confirmations, removals, deaths, etc.), we can attempt to forecast future membership. It presents something of a dire picture.

In one generation (by 2039), WELS is projected to lose between 75,000 and 123,000 members. In two generations (by 2059), the losses would be between 188,000 and 261,000 members. To state it another way, there is the real potential that within 40 years WELS would be down to approximately 93,000 members.

The decline will be seen in congregations. By 2039, we project WELS will lose between 280 and 400 congregations. By 2059, WELS would be down 760 to 940 congregations. That would translate to only 330 WELS churches nationwide.

As stated above, much of WELS' global mission efforts is predicated upon us having a strong base of congregations to support that ministry. The challenge: How do we continue to expand our global gospel proclamation if that base of support continues to erode?

In Congregational Services

To help answer that question, WELS Congregational Services was reorganized. Rather than operating as six independent and autonomous commissions, Congregational Services is now operating as a singular entity. Congregational Services prioritizes programs and initiatives aiming at two goals: "opening the front door" (adding new members through evangelism) and "shutting the back door" (encouraging members to remain a part of the congregation and synod). Look for those phrases scattered throughout the reports of the six commissions.

The first initiative was C18, a synodwide outreach campaign that set the goal of reaching one million souls prior to and on Christmas Eve. The engine for C18 was training and encouragement for WELS members to invite their unchurched friends, relatives, and neighbors to Christmas Eve, a service that 80 percent of unchurched Americans have said they would attend if asked. The results were positive. Approximately 70 percent of WELS congregations participated in C18 in some way, using at least some of the resources Congregational Services provided. There were 32,000 downloads of evangelism and worship resources from welscongregationalservices.net. There were more than 1.2 million invitational postcards shared in a variety of ways. From churches that reported, there were 131 congregations that recorded their highest Christmas Eve attendance. We praise God for the opportunity to share the gospel with new souls! The full impact of C18 will not be seen until the 2019 statistical report is published in spring 2020. Our prayer is that many of those worship guests ended up in a Bible information class, resulting in an uptick in adult confirmations in 2019. Thus, C18 is an example of a concerted effort to "open the front door."

The second initiative of this past year was the *Ministering to Millennials* module. (It can be found at welscongregationalservices.net/download/d009/.) A "commonly identified need" in WELS congregations is the challenge to retain or gain Millennial-aged individuals. Millennials are generally defined as individuals born between 1981 and 1996. Multiple studies have demonstrated that this generation has largely opted out of church. The *Ministering to Millennials* module contains a series of videos that helps congregations better understand this generation and its aversion to organized religion. It also contains a playbook of multiple tactics that have proven fruitful in the effort to retain and/or gain Millennial members. Thus, *Ministering to Millennials* is an example of an effort to both "shut the back door" (encourage Millennials to stay) and "open the front door" (reach new Millennial-aged individuals with the gospel).

We are thankful in this new, focused effort to be fully staffed. Since the last convention, Congregational Counseling has transitioned from operating with a part-time in-parish director to a full-time director at the Center for Mission and Ministry, Rev. Jonathan Hein. Youth Discipleship and Adult Discipleship, both of which were without a director for approximately a decade, merged into one commission: Discipleship. Rev. Donn Dobberstein came on as director. The Commission on Evangelism, which had operated temporarily with a half-time director, now has a full-time director, Rev. Eric Roecker.

A look ahead

What follows are some of the major efforts of Congregational Services in the next biennium.

Welcome Home initiative

An analysis of WELS attendance rates demonstrates that approximately 155,000 WELS members attend less than 5 percent of the time. We estimate half of these individuals have not attended in years. The *Welcome Home* initiative is an attempt to zealously pursue those members who are seemingly drifting away. Thus, this will be an example of an effort to “close the back door.”

We are suggesting October 20 or 27, 2019, as *Welcome Home* Sunday. It is being promoted as an “every member in attendance” Sunday, where congregations ask members not to take vacations or travel that weekend. “Let’s have everyone in attendance.” The prayer is to get some of those 155,000 members to return that week and reconnect them with both the gospel and their brothers and sisters in Christ. *Welcome Home* will include an online elder training program so that, if needed, congregations can equip more people to assist with the vital task of member retention. Like C18, *Welcome Home* will stress equipping members for service. Most members have friends from church who are drifting away. Those members will be trained how to lovingly urge those acquaintances to reconnect with the means of grace.

10 for 10 stewardship emphasis

This stewardship emphasis is intended to be held shortly after Labor Day. It is a three-week series consisting of a 45-minute worship service, which provides the gospel motivation for financial stewardship, followed by a 15-minute Bible study, in which every member applies stewardship principles to their personal lives. In those three weeks, members produce a giving plan for the following 10 weeks. In congregations where this program has been beta-tested, giving increases between 10 percent and 30 percent. More importantly, in exit surveys, members stress that the giving has been joyful. When the 10 weeks conclude, while giving typically trends back down, it has never reverted to where it was before. It remains at a higher level than it was at prior to the program. Thus, *10 for 10*, God-willing, helps congregations meet two “commonly identified needs.” First, it helps congregations provide members with the gospel motivation to manage blessings in a way that gives God glory and avoids the 21st-century Baal of materialism. Second, it helps congregations fund expanded ministry efforts by providing an increase in resources.

WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership

This conference will run from Jan. 21–Jan. 23, 2020, at the Sheraton Grand in Chicago. The conference will be divided equally between plenary sessions and breakout groups. The plenary sessions will deal with larger cultural issues that are presenting challenges to all congregations in WELS (and other Christian church bodies). The breakout sessions will be more tactical, sharing best practices for churches in different situations, tactics to “open the front door” and “close the back door” that make sense in your local context. The goal is that congregational leaders come away from the conference feeling that not only did they learn something, but they gained resources that they can implement almost immediately in their local congregations. The conference is open to all. Congregations are encouraged to bring multiple members to achieve a sort of “critical mass,” helpful in the effort to implement what was learned.

E20

Christmas Eve is the worship service unchurched individuals are most likely to attend. Close behind is Easter. In the E20 effort, we will strive to invite two million souls to attend a WELS congregation on Easter Sunday. E20 will include worship and outreach resources for Easter Sunday, as well as all of Lent. Throughout Lent, there will be an ongoing encouragement to WELS members to identify unchurched friends and neighbors and then invite them to Easter worship.

The Institute of Lutheran Apologetics

Fall 2019 will see the first meeting of the Institute of Lutheran Apologetics. This institute will bring together a group of pastors, teachers, and lay leaders with expertise in sciences that pertain to aspects of apologetics. The goal is two-fold. First, the Institute of Lutheran Apologetics will coordinate the discussion of this rapidly growing area of interest in our church body. Second, the Institute of Lutheran Apologetics will oversee the development of various apologetic-based resources—elementary and high-school curricula, evangelism training, etc. The prayer is that the Institute of Lutheran Apologetics will serve in helping us to “close the back door” by better equipping young WELS members to withstand the secular-humanistic worldview that dominates secondary education in America, as well as to “open the front door” by helping WELS members to talk about the truths of Christianity (specifically, Lutheranism) in a way that is winsome and compelling.

Congregational Services Resource Center expansion

In fall 2018, Congregational Services launched its resource center, welscongregationalservices.net. It has served well in rolling out training programs (such as the elder training program and *Ministering to Millennials*) and sharing the resources of initiatives (such as C18 and *Welcome Home*). In the next biennium, a major emphasis will be the build-out of the “modules” section.

In summary

One of the mottos of Congregational Services is, “If we do all we can with the gospel, the numbers don’t matter.” Spiritual and numeric growth are the work of the Holy Spirit. Only he creates faith. Only he convinces someone to become part of a congregation. So “the numbers” are something only he can achieve. However, we also acknowledge that the Spirit works through our efforts to share the gospel, be that to “open the front door” or “shut the back door.” So, in gratitude to our Savior, we look at our ministry efforts, seeking ways we might possibly increase them. We want “to do all we can with the gospel.”

The statistics and forecasts mentioned earlier look ominous. But the God of all grace has promised that his Word is efficacious and his mercy never-ending. Clinging to those promises, let us not despair about the numbers. Let us instead ask Christ to give us courage and strength. Let us encourage one another daily. Let us commit wholly to the mission of reaching the lost, retaining the straying, and feeding the flock. Let us “do all we can with the gospel,” no matter how hard or frightening the task may be, confident that God will be with us now and “for the generations to come.”

For more information about Congregational Services, please see the individual commission reports that follow or contact Rev. Jonathan Hein, 414-256-3227 or jonathan.hein@wels.net.

Rev. Jonathan Hein, reporter

Appendix: Institute for Worship and Outreach

The Institute for Worship and Outreach (IWO) works under the auspices of the Conference of Presidents to assist and encourage pastors as they strive for excellence in public worship and mission outreach. The IWO is a group of WELS pastors who have become convinced, on the basis of study and ministry experiences, that worship forms and outreach methods can and must intersect confessionally and evangelically in efforts to proclaim the gospel of Jesus. With this perspective, they have come together to foster a unified philosophy of worship and outreach in WELS and to be a resource for pastors as they reach out to the lost with the gospel of Jesus in public worship.

The IWO carries out the following functions.

- **Publishing:** The institute publishes papers, articles, and blogs at worshipandoutreach.org.
- **Studying:** The institute is committed to an ongoing study of methods, practices, and customs that concern especially the interaction of worship and outreach. The institute assembles periodically and invites other WELS pastors to participate in the studying process.
- **Training:** Through resource development, program content, and publishing, the institute assists pastors interested in developing an overall strategy of outreach that includes an emphasis on public worship.
- **Consulting:** When invited, members of the institute will work with individual pastors and/or groups of pastors to offer advice and counsel concerning specific challenges in the field.

Since its inception in 2010 the institute has presented to eight districts, the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Symposium, Martin Luther College Evangelism Day, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Mission and Ministry, and the National Conference on Worship Music and the Arts. The institute continues to present to WELS congregations, conferences, and conventions. Several members of the IWO are regular presenters at WELS Schools of Worship Enrichment and WELS Schools of Outreach. Eight of its members serve on committees to produce the next WELS hymnal.

Rev. Jonathan E. Schroeder, reporter

Rev. Jonathan E. Schroeder, moderator

Rev. Jonathan Hein, co-moderator

Rev. Jonathan Bauer

Rev. Aaron Christie

Rev. Donn Dobberstein

Rev. Michael Geiger
Rev. Bryan Gerlach
Rev. Michael Hintz
Rev. James Huebner
Rev. Daniel Leyrer
Rev. Adam Mueller
Rev. David Scharf
Rev. Michael Schultz
Rev. John Steinbrenner
Rev. Nathan Strutz
Prof. James Tiefel
Prof. Earle Treptow
Rev. Charles Westra
Rev. Jon Zabell

Commission on Congregational Counseling Floor Committee #10

Our calling

The Commission on Congregational Counseling (CCC) assists WELS congregations in assessing and evaluating ministry, reviewing biblical teachings and principles that impact mission efforts, developing plans to adjust and expand those efforts in appropriate ways, and carrying out their plans over a period of time. The CCC serves under the Conference of Presidents, providing a means for district presidents to offer encouragement and support to their congregations.

The CCC is the commission within Congregational Services that offers the most boots-on-the-ground type help to congregations. (The Commission on Lutheran Schools does the same for schools and early childhood ministries.) Trained counselors work onsite with congregations for periods of time, utilizing one of the programs described below.

Our current situation

The CCC currently offers the following programs.

Self-Assessment and Adjustment Program

This program walks a congregation through a careful analysis of its community and current ministry. It consists of four phases.

1. **Establishment phase**—Here a congregation works through a community profile, a congregational profile, and an electronic pulse survey. This allows both the congregation and its assigned counselor to have a more complete understanding of the congregation's current ministry context.
2. **Assessment phase**—This is the heart of the Self-Assessment and Adjustment Program. An assigned CCC counselor is onsite. On Saturday, he leads the congregation in a day-long Bible study about various aspects of ministry: worship, outreach, discipleship, youth ministry, fellowship, stewardship, etc. The congregation looks at biblical and confessional principles in each of these areas. The members of the congregation then come up with a list of ways they could adjust or expand their local ministry in those areas.
3. **Adjustment phase**—The counselor produces a detailed report, summarizing important findings from the community and congregational profile, as well as the pulse survey. Most importantly, he makes recommendations based on what the congregation members said they wanted to do to adjust or expand ministry.
4. **Implementation phase**—For up to ten months, the counselor will remain in contact with the congregational leadership, offering ongoing encouragement and advice as the congregation works at implementing the ministry adjustments and expansions.

Every counselor for the Self-Assessment and Adjustment Program is himself a parish pastor who volunteers his time to help congregations work through this assessment program. It is important to stress the “S” in the Self-Assessment and Adjustment Program. *Self-analysis. Self-adjustment.* The view of the CCC is not that the counselors are outside experts who will tell congregations the right way to do ministry. The counselor simply serves to facilitate healthy discussion amongst the congregational members about how they might best serve the kingdom. He provides an objective set of eyes and ears as the congregation looks at their situation. And he helps the congregation to find the resources they need to adjust and expand ministry as they themselves determine best.

The Self-Assessment and Adjustment Program not only helps the congregations to assess and adjust their ministry, but it also gives the CCC a unique vantage point, helping to uncover “commonly identified needs” among WELS congregations. The CCC can then pass this information along to the other commissions, enabling them to plan and prioritize upcoming efforts.

The School of Strategic Planning

The School of Strategic Planning brings leaders from multiple congregations together for a weekend to study the components of strategic and tactical planning. These congregations learn how to use planning not just for operational aims (ensuring events run smoothly and on budget) but also transformational aims.

Congregations are taught how to assess the current reality in the church and surrounding community. They envision a desired future. Leaders formulate long-range goals that strive to achieve that vision. They are trained to turn those long-range goals into more manageable, annual objectives.

The prayer is that through the School of Strategic Planning, congregational leadership return to their churches understanding how to produce a long-range plan and better annual ministry plan, and then use both to motivate members for increased ministry efforts.

Ministry, Organization, and Staffing Evaluation

The Ministry, Organization, and Staffing Evaluation helps congregations assess what their ministry plan calls for in terms of human resources. It enables them to determine what parts of the plan can be realistically fulfilled by volunteers. The Ministry, Organization, and Staffing Evaluation then assists congregations in ascertaining the correct size and responsibilities of staff (both called workers and hired) to fulfill the ministry plan. Finally, the Ministry, Organization, and Staffing Evaluation aids congregations in appraising the functionality of organizational structures and meetings and adjusting if necessary.

AXIS Program

AXIS is the most comprehensive program offered and is intended for congregations that feel the need to attempt an exhaustive ministry revitalization or complete ministry redevelopment. Over the course of 12 to 18 months, a congregational counselor leads members and leaders through multiple stages of analysis, planning, organization, and training.

Merging for Mission Program

Merging for Mission brings together multiple congregations that are considering merging either into a single entity or a multi-site church. Merging for Mission helps congregations to see that a merger must be rooted in a common understanding of mission, not just in a desire to “keep the doors open.” The program helps participating congregations determine if a merger is viable for them. If so, it walks them through the necessary analysis, planning, and training to allow for a smooth merge.

A look ahead

The biggest challenge for the CCC has been manpower. The requests for assistance are many. Yet, the CCC relies on parish pastors who volunteer to work with, typically, one church per year. The result is that, after a request for assistance has been made, it typically takes months for a CCC counselor to be assigned to a congregation. In the next biennium, the following shifts will be made in the CCC’s program that will, God-willing, help address this situation. Here are some things we believe will be vital in meeting these challenges.

First, CCC will partner with the circuit pastor program.

Congregational Services works under the auspices of WELS Conference of Presidents, just like the circuit pastor system. Thus, this is a natural partnership. Circuits are the smallest groupings of congregations that exist in WELS. At the request of district presidents, the CCC will train circuit pastors to assist congregations in some key ways.

- Circuit pastors will help interested congregations to assess their ministry and establish some mission-critical goals. This is a shorter, simplified version of the CCC's Self-Assessment and Adjustment Program, which is the most-requested form of assistance. If the circuit pastor believes there to be larger or more numerous challenges before the congregation than he has the time or aptitude to deal with, he would then refer the congregation to the CCC.
- Circuit pastors will work with congregations in his area that are considering merging. The hardest part of a merge is helping members to get over the emotional hurdles; for example, the potential that their facilities might be sold as part of a larger merger. Circuit pastors will help congregations see that what must drive us is the mission of the Church . . . that on the Last Day, we will not care about property or buildings. When the circuit pastor, utilizing the gospel, helps congregations achieve that mission mindset, they would then enroll the interested congregations in the Merging for Mission Program.
- Circuit pastors will help congregations that are trying to decide if they should close or not. This is a common question asked of CCC: "How do you know when it's time to close a church?" Circuit pastors will help churches wrestle with that question. If a congregation decides to remain open, a circuit pastor may refer a congregation to the CCC, which could help that congregation produce a plan for future ministry. If the congregation decides it is, indeed, time to close, the circuit pastor provides guidance and resources to assist the congregation in doing that joyfully, thanking God for all the years he allowed it to serve their people and community with the gospel.

Second, the CCC will increase the number of congregational counselors.

When the CCC first trained congregational counselors, men were selected from across the country. However, currently approximately 80 percent of the requests for assistance come from the Midwest. By summer 2020, there will be an additional 20 counselors trained, most of whom will be based in the Midwest. In addition, some of those trained will be retired pastors who have greater flexibility in when they can work with congregations, as well as more free time.

Third, the CCC will make the counseling process easier for the counselors.

Currently, the Self-Assessment and Adjustment Program takes 40 to 60 hours for a congregational counselor to complete. To date, these are full-time parish pastors volunteering their time. By streamlining some of the steps of the program and making better use of technology, we believe this can be cut to 20 to 30 hours.

Fourth, Congregational Services will seek funding for a full-time congregational counselor(s).

We will seek special funds that enable us, at least on a temporary basis, to call a congregational counselor(s) who could work with congregations more quickly and on a longer-term basis than what is feasible for a volunteer to do. NOTE: a full-time congregational counselor for Congregational Services is one of the items on the current Unfunded Priority List produced by the Synodical Council (see p. 61).

In summary

"Encourage one another and build each other up" (1 Thessalonians 5:11). That is our goal in Congregational Counseling and the aim of all described in this report.

For more information, contact Rev. Jonathan Hein at 414-256-3227 or jonathan.hein@wels.net.

Rev. Jonathan Hein, reporter

Prof. David Scharf, chairman

Prof. Richard Gurgel, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Rev. Adam Mueller

Rev. Douglas Tomhave

Advisory:

Rev. Jonathan Hein, director of WELS Commission on Congregational Counseling

Rev. James Huebner, WELS first vice president

Commission on Discipleship

Floor Committee #10

Our calling

In 2017, the Conference of Presidents began to call for a director of Discipleship. Rev. Donn Dobberstein accepted the call and assumed the position toward the end of the year. In 2018, two synod commissions, Adult Discipleship and Youth & Family Ministry, consolidated into one commission with a single mission: “Our WELS Commission on Discipleship provides resources, encouragement, and training to assist congregations as they seek to strengthen individuals and families in their connection to Christ and their ongoing walk of faith.”

Our current situation

Districts conventions in summer 2018 began to adopt the same model—merging youth and adult commissions. District commission members and coordinators work together to learn, prioritize, and develop a discipleship ministry plan to assist congregations, called workers, and individuals.

Because discipleship encompasses all of Christian life, the Commission on Discipleship wants to produce gospel-centered resources for all members of the Christian family, aiding them to fulfill their unique callings: men and women, youth, college-age and young adults, singles, parents, spouses, Sunday school leaders, etc. Here are some of our current efforts.

10 for 10 stewardship emphasis

10 for 10 is a stewardship emphasis to encourage each of us to be prayerful, thoughtful, and intentional in our giving. The generosity of God the Father enables it! The grace of God the Son will empower it! The gifts of God the Holy Spirit will inspire it! It starts with a three-Sunday emphasis:

- Week I: “Open Hearts” Firstfruits Giving Week
- Week II: “Open Minds” Proportionate Giving Week
- Week III: “Open Hands” Sacrificial Giving Week

10 for 10 offers a package of highly-adaptable congregational resources with a timeline to carefully guide everything from rollout to follow up. Everything will be made available, for free, on welscongregationalservices.net.

WELS Women’s Ministry

As part of WELS Discipleship, Women’s Ministry hosts a conference every three years. This year’s conference will be held July 18–20 at Luther Preparatory School in Watertown, Wis. The theme is “Living Stones: Positioned to Thrive” and is based on 1 Peter 2:5: “you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house.”

This year’s conference highlights God’s design and purpose for Christian women in our society. From openly speaking about Jesus at work or on the college campus, to reaching out in love to another generation, to working with others in God’s kingdom, each woman is encouraged and equipped to see how God intends for her to thrive in the unique situations he has placed her.

WELS Men’s Ministry

A variety of regional men’s retreats, workshops, and conferences are conducted as part of WELS Men’s Ministry. In the coming biennium, the Commission on Discipleship will help raise awareness of these men’s ministry events and resources throughout the districts of our synod.

WELS Youth Rally

The Youth Rally exists to provide youth and youth leaders from across the synod a large-scale worship, education, fellowship, recreation, and service opportunity that deepens commitment to Christ and his church. Planning is well underway for next summer’s rally schedule, which will run June 23–June 26, 2020. The rally will take place at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tenn. The theme is “2020 Vision.”

Kids Connection video

We are planning to celebrate the 25th season of this video for children, which presents church news as well as gospel truth to our youngest members. Churches can now do a “bundle” subscription of *Kids Connection* with its parent

video, *WELS Connection*. Congregations are encouraged to use it as a way to “connect kids to Christ and children around the world.” *Kids Connection* is a monthly ministry supplement well-suited for Sunday School, youth programs, and elementary schools.

A look ahead

The newly-unified Commission on Discipleship and district coordinators met for the first time in September 2018. As part of Congregational Services’ five-year plan to prioritize the goals of “opening the front door” (adding new members through outreach) and “shutting the back door” (encouraging members to remain a part of their congregation and synod), ministry priorities were established. We looked at the commonly identified needs and challenges that our congregations are facing—church members who are drifting away, marriages under attack, the erosion of the Christian family, challenges in youth ministry, etc.

Six task forces have been formed and begun working in these specific areas. The goal is that, over the next biennium, the Commission on Discipleship might get a repository of quality resources into the hands of church leaders and called workers that will assist their congregational ministries. Here is a list of those task forces and their responsibilities:

Elder Training

- To create a new series of elder instruction videos as part of *Welcome Home*, Congregational Services’ initiative to close the back doors of our churches. The video series will be “timeless” in the sense that it will provide step-by-step instruction on how to encourage and equip elders ministry, provide tools and resources to get better organized, as well as practical helps to common questions. These resources will be accessible at welscongregationalservices.net in June 2019.
- To research and make available member-tracking resources that will assist congregations to encourage a faithful means of grace culture accompanied by personal contact.

Marriage Enrichment

- To conduct a comprehensive SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of present marriage enrichment ministry.
- To consider marriage enrichment models that further meet district needs and are budget friendly as complementary alternatives to the current, well-received district marriage-enrichment weekends.
- To develop train-the-trainer resources to carry out marriage enrichment training within districts (called worker/ layperson who is apt and passionate).
- To report back to the Commission on Discipleship by September 2019.

Personal/Family Devotional Life

- To partner with Commission on Lutheran Schools/Early Childhood Ministry, assess current family resources, and identify the needs of a family devotional life that is led by a parent.
- To research and recommend creative options that incorporate technology to “reintroduce” the concept of family devotions that are age-appropriate and intergenerational.
- To evaluate and offer recommended revisions of Cradle Roll Resources.
- To report back to the Commission on Discipleship by September 2019.

Teen and Youth Service

- To focus on 14- to 21-year-olds as target audience with first level being 9th-12th grades and second level being post-high school.
- To identify congregations already modeling healthy youth ministries that are size-based (small, medium, large churches).
- To research methodology of “what’s working” (use of technology and social media in youth ministry).
- To initiate “leadership development” of youth leaders and youth-in-service within their home congregations.
- To build a step-by-step congregational ministry plan that offers a bridge of support to our youth in the faith-vulnerable years between confirmation, high school graduation, and college life.
- To develop a longer-range plan that accounts for the time necessary to achieve the above due to the wide scope of youth ministry.

Member Assimilation

- To develop ministry resources by 2020 that follow up on the *Welcome Home* 2019 initiative. As we welcome returning members to our church family, how can we encourage member-mentoring-member relationships? What does that look like?

- To focus on small-group ministry resources.
- To offer integration ideas for new members (confirmands, transfers-in, professions of faith) as well as longtime members lacking a connection with their church family.
- To report back to the Commission on Discipleship in September 2019.

Catechism/Bible Information Class

- To find class materials that reflect a variety of learning styles as well as various degrees of pastor and parent partnership in spiritual growth, such as a family-driven model; a pastor-family partnership model; a flipped-classroom model; and an online, video-based model.
- To make available samples of these teaching approaches with instructions on “how” to do it so that called workers and congregational leaders can determine what is best for their ministry situation. These resources will then be made available on the WELS Congregational Services website.
- To report back to the Commission on Discipleship in September 2019.

WELS Discipleship will continue to engage congregations on how best to carry out their annual discipleship plan according to their unique ministry setting. We are confident that God will bless the time and effort to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

For additional information, contact Rev. Donn Dobberstein, 414-256-3242 or donn.dobberstein@wels.net.

Rev. Donn Dobberstein, reporter

Rev. John Boggs, chairman
 Rev. Jonathan Bergemann
 Rev. Aaron Bublitz
 Rev. Gary Pufahl
 Rev. Paul Schupmann
 Rev. Andrew Schwartz

Advisory:

Rev. Donn Dobberstein, director of WELS Commission on Discipleship
 Prof. Thomas Kock, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
 Rev. Raymond Schumacher, Northwestern Publishing House
 Prof. Mark Stein, Martin Luther College

District discipleship coordinators:

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Arizona-California</i> | Staff minister Michael Mundstock |
| <i>Dakota-Montana</i> | Rev. Nikolas Haasch |
| <i>Michigan</i> | Rev. Daniel Westendorf |
| <i>Minnesota</i> | Rev. Matthew Ewart |
| <i>Nebraska</i> | Rev. Daniel Frey |
| <i>North Atlantic</i> | Rev. Joshua Olson |
| <i>Northern Wisconsin</i> | Rev. William Monday |
| <i>Pacific Northwest</i> | Rev. Andrew Schwartz |
| <i>South Atlantic</i> | Rev. Joel Russow |
| <i>South Central</i> | Rev. John Koelpin |
| <i>Southeastern Wisconsin</i> | Rev. Aaron Steinbrenner |
| <i>Western Wisconsin</i> | Rev. Scott Schwertfeger |

Commission on Evangelism

Floor Committee #10

Our calling

The Commission on Evangelism exists to assist congregations and members to seize every opportunity the Lord provides to evangelize lost souls. Our service to WELS is:

1. To develop and promote evangelism resources that faithfully proclaim the truth of Scripture.
2. To promote evangelism attitudes, structures, and programs consistent with Christian doctrine and the situation into which God has called a church, its called workers, and its people.
3. To promote the “equipping of the saints” for both organized congregational evangelism and individual Christian witness.

Our current situation

New chairman and new director

After accepting the Lord’s call to serve as the WELS Director of Discipleship, Rev. Donn Dobberstein stepped down as chairman of the Commission on Evangelism. Rev. Douglas Tomhave was appointed to serve out the remainder of Dobberstein’s term.

After 15 years of service as the director of the Commission on Evangelism, Rev. Mike Hintz retired in December 2017. Rev. Eric Roecker accepted the Lord’s call to serve as his replacement and began his service on Aug. 1, 2018.

School of Outreach

A main objective of the WELS Commission on Evangelism is to assist every WELS congregation with specific and ongoing guidance for evangelism planning, organization, and implementation of outreach strategies. The School of Outreach continues to be an important aspect of our work to help accomplish this objective.

From July 2017 through June 2019, a total of 13 workshops were conducted. Leaders from participating congregations attended two one-day workshops that were scheduled several months apart. At those workshops leaders heard presentations on key components of a congregational evangelism program. Additionally, there were breakout sessions at which the presenters worked with individual congregations to advise them regarding outreach plans and strategies. In the months following each of the workshops, those advisors were available to offer follow-up assistance specific to the needs of each participating congregation.

WhatAboutJesus.com

WhatAboutJesus.com is an outreach website produced by the Commission on Evangelism. It aims to be a source of information and inspiration for those seeking to know more about the Bible and its message.

Daily Devotions

Daily Devotions are brief, daily encouragements from God’s Word. They are produced both in print as well as via a podcast. The devotions appear on the home pages of wels.net and WhatAboutJesus.com. They are also posted on WELS Facebook. Additionally, devotions are sent to about 10,500 e-mail subscribers every day.

Online evangelism courses

The WELS Commission on Evangelism offers evangelism courses through the Martin Luther College online continuing education program. These evangelism courses are designed and intended for laypeople and called workers to help them lead their congregations with planning and implementing efforts to reach more people with the gospel. These courses make up the Evangelism Certificate Program at Martin Luther College. There are three one-credit courses: 1) The Mission of the Church, 2) Practical Evangelism for Congregations, and 3) Friendship Evangelism. Information is available at wels.net/evangelism.

Evangelism Day at Martin Luther College

The Commission on Evangelism partners with the faculty of Martin Luther College to enhance the evangelism training of students at the college. In January 2019 the fourteenth annual Evangelism Day was conducted. Students were reminded of the importance of reaching the lost and encouraged to be evangelism influencers in their ministries.

Telling the next generation

Telling the next generation is a new workshop developed by the Commission on Evangelism, the Commission on Lutheran Schools, and Early Childhood Ministry. The program serves congregations with planning, assistance, and resources for implementation of outreach strategies utilizing a Lutheran elementary school and/or early childhood ministry. Learn more at wels.net/tellingthenextgeneration.

To the Ends of the Earth

In September 2018 the latest movie from the Commission on Evangelism was released, entitled *To the Ends of the Earth*. The movie portrays St. Paul's visit to the city of Philippi and the conversions the Lord brought about through his ministry there. More than 70,000 copies of the movie were purchased by congregations and individuals. A Bible study was also made available to be used in conjunction with the movie as a way of encouraging evangelism.

A look ahead

Outreach culture and personal witness training

Along with continuing to offer our current programs and resources, the Commission on Evangelism has two main goals in the next biennium:

1. Provide resources to assist in creating an outreach culture in WELS congregations.
2. Provide resources to assist WELS members in being active in personal evangelism.

These resources will be of two main kinds:

1. Online video-based training and encouragement available at welscongregationalservices.net.
2. Face-to-face training and encouragement.

Our prayer is that every WELS member sees it as his/her privilege and responsibility to reach the lost the Lord has brought into their lives and that the Commission on Evangelism provides the tools for them to do so.

Rev. Eric Roecker, reporter

Rev. Douglas Tomhave, chairman

Rev. Jay Bickelhaupt

Rev. Joseph Fricke

Rev. Michael Geiger

Advisory:

Prof. Samuel Degner, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Rev. Eric Roecker, director of WELS Commission on Evangelism

District evangelism coordinators:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Arizona-California</i> | Rev. Paul Mueller |
| <i>Dakota-Montana</i> | Rev. Randy Bader |
| <i>Michigan</i> | Rev. Norman Burger |
| <i>Minnesota</i> | Rev. Stephen Meyer |
| <i>Nebraska</i> | Rev. Tim Spiegelberg |
| <i>North Atlantic</i> | Rev. Frederick Guldberg |
| <i>Northern Wisconsin</i> | Rev. Michael Weigand |
| <i>Pacific Northwest</i> | Rev. Benjamin Zuberbier |
| <i>South Atlantic</i> | Rev. Brian Pechman |
| <i>South Central</i> | Rev. Paul Seager |
| <i>Southeastern Wisconsin</i> | Rev. David Pagel |
| <i>Western Wisconsin</i> | Rev. Joseph Fricke |

Commission on Special Ministries

Floor Committee #11

Our calling

The Commission on Special Ministries offers spiritual and practical guidance and training to congregations and individuals as they share God's love and bring the gospel to those with needs or circumstances that prevent them from being served through the congregation's usual ministry.

WELS Special Ministries reaches out to individuals, congregations, and families to offer specialized services and resources to address the special need(s) with which they are confronted. We serve people who are physically, mentally, or emotionally in need of special assistance, affected by their ability to learn, worship, or participate in local ministries and everyday living situations. Special Ministries also serves thousands of people who are away from their church home, such as military personnel, people living overseas, and those in prison or in some other institution.

The commission carries out this work via appointed committees focused on specific areas of special need. Resources are promoted through the work of district special ministries coordinators who bring our work to the district level.

While the commission is devoted to serving WELS members, our Lord continues to provide opportunities to also proclaim the gospel to people who are unchurched or have fallen away from their former church.

Our current situation

The Commission on Special Ministries employs three full-time called workers—the director of Special Ministries, a civilian chaplain to the military serving in Europe, and a prison ministry administrator. Our national civilian chaplain to the military serves part time. The positions of European civilian chaplain and prison ministry administrator are supported entirely by special gifts and grants. Under the direction and support of these and other leaders, the commission mobilizes thousands of unpaid volunteers in a worldwide effort to meet the spiritual needs of people who might otherwise be ignored or forgotten. The work of the commission is divided into eight areas of ministry.

Health and Wellness

The WELS Health and Wellness Committee encourages and assists WELS members and their congregations as they offer spiritual and other services in the following areas: ministry to aging; nursing and parish nursing; chaplain training; caregiver support; and hospital, nursing home, and assisted living ministries. The committee helps churches establish support groups to meet the needs of members of the congregation and the community who struggle with a transition or a long-term challenge.

Parish Nursing provides a practical way for congregations to demonstrate loving Christian care and a clear gospel witness to members and the community. For helpful guidelines on how to begin a program, contact the Special Ministries office, 414-256-3241.

WELS Chaplain Certification is a continuing education initiative that involves cooperation of leaders from several Special Ministries divisions and Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn. It requires ongoing education to renew the certification every three years. In an era of growing security in institutions, it has become increasingly difficult for local pastors to minister in prisons, military bases, and large health care facilities. Chaplain certification will be increasingly useful, especially if a pastor or layperson wants to reach out to more than one's own members. Online courses are taught through MLC. Costs for the program courses are the responsibility of the student; we encourage churches and other calling bodies to include funds in their continuing education budget for this purpose. Subject to funding and conditions set for specific scholarships, assistance is available. Please visit wels.net/chaplain-certification-program for more information.

Rev. Robert Dick is the chairman of the Chaplain Certification Program Committee. E-mail him at chaplaincert@wels.net. Program applications are received by the Chaplain Certification Committee through Martin Luther College.

The Health and Wellness Committee cooperates with the Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors and the WELS Nurses Association.

The Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors (OWLS) provides a model of senior ministry and lay involvement organized by seniors. Through involvement, fellowship, mutual support, life enrichment activities, and service to others, OWLS members are encouraged and helped to serve as God calls them. Having originated with Special Ministries, OWLS also promotes and strongly supports WELS Special Ministries. The next OWLS Convention is scheduled for Galena, Ill., Oct. 6–9, 2019.

The **WELS Nurses Association** provides a network to encourage WELS nurses in their vocation. The organization also functions as a support and promoter of parish nursing as a way to serve God's people. Its mission is to "work together as servants of Christ." Visit welsnurses.net or e-mail welsnurses@wels.net.

For more information on the work of the Health and Wellness Committee, contact Rev. Edward Ungemach, chairman, at pastorungemach@faithantioch.org.

Military Services

The WELS Military Services Committee provides spiritual services to WELS members and others who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces. The committee carries out its mission through a full-time civilian chaplain in Europe and a national civilian chaplain and liaison to the military who coordinates stateside ministry and communicates with WELS members who are deployed in military service.

Civilian Chaplain Rev. Don Stuppy serves military personnel and civilians in Europe. He and his wife, Marge, live in Spiesheim, Germany (near Mainz and Frankfurt). Besides worship services, counseling, and confirmation instruction, Stuppy conducts retreats at Reformation and Easter.

As WELS national civilian chaplain and liaison to the military, Rev. Paul Ziemer maintains regular contact with many WELS troops and their families. He coordinates training conferences for WELS military contact pastors and he orients and mentors new military contact pastors. The Military Services Committee ministry plan includes expanding the office of national civilian chaplain to a full-time called position.

One hundred twenty-five WELS pastors who live near military installations in the continental United States and select nations overseas stand ready to serve our military personnel and their families as part-time WELS civilian chaplains. In order to be proactive in our efforts to serve future WELS troops, members of our committee are in contact with all of our WELS high schools and annually visit students who are enlisting in our nation's armed forces.

The Military Services Committee sends free copies of *Meditations* to military and overseas civilians on our mailing list. Our national civilian chaplain communicates with WELS military personnel via phone and the Internet and offers devotions via e-mail or at wels.net/military-devotions.

WELS Military Services is funded primarily through designated gifts and grants. With two called workers serving as chaplains and our church's commitment to directly serve our people in the military instead of through U.S. military chaplaincy, we pray that this work may continue to have its synodical funding restored. Previous WELS conventions restored a subsidy of \$45,000. Offerings from individuals and groups such as the Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors and the Lutheran Military Support Group continue to flow into the Military Services Project Fund.

The Military Services Committee believes that the number of WELS members in the military exceeds 1,500. Despite several years of promoting the need to provide the names and contact information for our men and women in uniform, the referral rate is about 30 percent of that number. Please help us serve our military personnel and WELS members living in Europe. Send the names and contact information for those serving in the military or living in Europe. Convention delegates are urged to stop by the Military Services display and pick up a referral poster and ask the churches in their circuits to use the WELS referral link to provide Military Services with the names of every WELS member serving in our nation's military.

Our online referral service is readily available at wels.net/refer. Or you may mail the information to Special Ministries, N16W23377 Stone Ridge Dr, Waukesha WI 53188.

WELS Military Services cooperates closely with the **Lutheran Military Support Group (LMSG)**, a WELS-affiliated ministry of WELS and Evangelical Lutheran Synod veterans and active duty personnel. The Lutheran Military Support Group is dedicated to strengthening ministry to our military members and their families, as well as encouraging and implementing ministry by veterans and for veterans. The Lutheran Military Support Group has strengthened our

military ministry overseas (the Pacific and Europe), enhanced training of our military contact pastors, and helped with unbudgeted expenses such as our civilian chaplains' moves.

For more information, contact Rev. Paul Horn, chairman, at revhorn2004@gmail.com.

Prison Ministry

WELS Prison Ministry administers an extensive ministry-by-mail program and provides training opportunities for laypeople and pastors who would like to begin a local jail or prison ministry.

Through a central office in New Ulm, Minn., a small staff utilizes the services of hundreds of volunteers to manage a ministry-by-mail program that has reached more than 70,000 inmates. (An additional 30,000 inmates use our materials distributed through other ministries). The rate of response to our materials is high. Eighty-three percent of our Bible study course books that are distributed produce a response from an inmate. Volunteers prepare regular mailings, correct Bible correspondence tests, and serve as pen pals to inmates. We serve 1,500 correctional facilities nationwide.

WELS Prison Ministry, partnering with Institutional Ministries (a WELS-affiliated ministry), equips individuals and congregations for local jail and/or prison ministry through its **Jail Ministry Training Team**. After initial training, the team offers supplemental training via online courses, occasional visits, and teleconferences. The Jail Ministry Training Team has trained hundreds of lay volunteers and called workers from congregations in 10 of the 12 WELS districts. This effort has been largely funded by grants.

WELS Prison Ministry and Institutional Ministries continue to seek out men and women for face-to-face jail and prison ministry. We identify and recruit laypeople to bring the gospel to inmates in local institutions. More than 400 lay volunteers have been trained to do face-to-face ministry in a local jail/prison throughout the United States. Additional training continues in areas of interest. This effort has been largely funded by generous grants.

WELS Prison Ministry continues to be a popular Bible study choice for prisoners, with our 22 Level 1 Bible correspondence courses (and more being written) and 15 Level 2 publications. Our latest book, recently published, is *Dealing with Depression and Anxiety*. We share all our books with WELS Multi-Language Publications to be revised for use in other languages and settings. It is hoped that this partnership will continue to produce many more books useful for prison ministry as well as mission work. Almost all jail and prison ministry resources are available free of charge from WELS Prison Ministry.

Our prison ministry is modestly subsidized with \$15,000 annually from WELS budgetary funds. The ministry no longer receives the majority of its funding from grants from Lutheran foundations and organizations. It will become necessary to find increased support or curtail its operations.

For more information, contact Mr. Dave Hochmuth, administrator of WELS Prison Ministry, at prisonministry@wels.net, 507-354-3130, or at N16W23377 Stone Ridge Dr, Waukesha WI 53188.

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Ministry

The Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Ministry promotes and encourages active participation in ministry to people with special needs in our synod. The ministry develops resources and provides information to parents, caregivers, children, adults, pastors, teachers, and congregations about education programs, mentoring networks, support groups, and printed and digital materials.

To access these materials, visit wels.net/iddm. Sample resources include:

- “Things You Should Know about People with a Developmental Disability,” an introduction to key Christian concepts;
- “Pastors: Your Piece of the Autism Puzzle,” information to assist with pastoral care;
- webinars for parents of children with special needs;
- “He Cares, We Care,” spiritual material and crafts mailed on a regular basis to people with intellectual or developmental disabilities upon request (call 414-256-3241 or submit names at wels.net/refer); and
- “Guidelines for Establishing a Parent Special Needs Support Network,” a manual designed for congregations to use in serving parents in their congregation and reaching out to others in their community.

This ministry works with Jesus Cares Ministries, a program of The Lutheran Home Association, with resources for Bible study, worship, and socialization needs for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

The ministry is forming a team of WELS members, both those with a developmental disability and those who are family members. This team will promote participation of people with intellectual or developmental disabilities in the life of the congregation.

For more information, contact Mr. Bill Truebenbach, chairman, at billtruebenbach26@gmail.com.

Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The WELS Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing seeks to help congregations share the gospel of Jesus Christ with members of WELS and others who are deaf or hard of hearing. Addressing the needs of these individuals will improve gospel ministry in worship services and Bible classes. The members of the Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing include deaf, people with hearing loss, sign language interpreters, family members, and called workers.

The Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing offers training and resources for ministry to deaf and hard of hearing people. Installing a hearing loop in a worship area or classroom makes a speaker's voice clearer for people with hearing aids. Captioning of videos allows even people with modest hearing loss to understand the message of an online devotion or *WELS Connection*. A Martin Luther College online course on American Sign Language has been well received and now a high school online course on American Sign Language is available in our Association of Lutheran High Schools Online at wels.net/alhs-online.

For more information, contact Rev. Robbin Robbert, chairman, at mdhh@wels.net.

Mission for the Visually Impaired

The Mission for the Visually Impaired helps people who are unable to read normal-sized print, whether they are blind or have impaired eyesight. Much of the work is done by volunteers at the headquarters in St. Paul, Minn. The work is planned and promoted by a committee that consists of leaders at the headquarters, some blind and visually impaired members, family members and pastors. The mission produces devotional and other materials in Braille, large print, and online audio files. These materials are distributed free throughout the world to WELS and non-WELS visually impaired people. The mission provides many blind people in Africa with spiritual materials in Braille and has worked with our One Africa team to expand ministry to the blind in Malawi and Ethiopia. Internet and other digital technologies are opening doors for ministry to people with visual impairment, and the Mission for the Visually Impaired has begun the process of getting its resources available in ways that work with the new technology. Our resource catalog of Braille, large print, and audio materials is now available at wels.net/mvi.

To order materials or to learn more about this ministry, contact WELS Mission for the Visually Impaired, 651-291-1536, or 375 Bridgepoint Dr, South St. Paul MN 55075-2466.

For more information, contact Mr. Bill Bremel, chairman, at welsvisimp@wels.net.

Care Committee for Called Workers

The Care Committee for Called Workers exists to assist WELS calling bodies in the spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional care of their called workers. The committee functions by providing congregations and other organizations with called workers with resources and guidance for supporting called workers and their families, encouraging workers in their ministries, and enhancing their quality of life.

The committee provides a free resource, "Care to Care," which includes downloadable study materials that provide more detailed information including how to start a Care Committee, suggestions for the types of questions to ask during the visits, and suggestions for activities that the committee can carry out. An online "Care to Care" video provides a general overview of the purpose of the local care committee and portrayals of the three types of visits (entrance, annual, and transition) for which the local Care Committee is responsible.

The committee has also published resources for congregations to help their called workers plan for retirement. Care Committee materials can be found at csm.welsrc.net/called-worker-care.

For more information, contact Mr. Kurt Holzhueter, chairman, at kpholz@juno.com.

Committee on Mental Health Needs

The Committee on Mental Health Needs assists WELS congregations, institutions, called workers, and lay members as they minister to one another in love, especially to those who are experiencing mental health needs.

Mental health needs are often addressed by professional counselors. This committee helps congregations and individuals find or provide the care needed. The committee has developed brochures (also available in digital form) that are helpful for members of WELS as they seek to find a therapist, interview a therapist, and understand therapist language.

The **WELS/ELS Christian Therapist Network** helps WELS called workers and members find well-trained Christian therapists in their area or through online counseling. The website christiantherapistnetwork.com lists therapists throughout the nation who are affiliated with WELS and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The list provides biographies so readers can find a therapist who may meet their needs. The network also provides training for WELS or Evangelical Lutheran Synod therapists. In partnership with Martin Luther College, the network provides "Acting on Hope," a ten-week online course that equips therapists to provide Bible-based counseling to their clients. "Acting on Hope" presents ways to use Scripture to work through repentance, forgiveness, and hope in Jesus with clients. Therapists at Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Services (Christian Family Solutions) and other agencies receive training through the course that is offered several times a year. The network also serves as a professional resource for therapists who are trained as Christian counselors and psychologists. Members in the network benefit significantly by being able to consult with fellow Christian therapists on cases where there may be a clinical need. A secure area of the website allows therapists in the network to share ideas in a confidential way as they seek to serve God's people with Christian counseling that is also evidence-based.

Conquerors through Christ helps Christians who struggle with the temptations of pornography, a growing problem now that the Internet brings such temptations to the privacy of a computer or mobile phone. Their website, conquerorsthroughchrist.net, has already been effective in motivating people to seek help from their pastors or professional counselors. A Bible study, "Bought at a Price," and downloadable e-books that provide parenting resources can also be found on that website. Recently the committee produced a "Preaching Training Camp" that pastors can use at a conference.

Freedom for the Captives has developed materials and training to improve the ability of our churches, schools, and leaders to address the needs of abused children and adult survivors of abuse in our congregations and communities. An online abuse preventing training course, "Standing Up for Children," and other materials are available at freedomforcaptives.com. The committee urges church and school leaders to not only receive training but also adopt policies to protect children. To better prepare our called workers to address the sin of child abuse, all students in the pastor or teacher tracks at Martin Luther College receive several hours of training in recognizing and responding to cases of child abuse. Additional training is provided to students attending Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

A look ahead

The Lord is renewing his people's awareness that compassion ministry expresses the Christian love Christ said would identify his followers to the world. Compassion for the special needs of a church member is often a door to serving people in the community with the same needs. In this way, WELS churches are leveraging ministries to people with developmental disabilities, support groups, and others special ministries as outreach. As American society no longer regards church membership as the norm, compassion ministry has grown as a way to reach into the community and to engage lay volunteers within the congregation.

Special Ministries resources for ministry have become more easily accessible via the Internet. Our Mission for the Visually Impaired is converting audio recordings and digital text files to downloadable audio books for a new library for the blind. Special Ministries teams will create more instructional videos, Bible studies, and other resources for online distribution, saving us staffing and postage costs. We plan to expand Internet resources for families of those with intellectual or developmental disabilities, addictions, and mental health needs.

The resources that we have developed for one field of specialized ministry are finding applications in other areas of the ministry and in missions.

Special Ministries accepts the challenge and privilege of training and equipping the many men and women who are passionate about ministry to the "least of these." Much of this work is done by volunteers or by called workers assuming extra duties without pay. In the next biennium, such programs as chaplain certification, jail ministry team training, and military contact pastor conferences will equip and strengthen those whom the Lord is calling to serve.

We will need even more creative, talented, and dedicated laypeople as well as pastors, teachers, and staff ministers to selflessly devote their time to developing materials and training others to bring the gospel to those who cannot

access it through the usual congregational channels. Our work will require closer cooperation with the many WELS organizations that have sprung up to carry out the work not funded in the WELS budget.

The leaders of our special ministries will also need to increase their attention to communicating the financial needs of Special Ministries for the sake of financial support by interested Christians and organizations. In particular, Prison Ministry and Mission for the Visually Impaired will need to find new funding sources to avoid cuts in programming. Military Services anticipates that the office of national civilian chaplain will need to become a full-time position. The Synodical Council has listed \$50,000 for Military Services as #8 and \$50,000 for Prison Ministry as #9 on the Unfunded Priority List (see p. 61).

All this ministry is in the hands of Christ, the head of the Church, who has shown that he has all authority in heaven and earth. He goes before us in our labors, creating opportunities and blessing the gospel, whether shared in a military contact pastor's living room or via sign language in a Sunday morning worship service. The prisoner and the Christian struggling with depression are finding that the Lord has compassion on them. We know that the Lord will hear our prayer, "Your kingdom come!" Our calling is to go into all the world. Join us in sharing the love of Christ our Savior in the forgotten parts of our communities.

For more information on any area of Special Ministries, visit wels.net/special-ministries or contact Rev. Jim Behringer, director of the commission, at 414-256-3240 or jim.behringer@wels.net.

Rev. Jim Behringer, reporter

Rev. Joel Gaertner, chairman

Rev. Paul Horn, vice chairman and chairman of the Military Services Committee

Rev. Stephen Schmidt, secretary

Mr. Bill Bremel, chairman of the Mission for the Visually Impaired

Rev. Darren Green, chairman of the Prison Ministry Committee

Mr. Kurt Holzhueter, chairman of the Care Committee for Called Workers

Rev. Robbin Robbert, chairman of the Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Mr. Kent Robinson, chairman of the Committee on Mental Health Needs

Mr. Bill Truebenbach, chairman of the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Committee

Rev. Edward Ungemach III, chairman of the Health and Wellness Committee

Advisory:

Rev. Jim Behringer, director of WELS Commission on Special Ministries

Mr. Dave Hochmuth, administrator of WELS Prison Ministry

Commission on Worship

Floor Committee #11

Our calling

The Commission on Worship exists to help parishes in their central activity of worship that glorifies God and strengthens his people. Music and liturgy consume much of the commission's time, but "worship" includes far more: an interest in the style, the forms, and the setting of worship; in preaching; in liturgical orders and rites; in church music for the congregation, choir, soloists, and instruments; in architecture and ecclesiastical arts.

Worship is the heart of all parish life, the time when the greatest number of members gather to proclaim the gospel and receive God's life-giving power in Word and sacrament. Worship is also a congregation's key point of contact with guests.

If you are a delegate and have never explored the work of the Commission on Worship, you can get a good idea of its scope by reviewing content at the new Congregational Services Resource Center at welscongregationalservices.net as well as the older Commission on Worship website at worship.welsrc.net, which still contains the greatest amount of Worship content.

Our current situation

The last two years have brought significant blessings and milestones for WELS through the Commission on Worship.

The National Conference on Worship Music and the Arts

With more than 1,000 attendees, the national worship conference is the largest worship conference among North American Lutheran church bodies (including events sponsored by the pan-Lutheran Association of Lutheran Church Musicians), even though WELS is one of the smaller Lutheran synods. The 2017 triennial conference, with strong emphasis on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, was held at Carthage College, Kenosha, Wis. Many of the presentations and sermons are available at worship.welsrc.net. Several newly commissioned musical works and hymns were made available through various publishers or, if not formally published, from the composers. *A Mighty Fortress*, a double CD of musical highlights, is available from Northwestern Publishing House.

This conference has been held every three years since 1996. But we are skipping 2020 to better take advantage of new hymnal resources and to link the summer conference with the fall release of the new hymnal. In addition, 2021 avoids competition with some other national WELS events in 2020. While firm dates are not yet available, the plan is to schedule the conference some time from the middle of June to the middle of July.

Hymnal Project

Most members of the Commission on Worship in recent years have been preoccupied with the forthcoming new WELS hymnal and its several ancillary volumes. More details about the Hymnal Project can be found on p. 147 in Northwestern Publishing House's report. After agreeing with Northwestern Publishing House on an earlier release (Advent 2021 instead of 2024), workflow increased significantly for the executive committee and seven subcommittees of the Hymnal Project. Since May 2016 when meeting frequency increased, this project has become the primary focus for the Commission on Worship and the Worship office.

Newsletters

The commission publishes two bi-monthly newsletters: *Worship the Lord* and *Preach the Word*. These newsletters are used also in Hong Kong, Ukraine, Sweden, Indonesia, and parts of Latin America. In addition some non-WELS pastors are making use of *Preach the Word*. Here are themes covered in the last two years.

A nine-part series on renovations in churches large and small concluded in *Worship the Lord* in January 2018. While each article dealt with specific challenges in specific situations, the general principles are applicable to most any renovation project—as well as to new construction. *Children in Worship: A five-part series* concluded in March 2019. The author was Rev. Phil Huebner, campus pastor at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, Wis.

A new series beginning in May 2019 will explore solutions to common problems with audio technology and sound systems.

In *Preach the Word*, Rev. Joel Gawrisch wrote a six-part series titled *Treasures Old and New* that explored lectionary preaching. This series ended in summer 2018. *Apologetics in Preaching: A six-part series* ends later in summer 2019. The author is Dr. Michael Berg from Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wis.

Back issues of both newsletters are available online, both in PDF format at the Worship website (all back issues) and starting in 2015 also in a blog format, welcoming comments, at wels.net/worship-blogs. *Preach the Word* is also available at the seminary's Grow in Grace site as an online searchable database.

Worship plans and new music

A major effort in the latter half of 2018 in partnership with other Congregational Services units provided resources for two synodwide programs.

Mission and Ministry Sunday (Oct. 21, 2018) celebrated God's blessings on his church and renewed our commitment to the Great Commission to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:18-20). Worship resources included sermon ideas, a children's song, and a new hymn with varied accompaniment options based on the outreach movie *To the Ends of the Earth*.

For C18 (Christmas 2018), the Commission on Worship provided newly commissioned music (including a gathering rite based on *Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel*), worship plans, and sermon ideas for Advent and Christmas, and worship folders in a variety of formats including camera-ready PDF.

A look ahead

In addition to resources, projects, and workshops related to release of the new WELS hymnal, future Commission on Worship activity includes placing more materials on the Congregational Services Resource Center and working on a hymnology curriculum.

Congregational Services Resource Center

A variety of topics will be covered by repackaging existing Commission on Worship online content. In addition, two video-based training resources are in the works. 1) *Effective Service Playing: The Partnership between Organist and Congregation* offers coaching to organists, many of whom are somewhat or largely self-taught. 2) *Worship Led by a Modern Ensemble* demonstrates the potential for leading worship with an ensemble consisting of piano, guitar, and other instruments. The focus is on songs of the liturgy, psalms, and hymns. Some settings of the liturgy, slated for the new WELS hymnal, are crafted to work either with organ (and other instruments) or with a modern ensemble; the melodies remain the same while the musical accompaniment varies.

Hymnology

A committee has been working since 2012 on a hymnology curriculum. The mission is simple: “This curriculum will help teachers cultivate in their students a deeper appreciation for Christian hymnody.” The curriculum has three objectives: show Christ, application, and develop a love to sing and perform these melodies. Over the past few years several anticipated release dates have been reported. When the development of this curriculum reached a point not far ahead of the development of the new WELS hymnal, a release date was set in time for the fall 2020 school year. Although an earlier release was the initial goal, the extra time ensures that this curriculum will seamlessly serve schools and congregations alongside the new WELS hymnal for a long time to come.

For additional information, contact Rev. Bryan Gerlach, 414-256-3265 or bryan.gerlach@wels.net.

Rev. Bryan Gerlach, reporter

Rev. Jon Zabell, chairman
Rev. Jason Hacker, secretary
Teacher Kevin Bode
Rev. Aaron Christie
Mr. Harvey Dunn
Mr. Craig Hirschmann
Dr. Kermit Moldenhauer

Advisory:

Mr. Jeremy Bakken, Northwestern Publishing House
Rev. Bryan Gerlach, director of WELS Commission on Worship
Prof. Craig Hirschmann, Martin Luther College
Prof. Joel Otto, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
Rev. Michael Schultz, director of the WELS Hymnal Project

Commission on Lutheran Schools

Floor Committee #12

Our calling

God's command to us as Christians is clear: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Luke 18:16). The mission statement of the Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS) is also clear: "to guide and assist congregations in advancing the gospel of Jesus by providing resources, training, and personal assistance for starting and strengthening Lutheran schools." It is with these two statements in mind that the CLS works to serve our synod's early childhood ministries (387); Lutheran elementary schools (294); area Lutheran high schools (27); and preparatory schools (2). The CLS assists our congregations and schools who daily share the precious gospel message with nearly 42,000 children in 33 states and 3 Caribbean island nations.

Our current situation

The CLS has provided resources, training, and personal assistance in a wide variety of ways:

- Supporting the 12 district presidents in providing more than 800 teacher call lists per year and assisting them in school-related blessings, challenges, and opportunities as requested
- Maintaining school called worker and school statistical data
- Consulting with pastors, principals, directors, teachers, and school and congregational leaders
- Attending teachers' conferences and conducting school visits throughout the synod
- Publishing a weekly early childhood ministries devotion, a weekly electronic news bulletin—the "CLS e-News," and *The Lutheran School Leader* six times yearly for principals and early childhood directors
- Providing support and mentoring programs for newly assigned and aspiring principals and early childhood directors
- Training consultants to support congregations with or considering children's ministries
- Coordinating cost-effective options for formative and summative testing products to assess our students' progress and provide tools for modifying instruction to improve learning
- Representing WELS schools to the general public through interaction with the National Council on Private School Accreditation, the Council for American Private Education, the United States Department of Non-Public Education, and various other state and national education agencies and organizations
- Developing and maintaining partnerships with the district schools coordinators, early childhood district coordinators, Northwestern Publishing House, Martin Luther College, and many others to provide resources to strengthen the instruction, materials, and curriculum within our schools

Lutheran school enrollment trends

Student Enrollment Growth/Decline – 5 Years

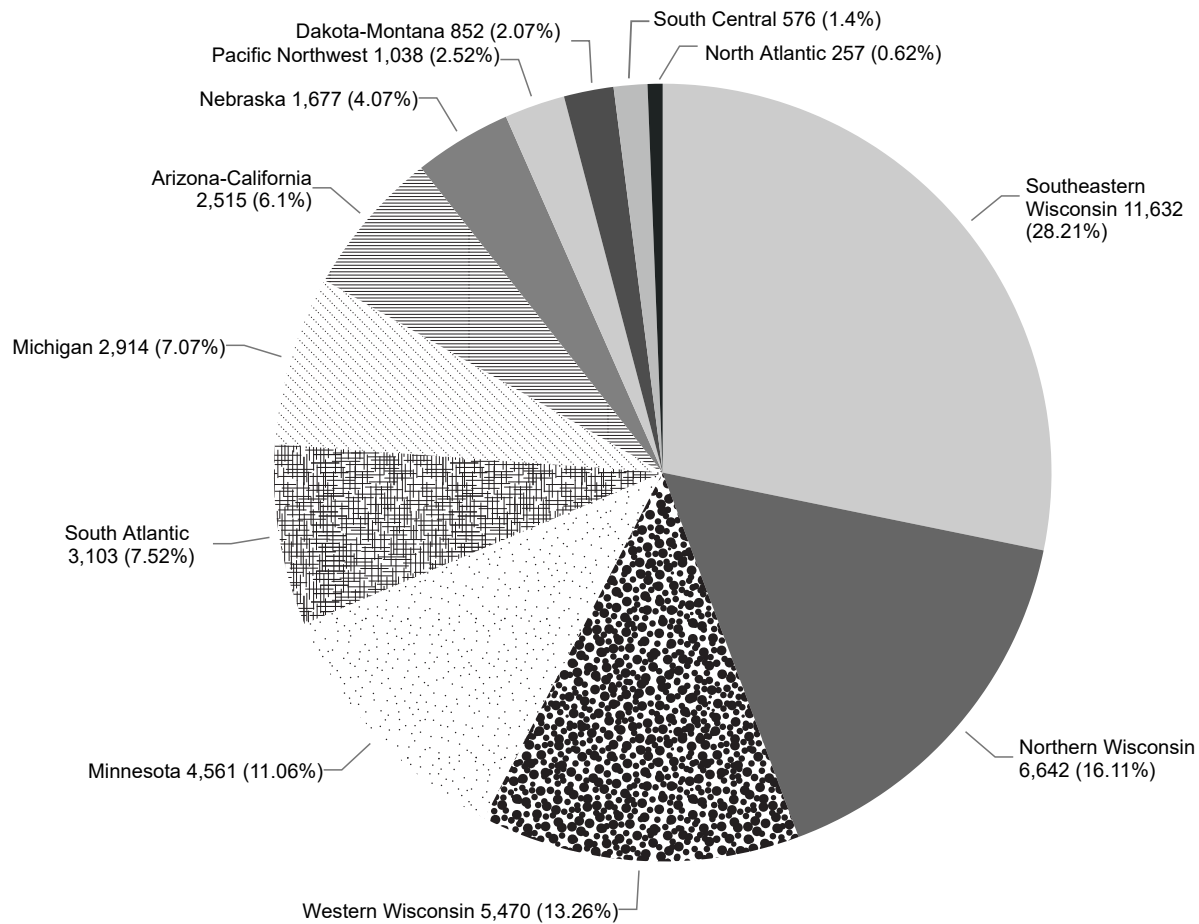
| School Type | 2014 2015 | 2015 2016 | 2016 2017 | 2017 2018 | 2018 2019 |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| ECM | 10,595 | 10,911 | 10,754 | 11,126 | 11,270 |
| LES | 24,453 | 24,410 | 24,335 | 24,485 | 24,348 |
| LHS | 5,093 | 5,174 | 5,320 | 5,493 | 5,619 |
| PHS | 675 | 643 | 645 | 616 | 611 |

ECM: Early childhood ministry LES: Lutheran elementary school LHS: Lutheran high school PHS: Preparatory high school

The past five years have continued to see enrollment growth in early childhood ministries and Lutheran high schools. Lutheran elementary school enrollment has been steady over the five-year period, and our prep school enrollment has decreased.

The following chart provides a breakdown of total preschool through high school enrollment by district.

Total Enrollment by WELS Districts 2018-2019



Early childhood ministries

What an opportunity, privilege, and responsibility we have in our WELS early childhood ministries to support Christian parents in their God-given role and to share the precious gospel with young children and their families. Each day, throughout our WELS congregations, more than 11,000 young children walk through the doors of our preschools and childcare centers. Of those, approximately 29 percent come from our WELS congregations and 42 percent from other Christian congregations. The remaining 29 percent of children come from either a non-Christian background or identify as having no church affiliation. What a mission field this is!

The Commission on Lutheran Schools provides a variety of resources to support and encourage congregations, early childhood ministries, and those who serve in them, including early childhood district coordinators, trained consultants, mentoring, resources for outreach and harvest strategies, and *Building Blocks: A Handbook for Beginning and Operating a Christian Early Childhood Ministry*. It is our prayer that the Lord bless each effort to “Tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power and the wonders he has done” (Psalm 78:4).

Telling the next generation: Utilizing our schools for outreach

The Commissions on Evangelism and Lutheran Schools collaborate to offer a one-day seminar focused on effective outreach practices and harvest strategies for WELS congregations with a school or early childhood ministry. Titled *Telling the next generation*, this seminar comes at a time when nationwide nearly 12 percent of Lutheran elementary school children and 29 percent of our early childhood ministry children live in homes that report having affiliation with a non-Christian organization or no church membership. It’s a tremendous blessing and opportunity to have this mission field attending our schools. The six-hour seminar is designed for pastors, principals, early childhood directors, teachers, and church and school lay leaders of the congregation to gather for interactive presentations on

maintaining a Christ-centered mission, the critical role of relationships, and a planned and effective harvest strategy. Each ministry team is provided an advisor for support and encouragement in the months following the seminar. To date, 1,523 individuals from 206 congregations have attended workshops hosted in 11 of the 12 WELS districts.

For more information or to schedule an area seminar, contact lutheranschools@wels.net or evangelism@wels.net.

A critical need for school leaders

Double-digit vacancies for both principals and early childhood directors in each of the past few years has Lutheran Schools supporting options to provide training for new or future leaders. Martin Luther College provides excellent training for our newly called teachers. Unfortunately, many of the trained teachers are assigned to principal or director positions for which they have had limited or no training. What follows is a description of current and future programs and plans for preparing school leaders.

21st-Century Lutheran Principal Initiative

The 2017 synod convention endorsed this initiative, which helps to address the growing need for school leaders for our schools and involves cohorts of experienced teachers going through three years of training with the Commission on Lutheran Schools and Martin Luther College. The first cohort of six men is scheduled to complete its training in 2020. A second cohort of six men began its training in summer 2018 with expected completion in 2021. A third cohort is being recruited.

Principal Training Program

The Conference of Presidents has endorsed this program, which pairs a Martin Luther College (MLC) graduate with an onsite principal at a WELS school who mentors the graduate for two years as a teacher while also providing leadership instruction. The graduate assumes greater leadership during the third year and is mentored by the onsite principal as a principal-in-training. Following the third year, the graduate returns to the Assignment Committee to potentially be assigned as a principal, with his mentor principal mentoring him during the first year at the new assignment.

Currently five men are in the program and two have completed the program and were assigned as school principals. Lutheran Schools identifies schools and onsite mentor principals while MLC identifies candidates and provides mentor training for the host principals. Thanks to a recent generous grant, participants in this experiential learning program can also enroll in the MLC Master's in Administration Program and take up to five courses.

Early Childhood Emerging Leader Cohort

This program is specifically designed for current early childhood teachers willing to train to serve as early childhood directors. This year-long cohort includes professional development, a year-long project in their current ministry applying leadership skills, support from an experienced early childhood director as their mentor, and monthly teleconferences covering practical topics related to the role of early childhood director. The 2018-19 cohort had six individuals who completed their work together in June. Another cohort is planned to begin in June 2020.

Principal and Director Apprentice Program

The Principal and Director Apprentice Program supports those teachers directly assigned from Martin Luther College to the principal or director position without any formal training. Such assignments have been rare for principals as the practice is being phased out for the good of both the calling body and new worker. Three men have been assigned as principal apprentices over the past two years and 13 women have been assigned to director roles. In each case, the apprentice is assigned a mentor for the first two years at a cost of \$1,000 to the congregation.

WELS School Accreditation

Currently 138 schools with an overall enrollment of more than 16,000 students in 14 states are accredited by WELS School Accreditation (WELSSA). Six of the 34 schools receiving site visits in 2018-19 were accredited for the first time. Plans are already underway to secure site teams for visits to 50 schools during the 2019-20 school year, 12 of which are seeking accreditation for the first time. Elementary schools maintaining a preschool may include their preschools in the accreditation process by including the 3K/4K addendum standards in their self-study. The addendum process allows the 5K-8 accreditation to be expanded to 3K-8 or 4K-8 accreditation status. WELSSA continues to expand the use of electronic standard tracking tools, which have allowed some of the reaccreditation visits to be completed over a two-day period. More than 100 site team captains, team members, and consultants volunteer to assist schools seeking to make use of this ministry tool for school evaluation and self-improvement.

School consulting services

Lutheran Schools has trained more than 50 consultants spread throughout the districts available to assist congregations that are seeking to start or expand a children's ministry, experiencing struggles in their current school or early childhood center, or desiring support from Lutheran Schools as a complement to a Commission on Congregational Counseling visit. Several congregations are seeking advice on how to combine existing schools for greater efficiency of available financial, teacher, and school leader resources.

EdTechLead Summit

A conference jointly supported by WELS Technology and Lutheran Schools in June 2019 is focused on bringing hundreds together to focus on tools for learning and serving God's people effectively and efficiently with the precious gospel message.

A look ahead

WELS Ministerial Growth and Evaluation Process

The WELS Ministerial Growth and Evaluation Process is being introduced during 2019–20 through a series of four modules and online follow-up support in each of the districts. The process focus is continuous teacher growth for student learning, a ministry development plan for all educators. Seventy presenters are available and spread throughout the districts to help deliver this new process. Formative and summative tools are available for teachers, principals, and early childhood directors.

Growing teacher shortage

The past few years, and again this year, the number of teacher vacancies has exceeded the number of candidates from Martin Luther College coming into the teaching ministry. As a result, teacher vacancies have soared and the number of teacher calls extended has grown from about 550 calls per year to more than 800 each of the last two school years. Teacher call fatigue and numerous vacancies in many schools have occurred. Lutheran Schools will continue to work with MLC and the Conference of Presidents on this growing concern. Requirements for ministry certification of those who've not graduated from our ministry training college, MLC, have been reviewed and revised. A growing number of WELS public school teachers have been called into the teaching ministry. The path for previously ministry certified teachers who never served or have had a gap in service has also been revised and clarified. Study groups are considering paths to ministry for non-traditional students and specific areas of need. We pray the Lord will continue to guide and bless the efforts.

Teacher Jim Rademan, reporter

Teacher James Sievert, chairman

Rev. Matthew Brown, secretary

Rev. Darin Aden

Mr. Ronald Conradt

Teacher Shawn Herkstroeter

Mr. Jim Sexton

Teacher Ryan Wiechmann

Advisory:

Teacher Cindi Holman, national coordinator of early childhood ministries for WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools

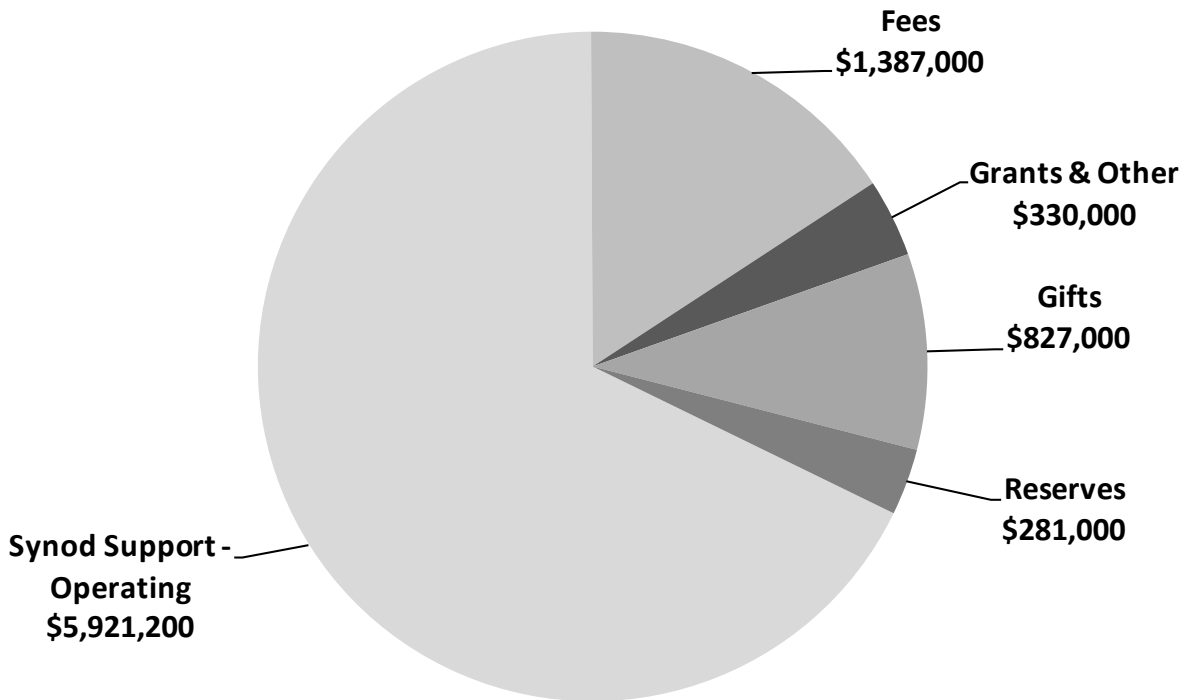
Dr. Robert Klindworth, Martin Luther College

Prof. Joel Otto, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

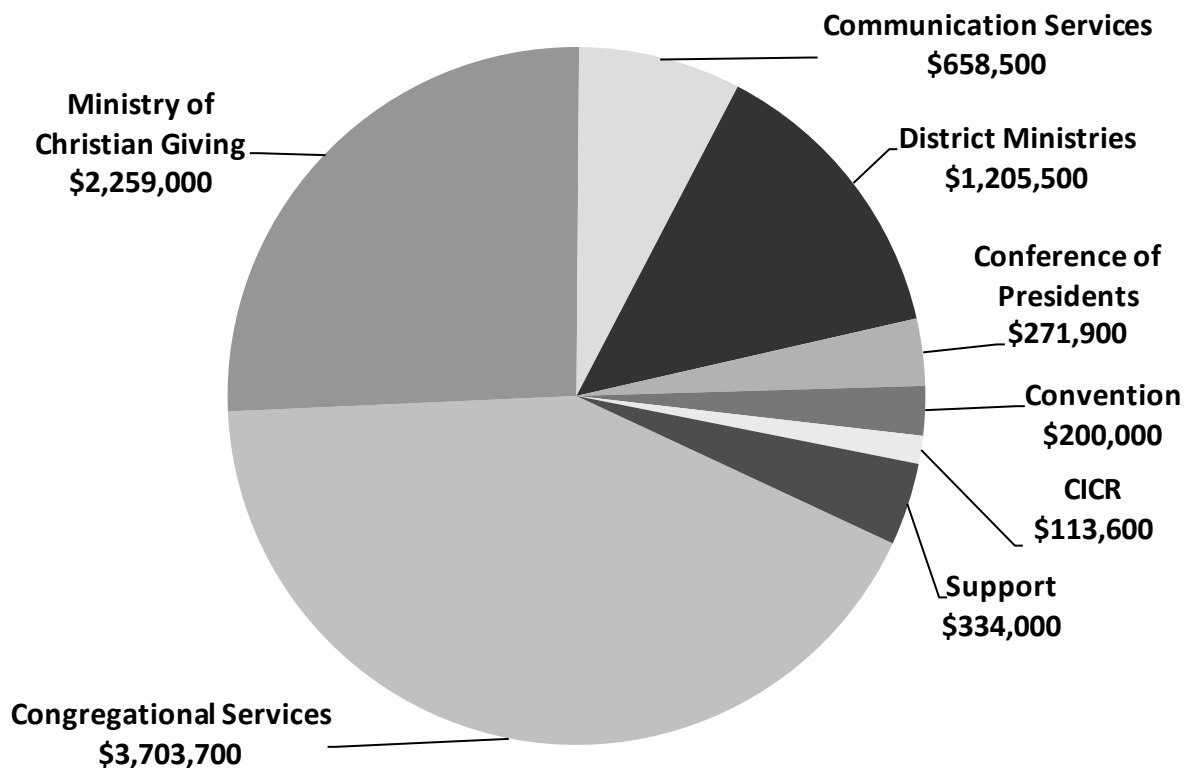
Teacher Tom Plitzuweit, associate director of WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools

Teacher Jim Rademan, director of WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools

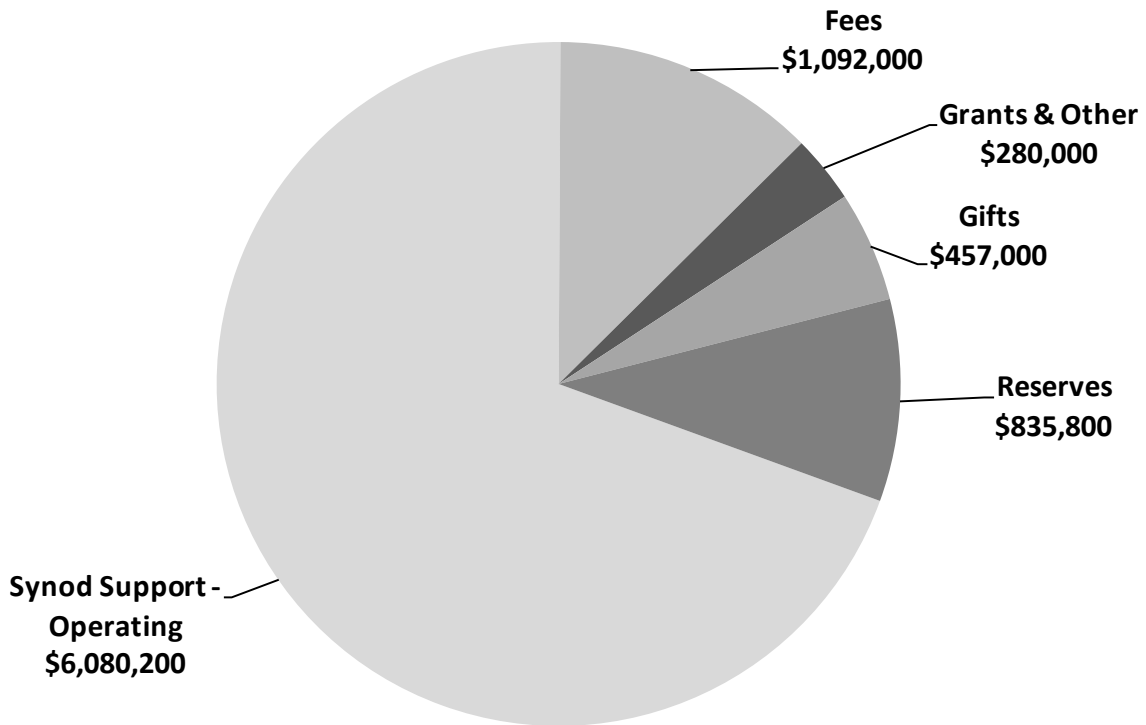
**FY 2019-20 Support
Congregation & District Ministry
\$8,746,200**



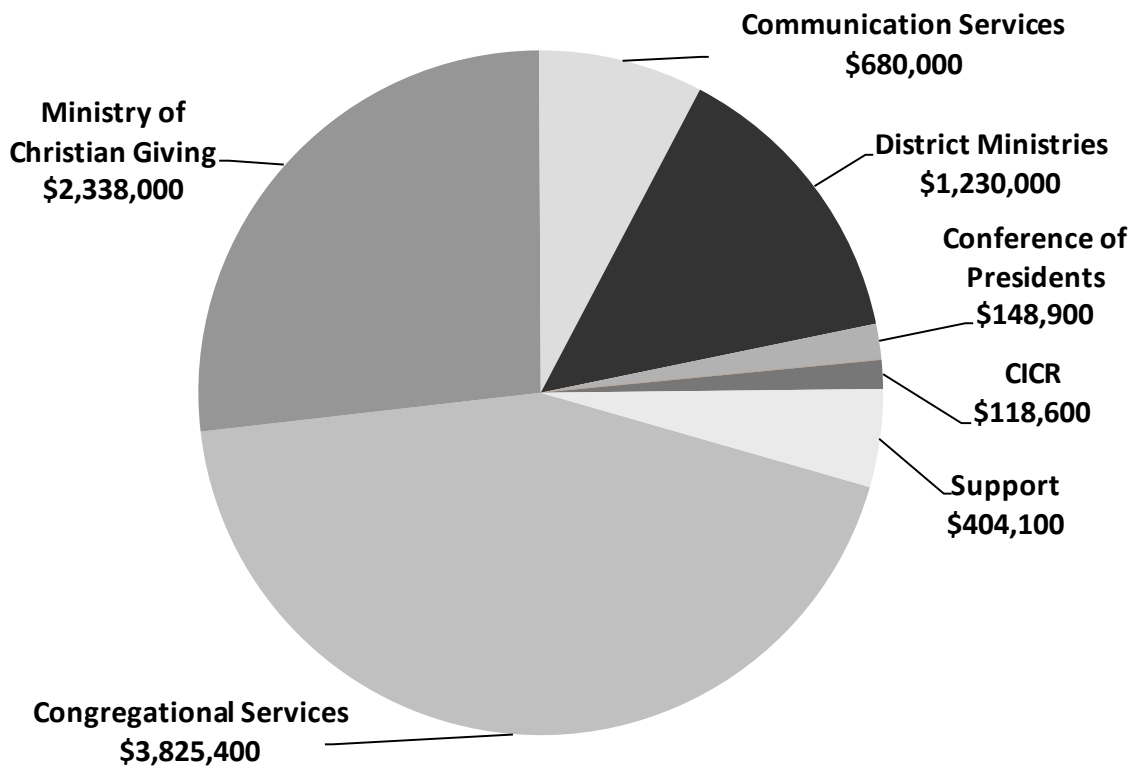
**FY 2019-20 Expenses
Congregation & District Ministry
\$8,746,200**



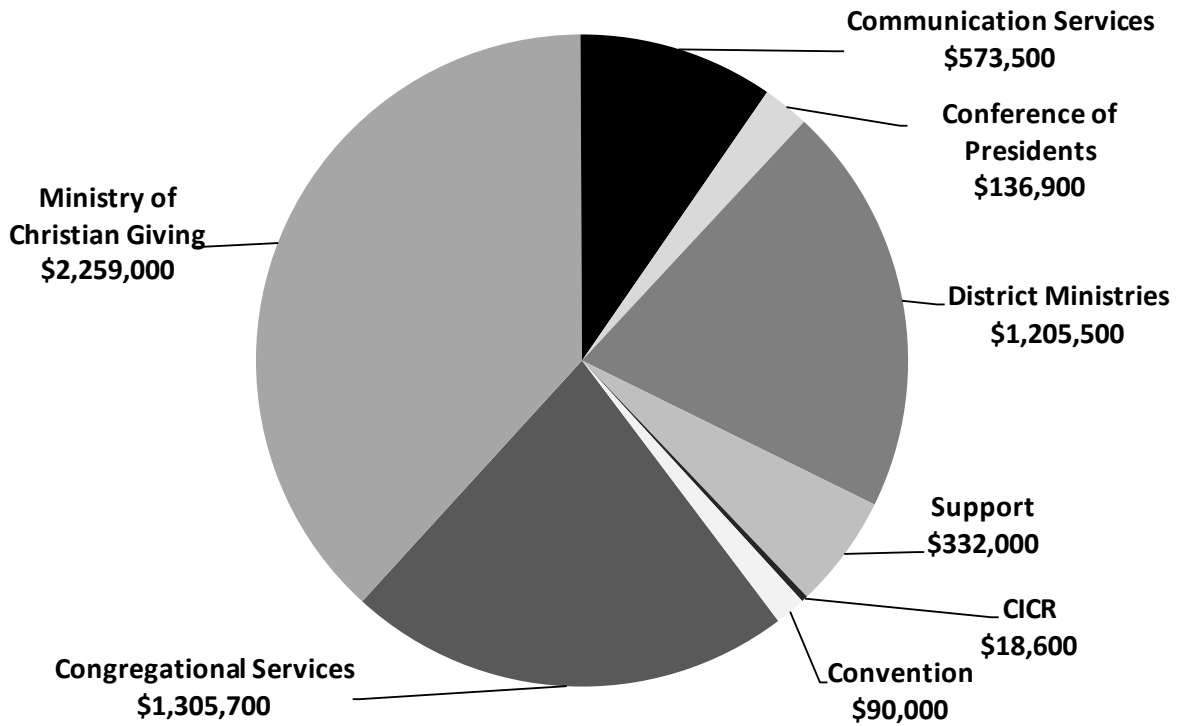
**FY 2020-21 Support
Congregation & District Ministry
\$8,745,000**



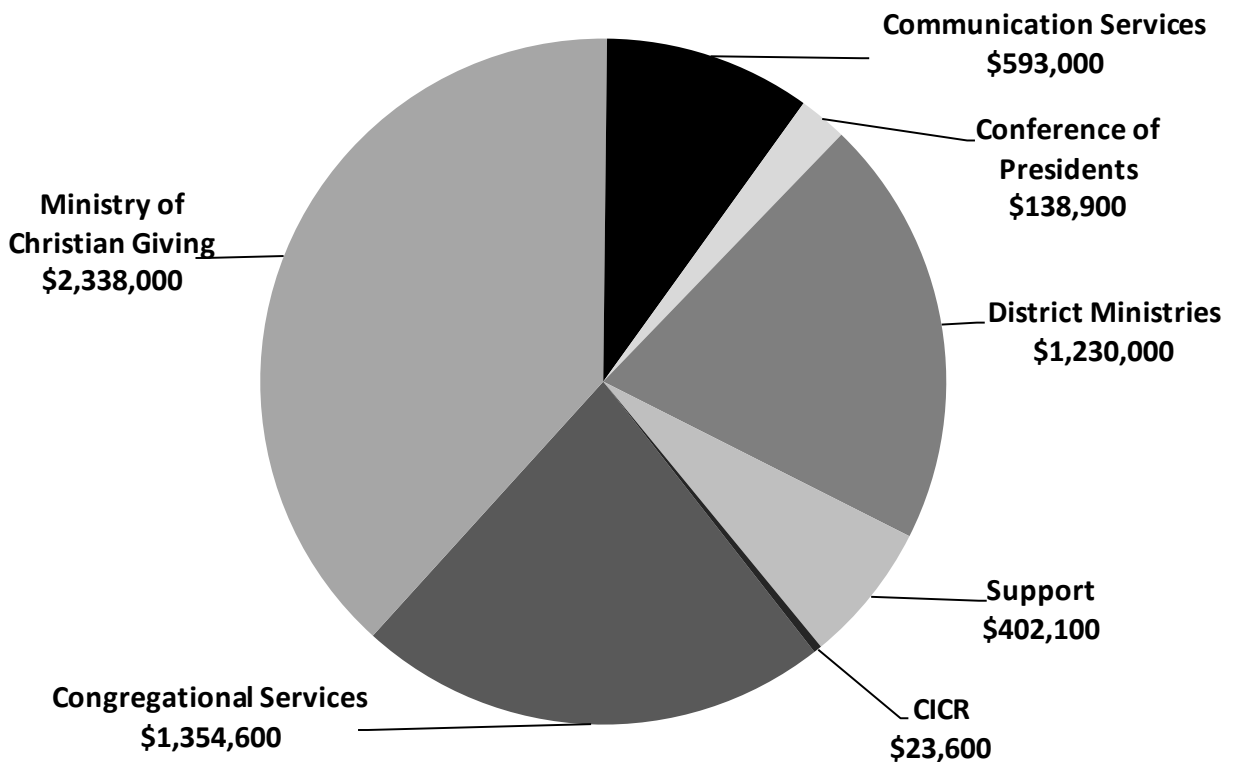
**FY 2020-21 Expenses
Congregation & District Ministry
\$8,745,000**



**FY 2019-20 Synod Operating Support Allocation
 Congregation & District Ministry
 \$5,921,200**



**FY 2020-21 Synod Operating Support Allocation
 Congregation & District Ministry
 \$6,080,200**



Ministry Support

The Ministry Support area of the ministry financial plan includes the Synodical Council and all entities overseen by the Synodical Council. These include:

Synodical Council

- Expenses for all regular and special meetings of the Synodical Council
- Expenses for the Accounting Oversight Committee
- Some insurance expenses

President's Office

- Compensation for the synod president
- Stipends to the congregations of the first and second vice presidents
- Office staff serving the president and the Synodical Council
- Travel expenses for the synod presidium
- Special support for displaced called workers
- Colloquy expenses

Synod Archives

WELS Historical Institute (see p. 133)

Publication Coordinating Commission (see p. 146 in the report of Northwestern Publishing House)

WELS Christian Aid and Relief

Expenditures related to humanitarian aid and relief programs; funding for the programs of Christian Aid and Relief is provided by gifts from individuals, congregations, and other organizations

Technology Services

Financial Services

Human Resources

Facility Services

Expenses related to the maintenance and operation of the Center for Mission and Ministry, including insurance costs

Synodical Council

Floor Committee #5

The Synodical Council (SC) is responsible for the implementation of all decisions and resolutions made by the synod in convention and for overseeing all activities of WELS in pursuit of its mission (other than those that are the specific responsibility of the Conference of Presidents). In keeping with the WELS Constitution and Bylaws, the Synodical Council also has the authority to act on behalf of the synod between conventions when proper and necessary. The Convention Compliance listing is included in this report (p. 67) and provides a summary of the progress made to date in implementing convention resolutions.

As it carries out the broad oversight described above, the Synodical Council is responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and overseeing all programs of ministry carried out by WELS. Part of that oversight is the management of all financial activities of the synod, assuring fiscal soundness, preparing and updating support forecasts, and monitoring expenditures to maintain a balanced financial plan. In the years when the synod meets in convention, the Synodical Council is responsible for working with all areas of ministry to develop and propose a balanced biennial ministry financial plan (budget) that supports the work of WELS in keeping with its long-range ministry plan.

The Synodical Council receives regular reports from all areas of WELS mission and ministry, including subsidiary organizations and their operational and investment policies, as it carries out its oversight responsibilities.

Standing committees

The Synodical Council is organized into three standing committees. The Finance Committee is responsible for establishing the support forecast and for recommending the overall level of spending for financial planning. The Finance Committee also monitors the financial performance and works closely with the WELS chief financial officer to oversee the risk management, banking, and general financial situation of WELS. The Administration Committee is responsible for developing and implementing general policies and procedures; providing oversight of WELS' subsidiary organizations; overseeing WELS Human Resources and Technology; and providing recommendations for WELS called worker compensation (with the input of the Compensation Review Committee). The Ministry Committee oversees and coordinates the plans and activities of all areas of ministry and works to evaluate and monitor how the various areas of ministry are carrying out their tasks in keeping with WELS' long-range plan.

The Finance Committee establishes the recommended spending levels based on the support forecast, while the Ministry Committee then determines what portion of the synod's resources are allocated to each area of ministry. This arrangement, in place since 2011, has proven to be very beneficial as the areas of ministry work together cooperatively rather than competitively to allocate the levels of financial support.

The Compensation Review Committee is a special standing sub-committee that reports to the Administration Committee. The Compensation Review Committee reviews and recommends adjustments to the WELS compensation guidelines for called workers, subject to the approval of the Synodical Council.

Long-range planning

The 2017 synod convention adopted a long-range plan entitled, "Our Great Heritage." The plan is to serve as a guideline and roadmap for ministry and financial planning through the year 2025, the year in which, God-willing, our synod will celebrate its 175th anniversary. The plan can be found as an appendix to this report on p. 63.

The long-range plan outlines in broad terms the direction and focus of our work in the coming years. Following its adoption by the 2017 convention, areas of ministry began to undertake strategic plans to carry out the broad directives of the long-range plan. All areas reported their plans and the progress they have made in implementing those plans to the district conventions in 2018 and will do the same at the 2019 synod convention.

Financial results (2018) and Congregation Mission Offering subscriptions (2019)

Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) received in 2018 totaled \$21,111,878. We are grateful for this generous support of our synod's mission and ministry. The total, however, was \$246,000 (1.2 percent) below the offerings received in 2017 and \$148,000 (0.7 percent) less than what congregations had indicated in their CMO subscriptions for the year. More than a decade of flat, and now even decreasing, CMO has made it increasingly challenging to maintain our current level of ministry, not to mention seizing some of the many gospel opportunities that God is graciously placing before us.

Adding to that challenge is the fact that subscriptions for 2019 are \$20,913,700, nearly 1 percent less than 2018 receipts. Since our planning assumed that subscriptions would be met in 2018 and that subscriptions for 2019 would increase by 0.5 percent, the task to maintain and expand ministry has become even more difficult. The results for 2018 and subscriptions for 2019 are \$350,000 less than forecasted and compound to reductions of \$454,000 and \$456,000 for Fiscal Year 2019–20 and Fiscal Year 2020–21, respectively. The ministry financial plan for the next two years that will be recommended by the Synodical Council has taken these financial realities into consideration.

The lower amount of CMO received in 2018 and the lower CMO subscriptions for 2019 contrast with the previous year, when offerings increased and when additional resources flowed into the Financial Stabilization Fund. In the

spring of 2018, because of the increased offerings and the healthy balance in the Financial Stabilization Fund, the Synodical Council voted to fund the top three items on the unfunded priority list as adopted by the 2017 synod convention. An additional \$150,000 was allocated to Martin Luther College (MLC) for financial aid and for efforts to reduce student debt. Home and World Missions received an additional \$200,000 for new mission starts and programs. The Publication Coordinating Commission of Northwestern Publishing House was given \$50,000 to assist in the publication of theological works and resource materials for congregations.

We thank God for the financial blessings he has provided through the gifts of his people.

A continuing concern and challenge is that CMO is now more than \$700,000 lower than it was ten years ago. An increase in expenditures of 4 percent is necessary simply to maintain the current operations of WELS, but CMO has not kept pace with that need. In just over ten years, grants from the Schwan Foundation have decreased from nearly \$8 million to less than \$2 million annually. The result is that the Financial Stabilization Fund is being drawn down at a faster rate than the Synodical Council prefers. All of this highlights the need for congregations to do all they can to increase CMO from current levels. And, since CMO has not increased sufficiently to cover inflationary increases or to enable WELS to address new mission opportunities, the Synodical Council is encouraging the synod's members to consider remembering the work of WELS through individual gifts and through estate plans.

While CMO levels and funding from the Schwan Foundation have decreased, revenue from unanticipated sources and special offerings (such as the Vietnam Hmong Outreach opportunity), as well as concerted efforts toward greater efficiency and underspending by the Synodical Council and synodical areas of ministry, have combined to enable the synod not only to maintain its ministries but also to shift resources to allow expansion in some areas. God continues to bless our synod with generous people and with undeserved financial resources.

For complete financial information, please refer to the "Financial results and ministry financial plan" report on p. 85.

Modifications of the ministry financial plan

The ministry financial plan adopted by the synod in convention sets the spending limits for all WELS entities. Entities that desire to exceed that level of spending or increase their use of reserves may request that the Synodical Council modify the approved spending level, provided that the entity can demonstrate that funding is available and sustainable. During the current fiscal year, the Synodical Council approved the following modifications that are funded with special or reserve funds:

- \$68,000 for replacement of boilers at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, funded by gifts from the *Tomorrow's Ministry Begins Here* campaign and Board for Ministerial Education capital funds
- \$457,000 in additional spending by the Board for Home Missions, funded by a special unplanned grant from the Church Extension Fund
- \$225,000 in additional spending by Congregational Services due to the timing of expenses for the *To the Ends of the Earth* evangelism video and new initiatives to address congregational health, to be funded by the *For the Generations to Come* offering in 2019 and a grant from Church Mutual Insurance to fund the video
- \$315,000 in additional spending by WELS Christian Aid and Relief for hurricane disaster relief, with funds provided by gifts already received
- \$150,000 and \$760,000 from Congregation and District Ministry and from Ministry Support, respectively, transferred from previously designated reserves to the Financial Stabilization Fund
- \$442,000 for the first half of the Centennial Hall HVAC replacement at Martin Luther College, funded by underspending, deferral of other capital projects, and reserves. Total project cost is \$843,000.

It is a policy of the Synodical Council that WELS entities that desire to use more-than-planned reserves in amounts greater than \$50,000 or .5 percent of expenditures must receive prior approval from the Synodical Council.

Health reimbursement account savings

Two years ago, the Synodical Council approved a program to self-insure a portion of WELS workers' health care costs. Savings to WELS have been substantially more than estimated, with \$485,000 more than estimated saved in Fiscal Year 2017-18 that was returned to areas of ministry and \$300,000 added to the Financial Stabilization Fund in Fiscal Year 2018-19. In addition, \$280,000 more than estimated is now expected to be saved in the next biennium. These additional savings from areas of ministry will flow into the Financial Stabilization Fund to help support the next biennium's ministry financial plan.

Northwestern Publishing House

Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) is a self-sustaining ministry. That means that it receives no funding from WELS and is dependent on its sales to support its operating budget. Changes in the publishing industry and retail trends have presented increasing financial challenges to NPH. The Synodical Council has been kept well informed of these challenges, as well as NPH's plans to address them.

With the full support of the Synodical Council, NPH is implementing plans to address the financial challenges it is facing and to sustain its ministry into the future. The plans involved the closing of the Milwaukee retail store, which was done in fall 2018; outsourcing shipping to a distribution facility; selling its current building; and moving NPH staff to the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry in May. Retail sales will continue online at nph.net.

The NPH move to the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry will create greater opportunities for collaboration with WELS commissions and areas of ministry. NPH will continue to produce new materials and serve WELS churches, schools, and members through its website and its telephone customer service.

Additional information about these changes can be found in the report of Northwestern Publishing House on p. 145.

Pension plan study

After consultation with the Conference of Presidents, the Synodical Council appointed a special committee to review the current synod pension plan and to explore options to improve the plan for WELS, congregations, WELS-affiliated ministries, and called workers. The committee has been working faithfully to carry out that assignment. Once its work is completed and its recommendations have been submitted, the Synodical Council will bring any recommendations for changes to the 2020 district conventions for reaction and input. The committee members are Mr. Paul Holzhueter (chairman), Mr. James Bren, Rev. Douglas Free, Mr. Warren Ehlke, Mr. Scott Heins, Rev. David Kolander, and President Mark Schroeder. Mr. Joshua Peterman and Mr. Todd Poppe are advisory members.

Tax matters

A federal court in Wisconsin ruled that the furnishings allowance exclusion is unconstitutional. That ruling has been overturned by the U.S. Court of Appeals. As a member of the Church Benefits Association, WELS expressed to the appeals court its support of this appeal as a "friend of the court." It is possible the matter will be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Questions have been raised about whether the housing allowance deduction for pastors and other male called workers should also be available to female called workers without violating scriptural principles or Internal Revenue Service regulations. The plan is to address this question as soon as the legal status of the exclusion has been determined by the courts.

Schwan Foundation

WELS has been blessed for many years with grants from the Marvin Schwan Charitable Foundation. Recent annual grants have been about \$1.8 million.

Historically, the Schwan Foundation has provided this financial support as a block grant, which was placed into the Financial Stabilization Fund and used to support the overall work of WELS. In recent years, the foundation has expressed its desire to move away from block grant funding to a more targeted approach, with grants given for specific ministries and programs. The WELS administration is working with the Schwan Board of Trustees to facilitate this change in a way that will not create difficulties in biennial ministry planning.

The Schwan Foundation is also now setting aside a portion of its annually distributed funds to be used to support special ministry efforts. Each of the seven beneficiaries was asked to submit proposals, which would then be considered for funding from the dollars set aside by the foundation. Grants for these special ministry efforts will be made quarterly.

Capital Projects Committee

The Capital Project Committee, chaired by Synodical Council member Mr. Thomas Schermerhorn, has worked to identify and prioritize all capital projects for the synodical schools and the Center for Mission and Ministry so that proper planning can be carried out. This includes capital projects of upgrades, maintenance, and new projects. Each ministerial school campus has provided an updated master plan so that the committee can begin work on an overall prioritization of projects and possible funding mechanisms. Any project at a synodical school with a cost of more than

\$50,000 requires the approval of the Board for Ministerial Education; a project of more than \$100,000 requires the approval of the Synodical Council. The report of the Capital Projects Committee can be found on p. 80.

Mileage reimbursement

The Synodical Council approved raising the reimbursement rate for business mileage from 45 cents to 48 cents per mile and for moving from 18 cents to 20 cents per mile, effective March 1, 2019.

Ministry financial plan for the next biennium

The development of the ministry financial plan (budget) being recommended by the Synodical Council to this convention began more than a year ago. A support forecast estimated the amount of financial resources that will be available to support the various WELS ministries. On the basis of that forecast and in keeping with the Synodical Council policy not to allow the Financial Stabilization Fund to drop below \$10 million, the Finance Committee of the Synodical Council recommended (and the Synodical Council adopted) the overall spending levels, as well as the planning assumptions that will be followed (compensation, cost of insurance and pension, etc.). The support forecast is adjusted if necessary to reflect changing financial information.

Each area of ministry and synodical department submitted its proposed ministry plans and requested operational support, along with planned use of special funds, to the synod president. The president, in view of the established priorities of WELS outlined in the long-range plan and in keeping with the spending levels adopted by the Synodical Council, crafted a draft comprehensive ministry financial plan. This draft was reviewed by the President's Advisory Council (PAC), in which representatives from all areas of ministry and departments review the plan proposal and make suggestions for modifications. Several adjustments were made after the financial results of 2018 and the CMO subscriptions for 2019 were known. The President's Advisory Council then unanimously recommended the plan to the Synodical Council. The Ministry Committee of the Synodical Council reviewed the plan and recommended to the full Synodical Council the allocation amounts for all areas of ministry and departments. In February, the Synodical Council adopted the plan and is now forwarding it to the synod convention for discussion and approval. The plan can be found on p. 89.

This process has been followed for ten years and has served the synod well. All areas of ministry have demonstrated a great deal of brotherly cooperation and the willingness to consider the overall needs of WELS.

Unfunded Priority List

When the synod convention adopts a ministry financial plan, it is also required to adopt a prioritized listing of those programs that are desirable but not able to be funded with the anticipated resources. The Synodical Council is responsible for monitoring this list, approving projects when funds become available, and modifying the list in keeping with current needs.

The Unfunded Priority List that is being presented to the convention as a part of the ministry financial plan is:

1. World Missions: Mission support/expansion—\$125,000
2. Home Missions: Mission expansion—\$125,000
3. Ministerial Education: Martin Luther College financial assistance—\$125,000
4. Congregational Services: Congregational counselor—\$150,000
5. World Missions: Mission support/expansion—\$100,000
6. Home Missions: Mission support/expansion—\$100,000
7. Ministerial Education: Top capital projects priorities—\$150,000
8. Special Ministries: WELS Military Services Committee—\$50,000
9. Special Ministries: WELS Prison Ministry Committee—\$50,000
10. Ministry of Christian Giving: Additional Christian giving counselor—\$120,000

At its February 2018 meeting, the Synodical Council approved the following items that had been placed on the Unfunded Priority List by the 2017 convention:

1. Martin Luther College: Financial aid—\$150,000
2. Home and World Missions: New starts and enhancements—\$200,000
3. Publication Coordinating Commission: New projects—\$50,000

In addition, the Conference of Presidents authorized a special offering for the Hmong Vietnam Outreach opportunity, and the Synodical Council authorized the expenditure of \$500,000 if funding became available through that offering.

The Synodical Council has adopted a policy that lists some of the events that would trigger the possible funding of items on the Unfunded Priority List. Such events would include, but not be limited to, 1) a balance in the Financial Stabilization Fund (FSF) more than twice the amount provided by the FSF in the most recently completed fiscal year; 2) a combination of increased CMO results 0.5 percent greater than planned and CMO subscriptions 0.5 percent greater than planned; 3) a new unrestricted source of funding, including increased unrestricted giving over a defined period of time, new grants that will continue over a period of time, or a new endowment that would support the unfunded program.

WELS Christian Aid and Relief

The Synodical Council received a detailed report on the work of WELS Christian Aid and Relief. The Synodical Council recognized three areas of need as WELS Christian Aid and Relief provides disaster assistance in a timely and effective way: 1) Training of pastors and congregations to respond to disasters that strike their local communities; 2) Providing assessment and coordination when disasters strike here in the United States and around the world; 3) Working more closely with Missions and Congregational Services to address relief needs.

In view of those needs, the Synodical Council has asked WELS Christian Aid and Relief to develop a detailed proposal that would include a full-time director for WELS Christian Aid and Relief. The Synodical Council will consider this proposal at its November 2019 meeting.

Bylaw revisions

The Synodical Council reviewed and endorsed the bylaw revisions that have been proposed and that will be considered by this convention. Those recommended revisions can be found on p. 149.

Thanks

Mr. Gary Graf, lay representative of the North Atlantic District, completed his service on the Synodical Council last November. Mr. Ryan Olson was appointed to serve the remainder of Mr. Graf's term. Mr. Paul Holzhueter and Mr. Warren Ehlke each completed 12 years of service on the Synodical Council as lay representatives from the Minnesota District and the Pacific Northwest District, respectively. Their replacements are Mr. Kurt Sames (Minnesota District) and Mr. Brent Masters (Pacific-Northwest District). We are thankful to the departing men for their faithful work and pray for God's blessings on the work of the new members.

Rev. Mark Schroeder, reporter

Rev. Mark Schroeder, president and chairman
Mr. John Fowler, South Atlantic District
Mr. Kenneth Gosch, Dakota-Montana District
Mr. Steven Hansen, Arizona-California District
Rev. Paul Janke, chairman of WELS Board for World Missions
Rev. Joel Jenswold, pastor-at-large
Mr. Bradley Johnston, South Central District
Dr. Timothy Kriewall, Michigan District
Mr. Brent Masters, Pacific Northwest District
Teacher James Moeller, teacher-at-large
Dr. Ryan Olson, North Atlantic District
Mr. Dale Pohlman, Nebraska District
Rev. Duane Rodewald, chairman of WELS Board for Ministerial Education
Mr. Kurt Sames, Minnesota District
Mr. Thomas Schermerhorn, Northern Wisconsin District
Rev. Jonathan Schroeder, pastor-at-large
Mr. Timothy Snyder, Southeastern Wisconsin District
Mr. Art Tessmann, Western Wisconsin District
Rev. Donald Tollefson, Conference of Presidents
Rev. Wayne Uhlhorn, chairman of WELS Board for Home Missions
Rev. Charles Westra, Conference of Presidents
Rev. Joel Zank, Conference of Presidents

Advisory:

Rev. Keith Free, administrator of WELS Board for Home Missions

Rev. Jonathan Hein, coordinator of WELS Congregational Services

Mr. Lee Hitter, director of communications

Rev. James Huebner, first vice president

Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, director of WELS Ministry of Christian Giving

Mr. Dennis Maurer, director of human resources

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, chief financial officer and treasurer

Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of WELS Board for Ministerial Education

Rev. Larry Schlomer, administrator of WELS Board for World Missions

Mr. Martin Spriggs, chief technology officer

Rev. Joel Voss, second vice president (serves as the secretary of the Synodical Council)

Mr. Sean Young, director of WELS Missions Operations

Appendix 1: WELS Long-Range Plan (Adopted 2017)

“Our Great Heritage”

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give him glory.’ ” (Revelation 14:6-7a).

We exist to proclaim the eternal gospel of Jesus Christ. We affirm that only that gospel can create and sustain faith. Thus, spiritual results related to the growth of the Holy Christian Church in every nation, tribe, language, and people are completely in the hands of God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit uses the means of grace to accomplish the results that only he can work, and he has entrusted the means of grace to human beings as his messengers. We fear God, preaching and teaching the law. We give him glory, preaching and teaching the gospel. We do that as individuals and as congregations working together in a confessional Lutheran church body, that is, we carry out our gospel ministry together while standing squarely on all the truths of Scripture as expressed by the Lutheran Confessions. At all times and in all we do our focus is the cross of Christ Jesus.

“To Spread Its Light From Age To Age Shall Be Our Chief Endeavor”

FOUNDATION FOR LONG-RANGE PLANNING—OUR PURPOSE

For the purposes of making it clear that we are an outreach organization, for planning and marshalling resources as good stewards of God’s blessings, and for encouraging unity in spirit, the leaders of our synod have noted the constitutional priorities articulated by recent synod conventions and have summarized the purpose of our work as a synod with this planning guide:

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod exists to give all glory to God by upholding, defending, and proclaiming the truth of the Holy Scriptures as articulated in the Lutheran Confessions, and by providing a means for congregations and their members to extend the reach of their God-given mission of proclaiming the gospel in Word and sacrament through joint mission efforts at home and abroad, the training of called workers, and coordination of gospel applications to encourage spiritually healthy called workers in spiritually healthy congregations and schools.

“Through Life It Guides Our Way”

THE PICTURE IN 2025

Under God’s blessing and by grace alone, we hope to see the following ambitious and realistic snapshot of our work in 2025.

Worldwide Identity as Confessional Lutherans

As we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 and the 175th anniversary of WELS in 2025, we are engaging Christian leaders around the world to join with confessional Lutherans in North America and beyond so that by 2025 the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) will be more widely known as a confessional

Lutheran church body firmly founded on the Holy Scriptures and joyfully partnering to proclaim the saving love of Jesus Christ in Word and sacrament to as many people as possible around the globe.

What you will recognize

- WELS materials will present the gospel with remarkable clarity as an authentic voice of the confessional evangelical Lutheran church.

What may look new

- Existing Christian church bodies around the world will be training their pastors and other called workers with WELS materials and personnel in order to become authentic Lutherans.

World Missions

Recognizing the need for every soul to hear the gospel, by 2025 the Board for World Missions (BWM) will be working with all of the other areas of the synod to serve more than 1,000,000 souls worldwide (160,000 souls in 2016).

What you will recognize

- A world mission team that agrees on a scriptural Lutheran understanding of missiological terms and philosophy, using planning tools to keep the work focused on the one thing needful.
- Regional seminaries, national theological professors, functional Bible institutes, and regular on-site training from catechetical level on up supplemented by distance learning.
- Catechetical, Bible institute level, and seminary course materials in many languages.
- Expatriate missionaries increasingly in a training function.

What may look new

- The majority of missionaries, pastors, and other congregational leaders from the people groups themselves.
- Mission networks and mission support networks that transcend national boundaries.

Home Missions

Recognizing that sharing the gospel through the establishment of new gospel outposts in North America is the primary purpose of Home Missions, by 2025 the Board for Home Missions will continue to seek every opportunity to plant new ministries and to enhance gospel outreach in existing congregations in order to serve more than 300,000 communicant members and more than 400,000 baptized members in the United States (298,899 communicant members and 376,177 baptized members in 2016).

What you will recognize

- The goal of opening at least 10 new missions a year.
- Support for ministry enhancements in existing congregations.
- Coordinated support for all stages of ministry development, including repayment of building loans, with some congregations and programs achieving self-support every year.

What may look new

- Increased multi-site opportunities throughout mission fields.
- Increased flexibility in facility acquisitions (especially in high-cost areas), including the option to buy and renovate existing buildings.
- Self-supporting immigrant groups in urban areas with the majority of missionaries, pastors, and other leaders from the people groups themselves.
- Purposefully enhanced relationships with subsidiaries and parasynodicals in supporting mission opportunities.

Joint Mission Council

With the combined resources and coordination of Home and World Missions, working with Ministerial Education programs for training non-traditional workers, by 2025 the Joint Mission Council (JMC) will coordinate the networking of confessional Lutherans from at least a dozen people groups with which WELS members come into contact.

What you will recognize

- Regular meetings of leaders from people groups in our fellowship.

What may look new

- Just-in-time Lutheran training at the appropriate doctrinal level for any individual who wants to serve as a pastor, teacher, or missionary anywhere in the world, building on our current Pastoral Studies Institute program.
- Organizational structures that facilitate the new ministry.

Ministerial Education

Recognizing God's grace in the precious Lutheran heritage of proclaiming the unconditional gospel that has been passed to our generation, by 2025 the Board for Ministerial Education (BME) will be working with all of the other areas of synod to provide the right number of pastors, teachers, staff ministers, and missionaries so that annual vacancy levels remain under 10 percent (8 percent vacancy rate in 2016).

What you will recognize

- Graduates who are willing to serve anywhere that the church needs them, who believe that the Bible is the infallible Word of God, and who subscribe without reservation to the Lutheran Confessions.
- Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS), offering theological training that prepares men to enter the pastoral ministry of WELS or of churches within our confessional fellowship, and endeavoring to offer opportunity for theological and professional growth to called workers who already are serving in the ministry of our confessional fellowship.
- Martin Luther College (MLC), training a corps of Christian witnesses who are qualified to meet the ministry needs of WELS and who are competent to proclaim the Word of God faithfully and in accord with the Lutheran Confessions in the Book of Concord. These Christian witnesses include men ready for pastoral training at WLS; men and women ready for service as teachers and staff ministers in the synod's churches, schools, and other institutions; men and women ready for other church ministries, both full and part time, responding to the needs of WELS; international students preparing for ministry in partnership with WELS mission fields; and men and women in programs of continuing education that meet the ministerial needs of WELS.
- Michigan Lutheran Seminary, preparing high school students for the public ministry of the gospel, encouraging them to enroll at MLC.
- Luther Preparatory School, preparing and encouraging young men and women for the full-time ministry in WELS.

What may look new

- Declining rates of educational debt held by graduates of MLC.
- Comprehensive long-term plans to maintain and improve the physical plants of the ministerial education schools.
- Growing participation with partners in Home and World Missions to serve diverse ethnic populations in global ministry.
- Rapidly growing numbers of teachers in self-supporting Lutheran schools in major U.S. urban areas.
- More comprehensive training and certification of principals and early childhood directors.

Congregation and District Ministry

Recognizing the vital importance of congregational health, by 2025, under the direction of the Conference of Presidents (COP), Congregational Services (CS) will serve congregations and their leaders by providing resources, training, and personal assistance so that they might carry out gospel ministry in the most faithful way on the local level.

What you will recognize

- The Commission on Worship, helping parishes in their central activity of worship that glorifies God and strengthens his people.
- The Commission on Evangelism, assisting congregations and members to seize every opportunity the Lord provides for personal witnessing to evangelize lost souls.
- The Commission on Special Ministries, offering spiritual and practical guidance and training to congregations and individuals as they share God's love to those with needs or circumstances that prevent them from being served through the congregation's usual ministry.
- The Commission on Lutheran Schools, guiding and assisting congregations in advancing the gospel of Jesus by providing resources, training, and personal assistance for starting and strengthening both elementary and secondary Lutheran schools as well as early childhood ministries.

What may look new

- A new printed hymnal and psalter completely supported by electronic worship planning resources.
- The activities of all of CS generated by the needs and priorities identified by the COP through Commission on Congregational Counseling contacts with congregations and considered requests from individuals and parasynodical organizations.
- Expanded activities of the Commission on Adult Discipleship and the Commission on Youth and Family Ministry under one director.
- An emphasis on reclaiming wandering sheep.

“Lord Grant While Worlds Endure We Keep Its Teachings Pure”

Resources

It is the stated goal of WELS leadership and the synod in convention to have Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) serve as the foundational source of financial support for synodical ministries. In order to carry out the plans and goals listed in this long-range plan, under God’s blessing and by his grace alone, the Conference of Presidents (COP) will coordinate the work of circuit pastors, WELS Communication Services, and the WELS Ministry of Christian Giving to encourage CMO gifts as well as special gifts from individuals and groups for the general work of WELS and for specific gospel projects. The Synodical Council (SC) will coordinate the use of CMO, general gifts placed in previous years in the Financial Stabilization Fund, and specific gifts in each biennial ministry plan.

Resource allocation

The synod president will consult with the President’s Advisory Council (PAC) to develop a biennial ministry plan for presentation to the Synodical Council and the synod convention. The ministry plan will reflect continuity in our work of proclaiming the gospel as well as considered decisions for dealing with new circumstances and opportunities as they arise.

Faithful use of resources for mission and ministry

The work of the synod takes place properly with a scriptural worldview of history. When the forces of Satan have conspired and risen up to attack God’s church and the gospel itself, God has enabled faithful believers to stand firm. They listen to the Word, repent of their sin, return to the cross, and treasure the sweet news of full forgiveness in Jesus. They form visible churches to hold faithfully to the Word of God without compromise and then to proclaim the saving message of that pure Word to the world, throughout all generations.

Appendix 2: 2017 WELS convention compliance listing

| Resolution/ report | Responsible group | Resolution description | Status: |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Res 2-03 | COP | 2019 convention at Martin Luther College | <i>Completed July 2019</i> |
| Res 2-04 | President | Convention offerings to the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia, East Asia Lutheran Synod, and the South Asian Evangelical Lutheran Mission | <i>Completed August 2017</i> |
| Res 3-01 | President | Translation Liaison Committee made a standing committee | <i>Completed</i> |
| Res 4-04 | CICR | Following adoption of the Joint Statement on the Termination of Fellowship there should be continued discussions with the Church of the Lutheran Confession | <i>Ongoing</i> |
| Res 5-01 | COP | Add one full-time Christian Giving counselor in the second year of the biennium (2018–19) if funding is available | <i>Not done; funding not available</i> |
| Res 5-04b,c | MCG, COP | Encourage congregations to make use of the resources of the MCG and that MCG should continue to work closely with the COP as it manages CMO and other funding opportunities | <i>Ongoing</i> |
| Report 6-01 | COP | District presidents to continue to encourage CMO | <i>Ongoing</i> |
| Res 6-01 | COP/SC | Begin implementation of the “Our Great Heritage” long-range plan | <i>Ongoing</i> |
| Res 6-02 | SC | The adopted Unfunded Priority List is to guide the SC in the event of additional available funding | <i>Ongoing</i> |
| Res 7-01 | SC | Ministry financial plan adopted to fund WELS missions and ministries | <i>Ongoing</i> |
| Res 8-01 | SC | Guidelines for compensation recommended by the Compensation Review Committee and approved by the convention to be implemented | <i>Completed July 2017</i> |
| Report 13-01 | COP, Cong. Services | Endorsed plan to call a director of discipleship | <i>Completed December 2017</i> |
| Report 13-01 | Commission on Discipleship | Encourage the strengthening of Sunday schools and the planning for Sunday school institutes | <i>Ongoing</i> |
| Res 14-02b | Commission on Lutheran Schools, COP, MLC, SC | Lutheran Principal Initiative to be promoted and reviewed; funding to be considered a priority | <i>Ongoing</i> |
| Res 14-02c | Commission on Lutheran Schools | CLS to encourage calling bodies to enact synod-adopted guidelines for principal administrative release time and compensation | <i>Ongoing</i> |
| Res 14-03 | Commission on Lutheran Schools | Encourage congregations to participate in the Voluntary Supplemental Contribution to CLS | <i>Ongoing</i> |
| Res 18-1 | COP | Encourage pastors to promote NPH to members | <i>Ongoing</i> |
| Res 20-01 through 20-16 | President | Make changes to the bylaws and implement changes as approved | <i>Completed August 2017</i> |

Accounting Oversight Committee

Floor Committee #5

Our calling

The Accounting Oversight Committee serves WELS and its schools, subsidiaries, and affiliates that are under the oversight of the Synodical Council (SC). The committee serves the SC by assisting management with ensuring appropriate accounting policies and internal controls are established and financial systems are efficient and effective; retaining external auditors; assisting in ensuring that financial personnel have the requisite skills; and by assisting in ensuring that financial reports are prepared timely, accurately, and in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles. The Accounting Oversight Committee keeps the SC informed of its action through the SC's appointed member of the committee; the synod's schools, subsidiaries, and affiliate boards, commissions, and committees are informed through WELS' chief financial officer.

Our current situation

The committee engaged the independent audit firm of Baker Tilly, LLC, to conduct the annual audits of the consolidated financial statements of the synod, its schools, and its subsidiaries for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2018. All audits were completed within four months of year end and all entities received an unmodified opinion, the best you can get, on the financial statements' compliance with generally accepted accounting principles. In addition, the auditors did not identify any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal controls. Copies of the annual financial statements, quarterly consolidated financial statements, and quarterly budget reports are available at cloud.wels.net/finance.

In addition to the annual WELS financial statement audits, the committee also engaged Baker Tilly, LLC, to audit the WELS VEBA Group Health Plan and WELS Pension Plan for calendar year 2018. These financial statements also received unmodified opinions for 2018, and the auditors did not identify any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal controls. The Accounting Oversight Committee again deliberated whether or not to recommend that a financial statement audit be performed on the Shepherd Plan for calendar year 2018. Because an audit is not required for the Shepherd Plan (this plan is not subject to the provisions of ERISA), the committee felt that the cost of an audit was not warranted.

A look ahead

In 2016, the Financial Accounting Standards Board issued new rules for not-for-profit financial reporting. The changes include reporting net assets with and without donor restrictions (versus unrestricted, temporarily restricted, and permanently restricted), addition of a statement of program expenses by natural classification, adding quantitative and qualitative disclosure on liquidity, and removing the charge to net assets without donor restrictions for underwater endowments. These changes are effective for WELS for Fiscal Year 2018-19, and WELS is well positioned for their implementation.

During the biennium, the Accounting Oversight Committee will continue to work with Financial Services on succession planning and monitoring WELS' risk management and insurance programs.

Mr. Bill Schultz, reporter

Mr. Bill Schultz, chairman

Mr. Todd Backus

Mr. Jeff Fisher

Mr. Jim Freer

Mr. Daniel Riebe

Mr. Gary Schmid

Mr. Thomas Schermerhorn, Synodical Council liaison

Advisory:

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, chief financial officer and treasurer

WELS Archives

Floor Committee #5

Our calling

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Archives is the official repository of the permanent records of WELS and its congregations, called workers, and WELS-affiliated ministries. These permanent records are those of significant historical value for the synod and its congregations, and they document all aspects of WELS administration, mission, and ministry. The mission of the archives is to preserve and protect these records and make them available for researchers as well as provide information services to the synod and its called workers and congregations.

Our current situation

In September 2018 the move of archival materials from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to the archive facility at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry was completed. It took three moves and the help of many volunteers to transfer more than 1,500 boxes of materials to the Center for Mission and Ministry. In the months since September, time has been spent processing and cataloging the archive materials.

The archive is blessed with regular volunteers who come in weekly to help process the materials. Along with these volunteers, the archivist has worked with two students from Wisconsin Lutheran College to complete internships. In September 2017 the first student intern began and continued to complete two semesters of internships in the archives for more than 200 hours of work. In January 2019 the second student intern from Wisconsin Lutheran College began her internship and is expected to complete 135 hours of work in the archives. These internships are mutually beneficial as the student receives credit towards graduation for the hours completed as well as hands-on experience in a potential career path. The archivist is also greatly appreciative of the work they, and all the volunteers, complete in the archives.

In 2018 more than 1,000 visitors came to the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry. These visitors had the opportunity to learn about our synod's history through the visitor center and gain knowledge about our synod archive. Many of these visitors came in larger groups from our synodical schools, area congregations, and school field trips. At the end of 2018, Communication Services completed two new welcome videos that are shown in the visitor center. One video is for our general tour audience, while the second video is geared specifically toward grade school visitors and is hosted by the *Kids Connection* hosts. Both videos have the option to include closed captions to ensure all our guests can enjoy them.

2018 also saw a growth in research appointments to the archives. Between January and December of 2018, the archives hosted 20 different researchers, many of whom frequented the archives multiple times to complete their work. In this same time frame, more than 130 research requests were submitted via e-mail or phone to the archivist. These research requests were fulfilled by the archivist with help from various volunteers. In the first three months of 2019, the archivist has answered 24 research requests and hosted 3 researchers in the archive. In November 2018, the archivist was able to purchase a large-format flatbed scanner that has been used to scan and e-mail documents to researchers who submit online research requests. This scanner will also be used to begin larger digitization projects in the future. The online catalog for the archives is live, and a link has been added to the archives website to connect researchers to this catalog. More items are being added to this catalog regularly. Currently, the intern from Wisconsin Lutheran College is working on adding more records to this catalog. It is the goal of her internship to have completed adding catalog records for several more collections. Visit welsarchives.wels.net to view the online catalog.

In the last two years several large donations have come to the archives from other areas of ministry located in the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry. Missions, Ministerial Education, Special Ministries, and Worship are all areas of ministry that made significant donations of materials to the archive in the last several months. These historical documents will be processed, cataloged, and made available for research as soon as possible. The archive has also received archive material donations from several congregations that have had to close their doors. Since September 2017, nine congregations have donated their records to the archive for permanent storage. Numerous other congregations and individuals have continued to send in items such as updated church histories and bulletins from special services. All these donations go far in preserving the histories of the congregations and the synod.

Outreach for the archives continued to grow over the past two years. In February of both 2018 and 2019, the archive was represented at Mission and Ministry at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. The display table at this conference was a joint table with the WELS Historical Institute, which allowed the future pastors of our synod to learn about both organizations. The archivist presented the attendees the resources available to them through the archives as well as provided education on the types of materials the archives is continually collecting. In June 2018, the archives had an information table at the Southeastern Wisconsin District Convention as well as the annual Lutheran Women's Missionary Society National Convention held in Green Bay, Wis. Both events provided a great opportunity to reach out to a large number of individuals and let them know how the archives serves the members of our synod.

A look ahead

Now that the archives are located at the Center for Mission and Ministry, other projects can begin as we look to the future of the archives. It is the goal of the archivist that in the coming months more materials that have been transferred from the various areas of ministry can be organized and cataloged. With the help of volunteers and interns, more progress will continue to be made in this area. Other major goals of the archivist are to begin work on digitization projects. Certain collections have been marked as a priority for scanning both for their historical value as well as for preservation purposes. One such collection is the Presidential Correspondence Collection. This collection contains correspondence to the synodical president from the start of the synod in 1850 up through the end of the 1880s. This collection, due to age and historical value, has been marked for priority digitization. It is hoped that by the end of the year a full inventory will be completed on this collection and more time can be devoted to preservation of this collection through scans of the letters.

Another collection that has been identified for digitization is the *Northwestern Lutheran* magazine. This magazine, which is the precursor to *Forward In Christ*, was started in 1914. Its counterpart, the *Gemeinde-Blatt*, already has a significant portion of it scanned and available through Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's website. Scanning the *Northwestern Lutheran* will bring a much-needed English counterpart to the information being made more readily available through the scanning of the *Gemeinde-Blatt*.

Outreach for the archives will continue in the coming years as it has done over the last two years. The archivist has applied to have an information table at the 2019 Lutheran Women's Missionary Society National Convention, which will be held in Des Moines, Iowa, this summer. It is a goal of the archivist to be represented at as many Lutheran Women's Missionary Society conventions as possible. A joint table between the WELS Archives and the WELS Historical Institute will be on display at the synod convention this summer. The archivist also aims to be represented at future Mission and Ministry conferences held at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. As the archivist looks further into the future, an event that will begin to receive more attention in the coming years is the 175th anniversary of WELS in 2025. It is the hope of the archivist that the whole synod will look forward to this anniversary with anticipation of celebrating the history of our synod.

The Lord has greatly blessed the work of the archives and continues to allow the archivist to help congregations and individuals explore and learn more about the history of our great synod. In the last two years the archives have grown and flourished by God's grace, and we humbly ask that he continue to bless the work and efforts of the archivist and the many volunteers.

For more information, contact Mrs. Susan Willems, WELS archivist, at 414-256-3203 or susan.willems@wels.net.

Mrs. Susan Willems, reporter

WELS Christian Aid and Relief

Floor Committee #16

Our calling

WELS Christian Aid and Relief brings physical relief to people suffering from natural disasters and severe medical and financial emergencies in the form of cash grants, food, clothing, and medical supplies. Christian Aid and Relief also partners with WELS missionaries to support humanitarian aid projects that can help build bridges to proclaim the gospel. The mission of Christian Aid and Relief is drawn from the biblical encouragement, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Galatians 6:10). Because of all that Christ has done for us, we are eager to reflect Christ’s love and compassion to those in need. We seek to personalize our efforts by distributing funds through our churches and missions. We partner with them to encourage local relief efforts on behalf of their own members and community. We bring in volunteers to assist with relief projects when appropriate.

Our current situation

Christian Aid and Relief is not funded in the WELS budget but relies on the special offerings of WELS members. Our expenditures are divided into two categories—relief expenditures and humanitarian aid projects.

Disaster relief

From July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018, our relief expenditures were \$633,056 with \$461,291 designated for domestic relief efforts and \$171,765 for foreign relief efforts. From July 1, 2018, to February 2019 our relief expenditures were \$501,872 total with \$278,332 designated for domestic and \$223,540 for foreign.

Puerto Rico

Major opportunities to provide relief in the past year centered in Puerto Rico where more than \$300,000 was granted to assist the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church of Puerto Rico. Funds and volunteers were provided to rebuild two churches and two parsonages, repair member homes, and offer ministry encouragement and worker training through Rev. Larry Schlomer Sr. Initially, groceries were distributed to families in need and \$5,000 was granted to provide meals for people in the church and community suffering from this disaster. This enabled members of the national church to provide meals for 50 people a day for four weeks. The new church in Humacao was dedicated Feb. 10, 2019.

Texas

Volunteers from neighboring churches helped with initial flood cleanup efforts in several affected areas. Equipment from our relief trailers was put to good use. We were blessed with wonderful volunteers and project coordinators. They repaired a parsonage and church at Christ our Savior, Angleton, Texas; the school at Sienna Plantation Academy; and about 17 member homes in the Friendswood, Texas, area. Volunteers often express what a joy it is to serve Christ by assisting people in their time of need. Special thanks to Builders for Christ volunteers for their excellent reconstruction work. Builders for Christ is a ministry of Kingdom Workers.

Florida

Volunteers, with the help of our relief trailers, assisted with the cleanup efforts in several communities affected by hurricanes, most recently Panama City, Fla. Generators and equipment, rental assistance to those displaced from their homes, and financial grants to assist with the cost of repairs and replacement of furnishings were provided. More than 170 volunteers have been repairing the church and parsonage in Panama City, along with homes in the church and community. Forty student volunteers from Martin Luther College also played an active role in the recovery effort. This relief effort, reaching out to the community, is ongoing.

Antigua, Barbuda, and Dominica

Assistance was provided to families displaced from Barbuda, who are staying with members and friends of our WELS mission, St. John, Antigua. Twenty-nine families received \$18,000 in immediate aid so far. Funds were also distributed to assist families in Dominica affected by the hurricane. Assessment of opportunities to rebuild 13 homes in Dominica for families connected to our churches in Antigua and St. Lucia is ongoing.

Wisconsin and Minnesota

We also provided grants and volunteers to numerous congregations struck by severe flooding in Wisconsin and

Minnesota. More than 85 volunteers assisted with clean up from tornadoes in Brownsville, Wis., and more than 200 volunteers helped with clean up near St. Andrew, Middleton, Wis., and the surrounding community.

Nepal

Financial assistance for food and supplies was provided to people suffering from landslides in Nepal.

Africa

\$35,000 was granted to support our Central Africa Medical Mission in Zambia and Malawi.

Humanitarian aid projects

Humanitarian aid projects offer missionaries opportunities to show how much we care by bridging gospel proclamation with acts of compassion. In many cases humanitarian aid opens doors for us to do mission work in certain foreign countries. In 2017–18, \$327,475 was granted for humanitarian aid projects. For 2018–19, \$317,403 has been approved.

Major items funded in our world mission fields include borehole drilling to provide clean water, English as a second language (ESL) classes, home-based care for the chronically ill and dying, food assistance to the needy, food and nutrition to orphans, serving people with special needs, skill training and care for women, technology training, and medical equipment and health clinics. Humanitarian aid projects are being supported in Malawi, Nigeria, and Zambia, Africa (including our Central Africa Medical Mission); Russia; Haiti; Mexico; India; Indonesia; Albania; Ukraine; Nepal; Pakistan; and Thailand.

Programs through our home missions welcome new legal immigrants in Las Vegas, Nev., and Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and assist people in need in Denver, Colo., and in Texas.

WELS Christian Aid and Relief regularly provides help for families with catastrophic personal and medical difficulties by assisting the local efforts of congregations and missions as they reach out to those among them in need. Contact WELS Christian Aid and Relief if an opportunity arises in your own congregation.

We thank our gracious Lord for moving the hearts of WELS members to show how much they care with their prayers and gifts of love.

A look ahead

Annually, Christian Aid and Relief reviews humanitarian aid grant requests forwarded to it from the Board for World Missions and the Board for Home Missions.

WELS Christian Aid and Relief looks for ways to improve communication to the members of our synod. *Lifeline* videos are produced so that those who support our work can see firsthand how their gifts are being used. A video and promotional kit is available to inform school children about our ministry. Check out wels.net/relief or “like us” on Facebook to receive timely information and to donate online toward Christian Aid and Relief projects. Committee members also make presentations to various church and school groups to “tell our stories,” letting WELS members know about the needs and opportunities to help people through Christian Aid and Relief. Contact us to learn more. We are partnering with other WELS agencies such as Christian Family Solutions, Kingdom Workers, and the WELS Nurses Association to coordinate volunteers to assist in relief efforts when appropriate.

Our goal is to train and equip congregations in advance how to respond when a disaster strikes. We are developing a written disaster preparedness training manual and expanding disaster trailer teams. We continue to build a database of volunteers. We are reviewing our staffing needs to meet the ministry opportunities the Lord is placing before us.

We thank outgoing member Mr. Steve Wright for his faithful service to our commission, and we welcome new member, Mr. Dennis Palmberg, to our commission.

Rev. Robert Hein, reporter

Rev. Robert Hein, chairman

Staff Minister Tom Hering, secretary

Rev. Bruce Marggraf

Mr. Dennis Palmberg

Rev. Richard Warnecke

Advisory:

Mrs. Beth Zambo, administrative assistant

Support Services

Floor Committee #13

Support Services is the area that encompasses Financial Services, Technology, Human Resources, and Facility Services. These areas support the ministry of the synod and its four ministerial education schools.

Technology

Floor Committee #13

Our calling

WELS Technology exists to support the work of the synod by providing a capable and secure technical infrastructure, building and supporting applications used by synod workers, facilitating digital communications, assisting congregations and called workers to better make use of technology, and coordinating technology initiatives that can't be done at smaller organizational levels. Together the dedicated men and women that make up the WELS Technology team seek to help the spread of the gospel with technology tools the Lord continues to make available in the 21st century.

WELS Technology divides its working into 10 service areas:

1. IT administration;
2. workstations, mobile, and peripherals;
3. project management;
4. security and disaster recovery;
5. servers and storage;
6. documentation and training;
7. end-user support;
8. network and telephony;
9. application and web development; and
10. application and web maintenance.

Our primary calling is connecting gospel-sharers with the available technologies that can better assist in the spread of that gospel. Time and resources are set aside to help with the process of making technologies available to those who would like to share the good news by "any means possible." We believe our calling is to find those intersections between technology and ministry.

Our current situation

Over the past two years, our focus has been on three key areas:

1. security,
2. application/forms development, and
3. digital ministry resources.

Security

The safety, integrity, and security of synod data is a priority. The synod maintains sensitive information about all of its called workers and their families, donors, college students, missionaries, churches, schools, and other institutions. Some systems receive financial information, credit card data, and other data that, in the wrong hands, would harm WELS members and the organizations to which they belong. This could include attempts to ransom data, sell information, steal identities, or cripple operations.

The synod's security procedures involve regular testing for PCI (Payment Card Industry) compliance. The compliance requirements have become more rigorous in the past two years and many changes have been made to get and keep

WELS systems in compliance. This meant upgrades to certain servers, revised security policies, and ongoing training. After working with our synod schools and Northwestern Publishing House, they too are in compliance.

There has been a proliferation of mobile computing devices accessing synod resources. WELS Technology continues to improve on a complete Mobile Device Management program to ensure that any device that has access to synod resources can be monitored and, if necessary, locked or erased when stolen. The types of users at greatest risk are those in the Technology, Finance, Advancement, and Christian Giving offices.

Last year the European Union passed the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) act. GDPR affects any organization that maintains information about EU residents. WELS needs to be in compliance as we do have this kind of data. It is also assumed that similar laws will be passed in the United States protecting the rights of U.S. citizens. The WELS Technology team met with each area of ministry (18 groups in all) to begin the process of ensuring GDPR compliance as well as other security/privacy best practice efforts. The process includes identifying all forms (digital and paper) used by the area and determining what is needed to secure “expressed permission” for personal data collection and to clearly identify additions to the form to clarify the intended use of data collected.

A part of these efforts is to identify and classify all data maintained by the area and assign the appropriate security designation (according to the terms of the WELS Information Security Policy). It is important to also note every data source (spreadsheets, databases, contact lists, etc.) in which personally identifiable information may be contained. A list of all third parties with whom personal data is shared is also being created. Agreements need to be in place that govern the use and protections for that data.

The WELS Privacy Policy was updated in an effort to increase transparency and be fully GDPR compliant. It can be found at wels.net/privacy-policy. A web page was also crafted to allow data owners to better understand how they can use self-service tools to access and even change their own information. Visit wels.net/access-data to see the listing.

The WELS Center for Mission and Ministry, the synod schools, and Northwestern Publishing House are currently in the midst of a thorough Security and Privacy Risk Analysis. This process will analyze, document, and plan for issues that may arise in the areas of PCI, GDPR/Privacy, and HIPAA.

Several other steps have been taken to increase both digital and physical security:

- Moved our security tools to cloud-based offerings for defense against malware
- All synod-owned laptops are fully encrypted
- Upgrades have been made to key synod servers and databases
- Automation of WELS Information Security Policy acknowledgement by all employees
- Video camera installed at front door
- All exterior doors locked
- Ballistic-proof film installed on doors

Finally, a renewed effort to implement our WELS Records Management Plan is a part of this process. This will ensure that all “records” have a defined retention period and that where possible, systems can be implemented to assist in compliance. The plan will help with eDiscovery if needed, and also ease the burden of collecting or removing data should we receive those requests per the allowances afforded individuals through GDPR, and likely U.S. citizens in the future.

Application/forms development

One of the blessings technology brings to the synod is the ability to improve operational efficiencies through the proper application of appropriate digital tools. That includes databases, online forms, reports, document management, and content management. Over the past five years WELS Technology, in connection with key areas of ministry, has been migrating and innovating the 25-year-old Progress database application. Its successor, WELSource, is a modern, web-based tool that has both increased productivity and allowed for improved data integrity.

The application contains all synod data related to called workers, congregations, call system, campus ministry, home and world missions, pension plan, etc. Most recently, digital forms have been published or upgraded that allow called workers, congregations, and schools to fulfill their annual synod reporting requirements. These are accessed through a main portal called My WELS Cloud, which provides an easy to use launching point for all synod-related forms. For called workers that includes biographic updates, self-assessments, and performance assessments. For organizations that includes Congregation Mission Offering commitments, church and school statistics, call list requests, and mission activity reporting. This new system has saved staff countless hours that used to be spent manually entering data from

paper forms. Participation percentages have also gone up as a result. School Statistics form participation has grown from 87 percent in 2016 to 92 percent in 2018. Church statistics participation went from 95 percent to 97 percent in the same time period. The number of congregations submitting Congregation Mission Offering subscriptions grew from 95 percent in 2016 to 99 percent in 2018. Overall 13 forms were launched in 2017 and more than 30 in 2018.

Some of the other key applications developed include: Mission Payroll, Campus Ministry, Lutheran Schools Subscriptions, Personal Information, Benefit Plans Health and Pension, Call System, and Call System Request. The Call System application is especially interesting as it is a critical tool in the hands of the Conference of Presidents and Lutheran Schools in pulling together appropriate candidates for the many call lists they are asked to create by churches and schools. The new tool implements complicated business rules to produce accurate search results by experience, gifts, and availability. It also enforces restrictions set up to ensure that no individual appears on multiple lists or too frequently.

The synod's financial management and donor management systems from Blackbaud were both migrated to their associated cloud versions this past year. Financial Edge and Raiser's Edge are now accessible from any computer, which was one of the goals of the technology disaster recovery plan. Almost all synod systems are now cloud based. This approach is more cost effective and secure and increases availability.

In coordination with the Synodical Council's Compensation Review Committee, an online calculator was upgraded to support congregations and called workers who wish to compute compensation based on synod salary and benefit recommendations. The calculator accepts inputs ranging from additional responsibilities and education to housing allowances and cost of living adjustments. Recently the ability to calculate compensation for less than full-time calls was added. The tool can be found at cwcompcalc.wels.net.

WELS Technology is working on multiple projects at any one time. For an up-to-the-minute listing of all current and completed projects, please visit cloud.wels.net/techprojects.

With the increase in digital forms available to called workers, congregations, and schools for data management, there has been a parallel increase in the need for help desk support. WELS Technology provides business-hour telephone and e-mail support for all forms and synodical systems and after-hours support for emergencies. Approximately 2,000 help desk tickets were opened in 2018, with an equal number of telephone calls to the help line.

Digital ministry resources

The WELS Mobile App was replaced last year with a new "WELS App" that is available at <https://wels.app>. The WELS App provides devotional and informational content from WELS. It is a "Progressive Web Application" or PWA, which means that it can be easily accessed from any web browser on any device and, in many cases, "installed" on the device as any other store-based app could be. This format allows more people to access the content no matter what device or computer they are using, and it makes it easier to maintain. Together this promotes faster updates and improvements. Read more about this new app at wels.net/wels-app-replaces-wels-mobile.

The WELS Yearbook is now available online at yearbook.wels.net. It has been combined with the WELS Locator to allow easy lookup of churches, schools, and other WELS organizations by name, city, or proximity to your location or specific addresses. The statistics (membership, enrollment, etc.) of the organization are also available plus a listing of staff members. All active and retired called workers are listed in the app.

Content available from the WELS App and wels.net (Daily Devotions, Through My Bible in Three Years) is now also available via Amazon smart speakers like Echo, Echo Dot, and Echo Show. The audio versions can be added to Alexa's Flash Briefing function. The three- to five-minute Daily Devotion is narrated for you, once set up, by saying "Alexa, play my flash briefing." What a great way to start your day. To learn more, visit wels.net/listen-to-wels-daily-devotion-on-alexa and wels.net/listen-to-wels-through-my-bible.

WELSTech, a weekly audio/video podcast about technology and ministry, celebrated its 600th show this spring. The podcast continues each week with guest interviews, timely tech-in-ministry topics, and great feedback from the show listeners. A major focus for this year's shows is resources that congregations and schools can use to improve organization and communications. To subscribe to the podcast or read show notes, visit welstech.wels.net.

Numerous workshops and presentations are available via WELS Technology. Topics include: 1) The Efficient Church & School Office 2) Social Media for Congregations 3) Technology, Stewardship, and the Digital Life 4) Building an Evangelistic Website 5) Digital Prospect Management and 6) Volunteers: Building Owners, Not Renters.

A look ahead

In the coming year, work will continue on GDPR/Security Compliance and migration to the newer WELSource platform. The final phase will sunset the old Progress database. Alongside the WELSource project, we will continue the steady migration of paper to digital forms. Hundreds of forms (both paper and simple PDFs) still remain to be recreated/enhanced in the synod's forms tool. All these efforts together will save thousands of person hours each year in data entry and management. Many of these improvements will benefit called workers, churches, and schools as they have greater visibility into synod data that affects them and allows an easy way to keep that data up-to-date. Call lists will be more accurate, reports timelier, and access to the right forms and people more likely without assistance.

One important component of security compliance is employee training. Last year we began to use Sophos "Phish" Threat service. Its use will continue in the next year. The tool sends out organization initiated phishing e-mails to entice employees to click on links and provide "secure" information. The system then tracks those who were fooled by the e-mail and provides them additional training to better identify actual phishing attempts. While our systems "catch" many of these actual attempts before they appear in inboxes, it is impossible to catch them all, therefore employee training is a critical first line of defense.

Some of the specific infrastructure and information technology related goals for the coming biennium are:

- Decommission Progress database and Citrix
- Decommission the K2 forms environment
- Update of Virtual Machine environment
- Update servers to Windows Server 2019
- Upgrade telephony system to Skype for Business 2019
- Implement Help Desk improvements

The WELS Technology team looks forward to opportunities for service. As God has allowed new technologies available for our use, we strive to be good stewards of them and to enable our synod's ministries to use them to spread the precious news of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. To him be the glory.

Mr. Martin Spriggs, reporter

Financial Services

Floor Committee #13

Our calling

Financial Services prepares and provides accounting and financial information and services that support and serve WELS ministries. This is done by providing timely, accurate, and complete financial statements, reports, and analyses. These reports facilitate ministry by providing God-pleasing, efficient, and effective financial services and operations that are in accordance with policies, procedures, and regulations. Financial Services also designs, implements, and maintains internal control systems that safeguard the assets God has provided.

Financial Services provides financial planning and forecasts; accounting, audit, and financial statement preparation; gift processing; accounts payable; accounts receivable; unclaimed property; special funds accounting; payroll; risk management; insurance; records retention; banking; cash management; investments; contract review; corporate credit card and rental vehicle programs; trust administration; tax advisory services; and legal services coordination. These services are provided to WELS, WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF), WELS Foundation, WELS Investment Funds (WIF), WELS Retirement Plan, WELS Voluntary Employee Benefits Association (VEBA) as well as serving as consultants for these services to Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) and WELS' four ministerial education schools.

Human Resources and Facility Services also report to the chief financial officer (CFO). The CFO is the WELS treasurer and an advisor to the Synodical Council and Board for Ministerial Education as well as the Accounting Oversight and

Compensation Review Committees. In addition, the CFO serves on the Capital Project Committee and as an ex officio member of the board of directors of Northwestern Publishing, WELS Church Extension Fund, WELS Foundation, and WELS Investment Funds, and the WELS Retirement Plans and VEBA Commissions.

Our current situation

Financial Services is blessed with a dedicated, talented staff with complementary education, training, and work experiences. Financial Services will continue to identify, investigate, and implement strategies that improve effectiveness and reduce costs within the area and across WELS.

In 2018–19, Financial Services has again identified and implemented strategies that reduced staff while meeting service expectations. While staffing vacancies and the latest reduction have provided challenges, we remain confident they can be worked through and we thank God for providing staff with hearts for serving WELS ministries.

Recently, Financial Services accomplished these objectives:

- Acclimation of employees with new responsibilities.
- Completed all audits within four months of year end, and the auditor's opinions were unmodified (the best possible).
- Completed a review and revision of all WELS policies that were subsequently approved by the Synodical Council.
- Collaborated with WELS Foundation for the selection of a gift administration service provider.
- Implemented digital receipts for WELS' corporate credit card program.
- Implemented new accounting standards for not-for profit organizations that include renaming of net asset categories, reporting program expenses by natural classification, quantitative and qualitative disclosures on liquidity, and elimination of charging under water endowment balance to net assets without donor restrictions.
- Guided development of the ministry financial plan for the 2019–21 biennium.
- Collaborated with the WELS Technology team and software vendor on the development and implementation of software enhancements that will increase efficiency and effectiveness.
- Worked with the Capital Projects Committee and Synodical Council to clarify approval and promotion requirements for capital projects.

A look ahead

Even with significantly fewer staff than several years ago, Financial Services is focusing on maintaining day-to-day operations, reducing costs, and improving effectiveness. We are confident that controls will not be weakened and are fully committed to ensuring that services will not deteriorate because of the staff reduction. However, our abilities to react to new service requests may be limited. We will continue to seek out and implement changes that reduce costs, increase effectiveness, and/or strengthen internal controls.

Looking ahead, our plans include the following:

- Continue to implement new and additional features of cloud-based donor relationship management and accounting software.
- Collaborate with the ministerial education schools on investigation of paperless accounts payable processing alternatives.
- Implementation of new accounting standards related to leases, revenue recognition, and contributions.
- Review and revision of corporate WELS policies.
- Cross training of employees to ensure service continuity during vacancies and extended absences.

In summary, the Financial Services team is honored to serve and is prepared to use the available resources and its God-given skills and abilities to support the ministries of WELS.

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, reporter

Human Resources

Floor Committee #13

Our calling

The synod's Human Resources department oversees the personnel functions for synod personnel, including development, communication, and implementation of personnel policies; recruitment; compensation; benefits; performance management; and employee relations. Human Resources provides advice to supervisors on matters such as federal and state legal requirements to ensure compliance with labor laws.

Human Resources (HR) also serves as a resource to WELS congregations and to affiliated groups and entities on the matters mentioned above as well as for risk management and federal and state legal requirements related to personnel matters. Further, in addition to legally mandated reporting to authorities, any charge, report, or allegation of sexual misconduct or physical abuse that has been made of an incident involving pastors, teachers, vicars, full- or part-time employees, and volunteers in any capacity must be reported to the synod president, director of Lutheran Schools, or director of Human Resources.

Our current situation

Current WELS Human Resources staff consists of two full-time employees—the Human Resources director and a Human Resources generalist. Beyond day-to-day human resource management activities, a few key initiatives include:

- Staffed the following key lay worker positions over the last year: Technical Support Specialist; Director, Africa Missions Operations; Mission Journey's Coordinator.
- Compensation Review: Human Resources continues to work with the Compensation Review Committee of the Synodical Council on review of the WELS Called Worker Compensation Guidelines. The Called Worker Compensation Calculator has been well received as a useful resource to calling bodies for both budget purposes and to assist in the calling process.
- ACA reporting and compliance: Per Affordable Care Act compliance requirements, large employers must file annual reports and monitor measurement periods to comply with the ACA's employer mandate. Human Resources oversees this annual reporting process for the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry and WELS' four ministerial education schools.
- Synod board/committee nominee vetting: Human Resources assists in the process of filling board/committee openings for positions appointed by the Synodical Council, mainly with vetting of nominees to establish willingness to serve, procuring resume and/or bio forms, and creation of a central database to maintain all nominee data and vacancy records.
- Religious Worker Visas (R1): HR facilitates the process of securing Religious Worker Visas to assist Lutheran high schools with placement of Martin Luther College international student graduates in teaching positions within the United States.
- HR continues to work with congregations and COP members on matters related to risk and personnel as well as general compensation, benefit, and policy issues.

A look ahead

The key area of focus for the HR team going forward will be to evaluate current operations and to identify where efficiencies could be implemented while maintaining effectiveness. Over the next biennium HR will, with God's guidance and blessings:

- Facilitate learning and development programs for the management and staff of the synod entities.
- Update and maintain wels.net and the WELS Intranet site (cloud.wels.net/hr) to ensure information and details provided assist members from both an informational as well as practical aspect.
- Perform due diligence on the vendors and systems in place within the HR structure. This will be an important step to ensure both the outcomes provided, as well as the cost, are appropriate and expected.
- Work with our areas of ministry and synodical schools in coordinating timely information and support for workers.
- Provide continued training with synod leaders to continue to reinforce and develop the supervisory skills required.

- Work with the Synodical Council's designated committee(s) in reviewing and evaluating HR policies and procedures and compensation programs at our synod-operated organizations.
- Continue providing support to WELS organizations in areas related to our synod human resources.

For synodical salary ranges, WELS compensation guidelines, and other called worker compensation information, see pp. 104-107.

Questions can be directed to hro@wels.net or call 414-256-3268.

Mr. Dennis Maurer, reporter

Facility Services Floor Committee #13

Our calling

Facility Services provides support services to the ministries conducted at or through the synod corporate headquarters. This objective is accomplished by providing a God-pleasing physical workspace conducive to ministry operations and by creating a welcoming environment to passersby, visitors, guests, and employees.

Our current situation

In spring 2014, synod administration moved to its new home in Waukesha, Wis., along I-94 on Stone Ridge Drive. The building is called the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry (CMM) and has 33,000 square feet of space on two floors as well as a lower level with about 16,000 square feet of space.

In 2016, a little more than half of the lower level was built out to house the synod's archives and the WELS visitor center, which is used to inform guests to WELS Center for Mission and Ministry about WELS ministries and some artifacts. During 2018, the last remaining archives were moved from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to the archival space at the Center for Mission and Ministry.

In late 2018, a project to build out most of the remaining space in the lower level was begun. This space became the new home of Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) in May 2019. You can learn more about NPH's new operating model on p. 145.

A look ahead

The Synodical Council created a Building Fund policy to ensure that an adequate funding source exists for maintenance and improvement of the CMM. The policy directs a portion of rents paid by WELS subsidiaries (WELS Church Extension Fund, WELS Foundation, WELS Investment Funds, Northwestern Publishing House, WELS Benefit Plans) to the Building Fund. The balance in the building fund is approximately \$350,000. Although the building is fairly new in some respects, the parking lot and building systems, like HVAC, are starting to show their age and may need to be replaced in the next five to seven years.

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, reporter

Capital Projects Committee

Floor Committee #5

Our calling

By resolution, the 2013 synod convention created the Capital Projects Committee to ensure that the synod's capital needs, both maintenance and new or improved facilities, were a component of the synod's ministry plans in the near term and longer term.

Our current situation

The Capital Projects Committee has been blessed with an unprecedented spirit of cooperation and collaboration. Praise God for blessing this collaborative planning effort.

The committee believes that the synod's facilities are generally well maintained and updated when funds are available. Through a use of operating funds, reserves, synod support, distributions from the ministerial education building endowment fund, and gifts, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Martin Luther College, and Luther Preparatory School can adequately keep up on normal maintenance projects and modernization of their facilities and grounds. Michigan Lutheran Seminary has limited reserves and thus relies primarily on distributions from the ministerial education building endowment fund and gifts from the MLS Foundation for its facility maintenance and modernization needs. Collectively, these sources have proven to be adequate for the maintenance of the ministerial education facilities and grounds. The WELS Center for Mission and Ministry (CMM) facility needs are funded from its Building Fund. The CMM Building Fund is funded by subsidiary and affiliate rent for space at the CMM and is adequately funded for the foreseeable future.

A look ahead

Looking forward, the Capital Projects Committee, the Synodical Council, and the school governing boards have concerns about WELS' longer-term ability to maintain and modernize the facilities and grounds at its schools. These concerns are predicated on a funding model that relies heavily on Congregation Mission Offerings, which have slightly declined during the last decade while operating costs such as wages, benefits, utilities, and insurances have continued to rise.

For the 2019–21 biennium, the following is the total planned spending on capital maintenance for multiple projects costing less than \$100,000.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary: \$365,000

Martin Luther College: \$1,119,850

Luther Preparatory School: \$190,000

Michigan Lutheran Seminary: \$165,000

In addition to the above maintenance projects for the biennium, the following projects costing more than \$100,000 are planned.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

FY20: Inner court landscape project

FY20: Administration building bathroom remodeling

Martin Luther College

FY19 & FY20: Centennial Hall heating

FY20: New student residence hall

FY20 & FY21: HVAC control and system upgrades

FY21: Turfed recreation facility

Luther Preparatory School

FY20: Augsburg Hall roof replacement

FY21 & FY22: Wartburg Hall window replacement

FY21: Conceptual drawings for a new music auditorium

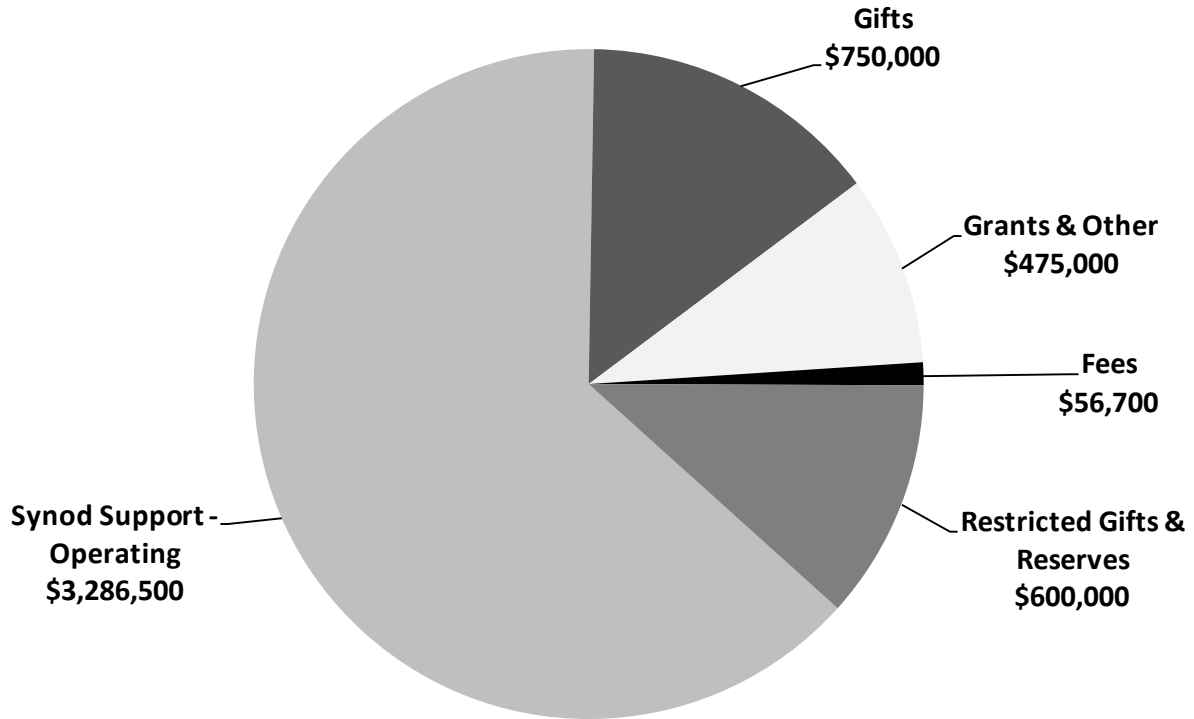
Mr. Thomas Schermerhorn, reporter

Mr. Thomas Schermerhorn, chairman and Synodical Council lay representative
Mr. Matt Burow, lay representative
Mr. Chris Eubank, Michigan Lutheran Seminary
Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer and treasurer
Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of Board for Ministerial Education
Mr. Steve Thiesfeldt, Martin Luther College
Mr. Brian Treichel, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
Mr. Jim Waack, Luther Preparatory School
Mr. Dean Waldschmidt, Board for Ministerial Education

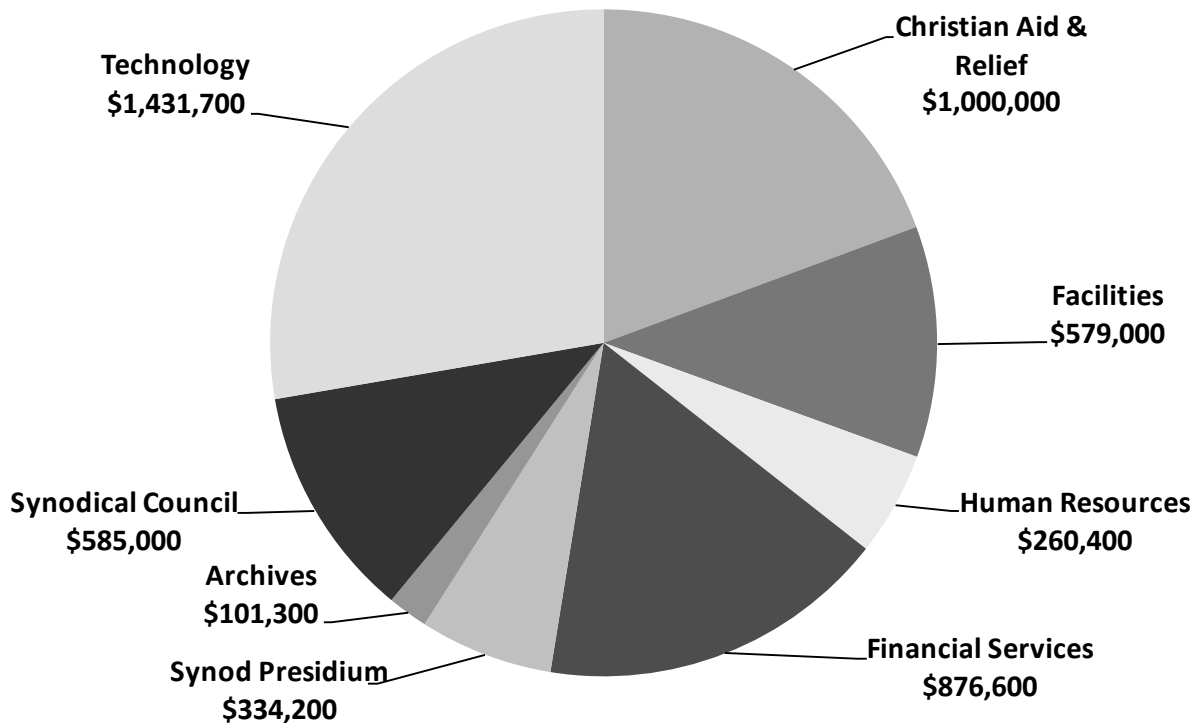
Advisory members:

Ms. Carla Hulke, director of finance for Martin Luther College
Ms. Jamie Ristow, director of finance and accounting for WELS

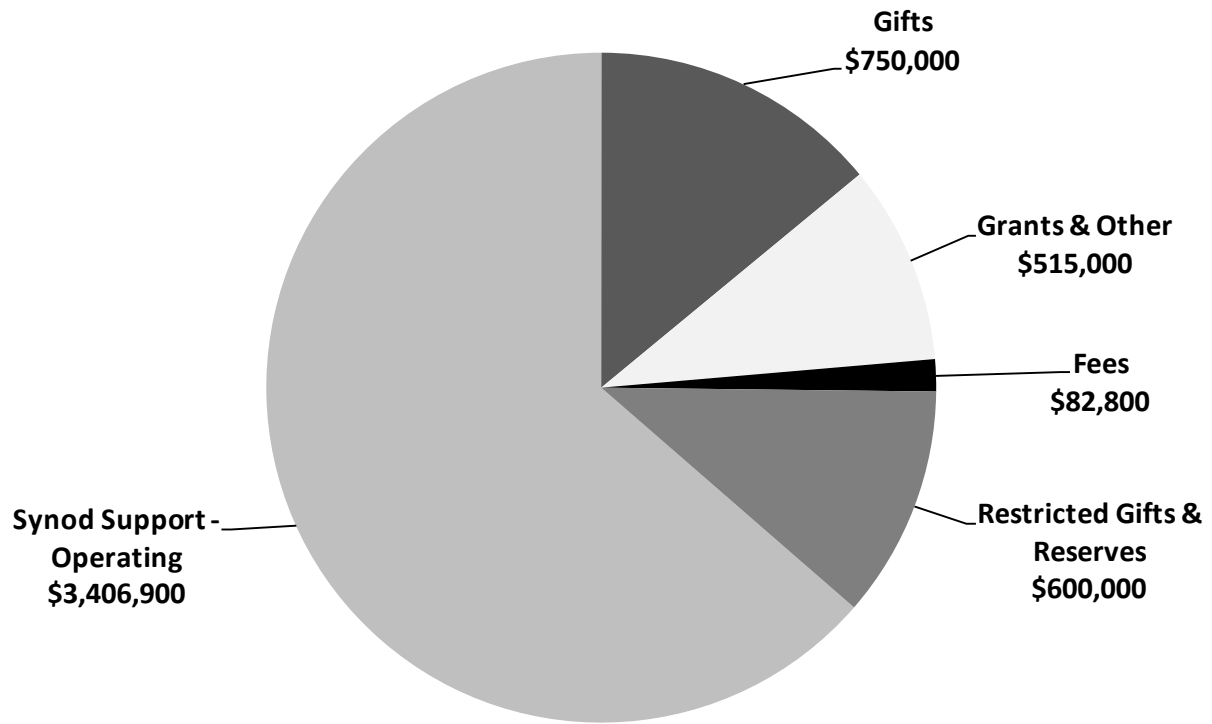
**FY 2019-20 Support
Ministry Support
\$5,168,200**



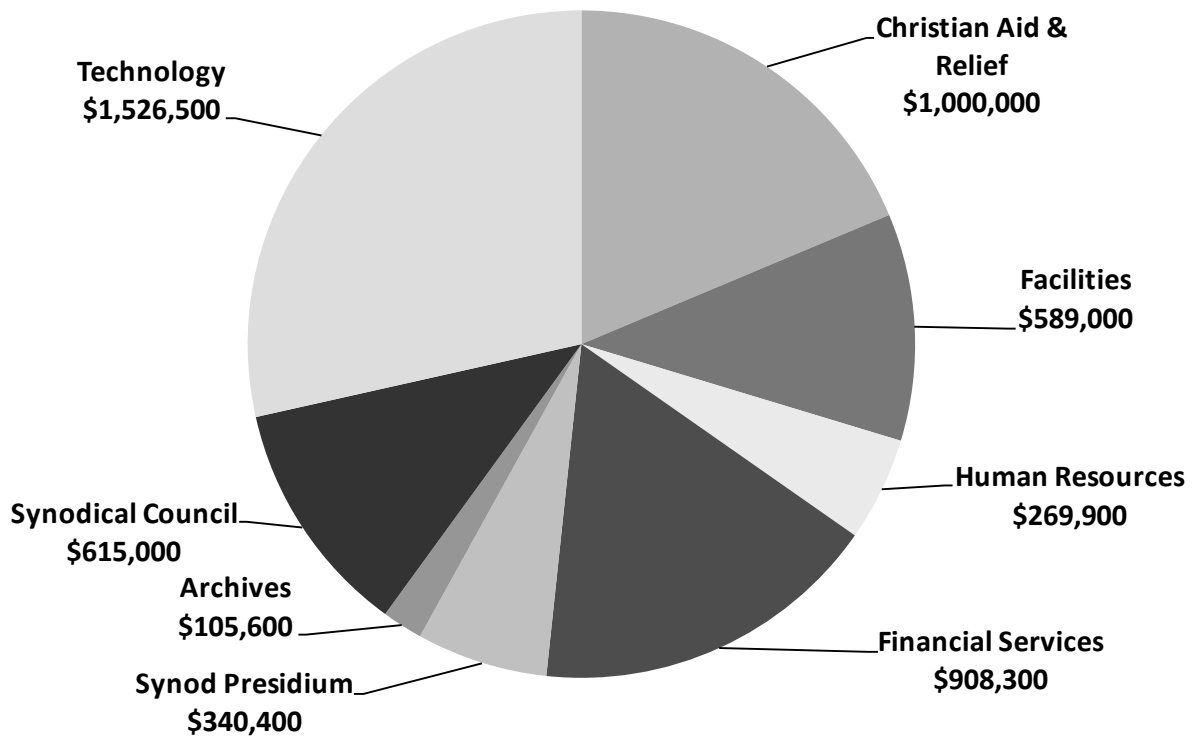
**FY 2019-20 Expenses
Ministry Support
\$5,168,200**



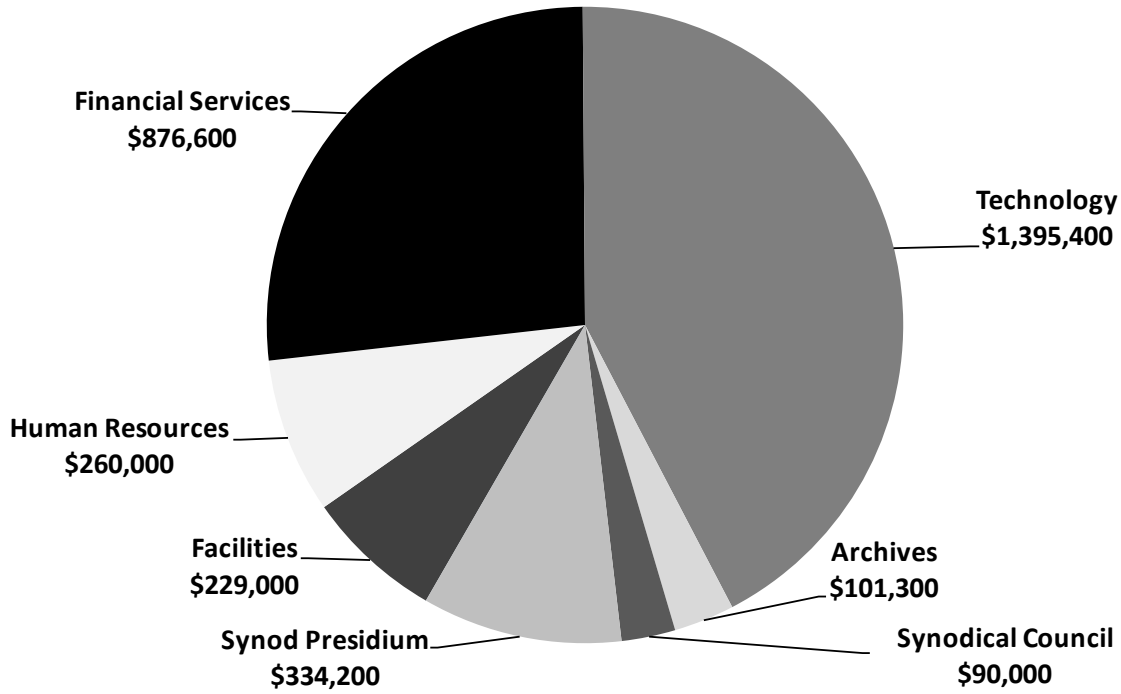
**FY 2020-21 Support
Ministry Support
\$5,354,700**



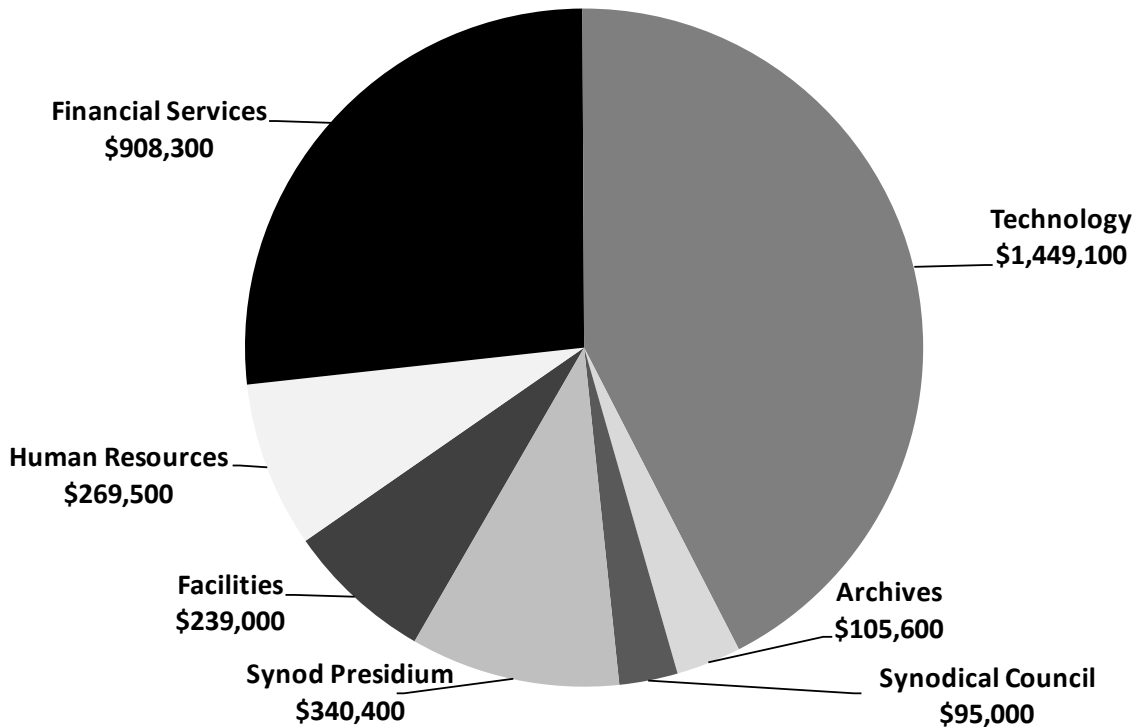
**FY 2020-21 Expenses
Ministry Support
\$5,354,700**



FY 2019-20 Synod Operating Support Allocation
Ministry Support
\$3,286,500



FY 2020-21 Synod Operating Support Allocation
Ministry Support
\$3,406,900



Financial results and ministry financial plan

Floor Committee #6

Overview

The Lord has and we pray will continue to bless WELS with gifts from congregations, members, and others. These gifts are used to reach the lost at home and abroad, train and nurture called workers, and provide services that facilitate and support ministry excellence in congregations and their schools and administration.

WELS manages and reports the gifts received, revenues generated, and how those moneys are used in various funds based on a fiscal year (FY) that runs from July 1 to June 30. The Operating Fund is used to account for ministry expenses funded by Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) plus other gifts and revenues that do not have donor restrictions. These other gifts and revenues are accounted for in the Financial Stabilization Fund (FSF). The Financial Stabilization Fund was created to ensure that ministry plans did not need to be adjusted in the middle of a year when these difficult to predict funding sources turn out to be less than planned. The Synodical Council transfers funds from the Financial Stabilization Fund to the Operating Fund the year(s) after the gift is received. The amount transferred each year is based on the balance of the fund and ministry needs and opportunities. WELS uses Special Funds for gifts that are restricted by donors for a specific ministry. Many of these gifts are not immediately available for ministry. Planning for and use of these gifts is initiated by areas of ministry with guidance from Financial Services and approval of the Synodical Council.

WELS ministerial education schools and Support Services subsidiaries also use Operating and Special Funds for management and reporting. These entities are fully incorporated into the ministry financial plan (budget) to ensure all sources and uses of funds are reported and considered by the synod in convention. Delegates approve the ministry financial plan and prioritize ministries that were not able to be funded.

Fiscal Year 2017–18 (FY18)

Collectively WELS Operating Fund, Special Funds, and the Financial Stabilization Fund received support of \$47.6 million and expended \$47.9 million, which resulted in a slight decrease in reserves without donor restrictions of \$300,000. CMO finished the year \$100,000 less than planned and has been flat or in decline for 10 years. Operating expenses were \$700,000 less than planned due to vacant positions and reducing costs wherever practical in administrative and support services. Financial Stabilization Fund inflows were \$1.1 million less than outflows, but the ending balance in the Financial Stabilization Fund is strong at \$14.6 million. \$400,000 of the shortfall was for the unplanned use of the Financial Stabilization Fund for the top three items on the Unfunded Priority List—Publication Coordinating Commission for theological works, financial assistance at Martin Luther College, and additional support to Home and World Missions. Special Funds reserves without donor restrictions increased \$800,000 on support of \$12.9 million and expenses of \$12.1 million. The increase appears to be temporary as planned ministry projects got started later than planned.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) is financially strong. Reserves without donor restrictions increased \$200,000 to \$7.3 million on support of \$5.5 million and expenses of \$5.3 million. Gifts were greater than planned and more than offset fewer students and increased student assistance. Expenses were less than planned due to fewer students, cost savings, and vacancies.

Martin Luther College (MLC) is financially strong and significantly improved its financial condition, as measured by accreditation bodies, when WELS made the paper transfer of equipment and library books ownership to MLC. This transfer added \$3 million to reserves without donor restrictions and is consistent with the ownership at the other schools. In addition, reserves without donor restrictions increased \$900,000 to \$10 million on other support of \$21.0 million and expenses of \$20.1 million. This further increase in reserves was due to higher than planned enrollments and lower than planned costs for health care, utilities, and staffing, which offset greater than planned student assistance.

Luther Preparatory School (LPS) is gradually increasing its financial strength. Reserves without donor restrictions increased \$200,000 to \$1.7 million on support of \$8.1 million and expenses of \$7.9 million. Increased tuition and fees from the Wisconsin Parental School Choice program and lower costs for utilities and maintenance were the primary factors for the increase.

Michigan Lutheran Seminary (MLS) is financially weak. Available reserves would have been -\$64,000 had it not been for the \$170,000 increase from correction of accounting errors. The reserves increase from the accounting error correction offset lower enrollments and greater than planned student assistance. The new administration has developed plans that stop the further erosion of the financial condition at MLS. How the Lord blesses these plans will not be known for several months.

WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF) is financially strong. Reserves without donor restrictions increased \$3.1 million as loan revenues continue to exceed interest paid to investors and administrative costs. The increased reserves resulted in a special grant of \$1 million to Home Missions in FY19. The remaining balance of the increase was used to meet the ever-growing loan demand from mission and mission-minded congregations.

WELS Foundation is financially strong. Reserves without donor restrictions increased \$700,000 on gifts, fees, and investment returns that exceeded gift administration costs. WELS Foundation has a policy governing reserves and transferred \$500,000 of its reserves to WELS as operating support.

WELS Investment Funds (WIF) also continues to be financially blessed. It does not have reserves because it invests and administers funds for others. An increased investment portfolio from market gains and new investors allowed WELS Investment Funds to reduce its administrative fee charged to the investment portfolios.

Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) transitioned to a new business model during FY18 that will strengthen its financial position for the future. Closing its retail store resulted in the recognition of one-time costs that led to a decrease in reserves without donor restrictions of \$500,000.

Fiscal Year 2018–19 (FY19)

Support and expense projections point to a weaker, but still healthy, financial position at the end of FY19. Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO), the Operating Fund's largest source of support, is projected to be \$300,000 less than planned. The lower than planned CMO is due to a decrease of 1.2 percent in 2018 and a nearly 1.0 percent decrease in subscriptions for 2019. This decrease is expected to be offset by lower than planned expenses in the President's areas, Ministry of Christian Giving, Financial Services, and Facilities. Similar to the prior year, the balance in the Financial Stabilization Fund is projected to decrease \$850,000. Inflows are significantly lower than the amount being transferred out in order to maintain ministry. Thankfully, one-time transfers in of \$720,000 slowed the Financial Stabilization Fund decline for FY19.

WELS Special Funds reserves are expected to be higher than planned due to the special grant of \$1 million to Home Missions from WELS Church Extension Fund, hurricane recovery gifts to WELS Christian Aid and Relief, and mission and ministry activities occurring later than planned.

Financial performance at the four ministerial education schools has been generally favorable compared to the plan, based on lower expenses due to vacancies, lower health care costs, and other cost savings.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary remains financially strong while projecting a small deficit in reserves without donor restrictions of \$70,000 compared to a planned deficit of \$234,000. The smaller deficit is due to position vacancies. Tuition and fees for traditional students should come in as planned.

Martin Luther College continues to strengthen its financial position with a projected modest increase in reserves without donor restrictions compared to a planned deficit. While revenues are expected to fall short of plan due to lower than planned gifts and increased student assistance, a significant reduction in expenses is projected due to health insurance and HRA savings and lower utility costs.

Luther Preparatory School reserves without donor restrictions are projected to decrease by \$100,000, compared to a planned deficit of \$245,000. While support is projected to be below plan due to lower tuition revenue based on lower enrollment, expenses are also projected to be lower than planned due to a position vacancy and lower health insurance and equipment expenses.

The financial situation at Michigan Lutheran Seminary remains relatively unchanged with a projected \$60,000 increase in reserves without donor restrictions. Increased distributions from the special funds of the Board for Ministerial Education offset lower than planned gifts and tuition due to lower enrollments. Without the transfer from the Board for Ministerial Education, Michigan Lutheran Seminary reserves would have been negative. Operating costs are expected to be lower than planned related to position vacancies and utilities. Several capital projects are underway at Michigan Lutheran Seminary that have been fully funded by gifts received from the *Tomorrow's Ministry Begins Here* campaign or from the MLS Foundation's *Big Backyard Project*. FY19 capital projects include new boilers, bleachers, and press box.

The Support Services subsidiaries are forecasted to end the year in line with or slightly better than planned. WELS Church Extension Fund is offering special investment rates to meet the loan demands from new and growing congregations but may need to write-down a couple of large loans that are currently not performing as planned. If this write-down occurs, WELS Church Extension Fund's reserves will not increase as planned. WELS Foundation projects lower than planned expenses, while support levels are uncertain at this time due to market volatility. The anticipated transfer of gifts from WELS Foundation to WELS should be in line with the plan. WELS Investment Funds anticipates being able to continue with the reduced administrative fees that went into effect for FY19 and is positioned to further decrease the fees as the portfolio grows through new investors and investment gains. Northwestern Publishing House continues to move forward with its new business model since the retail store closed in fall 2018. The buildout of the lower level of the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry is complete, and Northwestern Publishing House is relocating to the new space in May. The financial results from the new model are encouraging and position Northwestern Publishing House to regain its financial strength over the coming bienniums.

| Operating Fund | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| | Actual FY18 | Plan FY18 | Change | | Feb '19 Forecast FY19 | Plan FY19 | Change | |
| | | | Increase/(Decrease) Amount | Percent | | | Increase/(Decrease) Amount | Percent |
| Support | | | | | | | | |
| Gifts from Congregations - | | | | | | | | |
| Actual/Forecast | \$ 21,165,348 | \$ 21,267,000 | \$ (101,652) | -0.5% | \$ 21,084,000 | \$ 21,389,600 | \$ (305,600) | -1.4% |
| Financial Stabilization Fund | 7,115,467 | 7,715,100 | (599,633) | -7.8% | 7,794,100 | 7,918,500 | (124,400) | -1.6% |
| Total Subsidy Support | 28,280,815 | 28,982,100 | (701,285) | -2.4% | 28,878,100 | 29,308,100 | (430,000) | -1.5% |
| Synod Support of - | | | | | | | | |
| Home Missions | 5,556,000 | 5,556,000 | - | 0.0% | 5,556,000 | 5,556,000 | - | 0.0% |
| World Missions | 6,553,000 | 6,553,000 | - | 0.0% | 6,553,000 | 6,553,000 | - | 0.0% |
| Ministerial Education | 8,122,123 | 8,133,000 | (10,877) | -0.1% | 8,133,000 | 8,133,000 | - | 0.0% |
| Congregation & District Ministry | 5,042,490 | 5,444,100 | (401,610) | -7.4% | 5,512,600 | 5,704,600 | (192,000) | -3.4% |
| Ministry Support | 3,007,202 | 3,296,000 | (288,798) | -8.8% | 3,123,500 | 3,361,500 | (238,000) | -7.1% |
| Total Expenses | 28,280,815 | 28,982,100 | (701,285) | -2.4% | 28,878,100 | 29,308,100 | (430,000) | -1.5% |
| Surplus (Deficit) | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | |
| Financial Stabilization Fund | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Beginning Balance | \$ 15,721,869 | \$ 15,721,869 | \$ - | 0.0% | \$ 14,633,482 | \$ 14,633,482 | \$ - | 0.0% |
| Additions: | | | | | | | | |
| Schwan Grants | 1,860,000 | 2,030,000 | (170,000) | -8.4% | 1,812,000 | 1,880,000 | (68,000) | -3.6% |
| WELS FDN Net Asset Grant | 450,000 | 150,000 | 300,000 | 200.0% | 150,000 | 150,000 | - | - |
| LLC Termination and Other Grants | 383,335 | 380,000 | 3,335 | 0.0% | 1,013,000 | 380,000 | 633,000 | 0.0% |
| Gifts from Individuals | | | | | | | | |
| Mission & Ministry | 102,959 | 250,000 | (147,041) | -58.8% | 250,000 | 250,000 | - | 0.0% |
| Walking Together/Mission Partners | 85,704 | 50,000 | 35,704 | 71.4% | 60,000 | 50,000 | 10,000 | 20.0% |
| Gifts and Memorials | 1,235,250 | 900,000 | 335,250 | 37.3% | 950,000 | 900,000 | 50,000 | 5.6% |
| Sub-Total Gifts from Individuals | 1,423,913 | 1,200,000 | 223,913 | 18.7% | 1,260,000 | 1,200,000 | 60,000 | 5.0% |
| Unrestricted Bequests | 1,058,506 | 1,550,000 | (491,494) | -31.7% | 1,400,000 | 1,550,000 | (150,000) | -9.7% |
| Investment Income | 917,762 | 740,000 | 177,762 | 24.0% | 1,000,000 | 680,000 | 320,000 | 47.1% |
| Endowment Distribution | 95,086 | 92,000 | 3,086 | 3.4% | 100,000 | 95,000 | 5,000 | 5.3% |
| Other Revenue | 238,478 | 190,000 | 48,478 | 25.5% | 212,618 | 195,000 | 17,618 | 9.0% |
| Total Additions | 6,427,080 | 6,332,000 | 95,080 | 1.5% | 6,947,618 | 6,130,000 | 817,618 | 11.8% |
| Transfer Out-Unfunded Priorities | (400,000) | | (400,000) | | | | | |
| Transfer Out- Operating | (7,115,467) | (7,715,100) | 599,633 | -7.8% | (7,794,100) | (7,918,500) | 124,400 | -1.6% |
| Ending Balance | \$ 14,633,482 | \$ 14,338,769 | \$ 294,713 | 2.1% | \$ 13,787,000 | \$ 12,844,982 | \$ 942,018 | 6.8% |

Proposed ministry financial plan for 2019–21 biennium

Planning for the 2019–21 biennium was initiated in spring 2018 or about 16 months before the start of the biennium. With the Financial Stabilization Fund balance above \$15 million at that time and the hope that Congregation Mission Offerings would increase slightly each year, the Synodical Council increased synod support levels by 3 percent annually to cover inflationary cost increases. This was welcomed news for areas of ministry and the schools, which have operated for several years with flat synod support. The Synodical Council asked the WELS president to work with the areas of ministry to draft an initial ministry financial plan within these synod support levels for review at their fall 2018 meeting. With this general direction by the Synodical Council, the areas of ministry, schools, and support services subsidiaries, working with their boards and commissions, proceeded to develop their ministry plans.

After review of the proposed plan at its fall meeting, the Synodical Council recommended that the combined levels of synod support funding be reduced by \$2 million to maintain the policy minimum balance in the Financial Stabilization Fund of \$10 million at the end of the biennium. Support levels were updated and reductions in spending were identified to meet the target identified by the Synodical Council.

In February 2019, the WELS president submitted to the Synodical Council a revised ministry financial plan that kept the balance in the Financial Stabilization Fund slightly above the policy minimum. The proposed plan for FY20 includes synod support of \$29.5 million, other expenses in areas of ministry and at the schools of \$46.6 million, and \$12.4 million of expense at the subsidiaries for a total ministry financial plan of \$88.5 million. The FY21 proposed plan includes synod support of \$30.0 million, other expenses in areas of ministry and at the schools of \$46.0 million, and \$12.3 million of expense at the subsidiaries for a total ministry financial plan of \$88.3 million. The proposed financial plan relies heavily on the drawdown of the Financial Stabilization Fund—approximately \$3.8 million over the biennium—and on areas of ministry and schools using \$7 million of reserves in addition to other funding sources or one-time funds to sustain ongoing ministry. The planned drawdown of reserves in the Financial Stabilization Fund, areas of ministry special funds, and at the schools is not sustainable.

Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) have been flat to slightly declining since 2008. 2019 CMO subscriptions are \$20.9 million or 3.3 percent below CMO receipts from 2008. Looking at a recent three-year average, CMO has decreased 0.6 percent annually. While the ministry financial plan includes CMO increases of 0.5 percent annually, recent trends show that a forecasted increase could be a challenge to achieve. Communicant members in 2018 were approximately 281,000, nearly 10 percent below the 309,000 communicant members in 2008. Membership has been declining approximately 1 percent per year since 2008 and likewise, the base of financial support for the work of WELS is also shrinking.

While modest wage increases and other cost increases for benefits, insurances, and utilities are anticipated to average 3 percent annually, CMO support is forecasted to increase 0.5 percent, just a fraction of the cost increases. To maintain existing ministries, it is necessary to find areas of cost savings and implement a greater use of reserves within the areas of ministry, at the schools, or in the Financial Stabilization Fund. Drawdowns of the Financial Stabilization Fund are planned to be \$1.7 million in FY20 and \$2.1 million in FY21, which should result in an ending balance of \$10 million in the Financial Stabilization Fund.

The financial position of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary will remain strong with a combined projected deficit, or use of reserves, of \$150,000 planned over the biennium. The use of reserves is planned in order to fund two large capital projects for renovation of the main restroom and the inner courtyard. Enrollment is projected to increase over the biennium by 14 students.

Martin Luther College continues to remain in a strong financial position with projected increases in reserves of \$135,000 over the course of the biennium. Synod support is planned to increase at Martin Luther College, and enrollments are projected to increase by 18 students over the two years.

While in a stable financial position, Luther Preparatory School is projecting a combined deficit of \$525,000 over the biennium, due mainly to planned capital projects. The use of reserves is anticipated due to the planned replacement of a dorm roof and dorm windows and for blueprints/plans for a potential music auditorium. Enrollment is projected to increase by five students over the biennium.

Michigan Lutheran Seminary is moving forward under new administration with plans to improve the financial situation over the upcoming biennium. Reserves without donor restrictions are planned to increase a combined

\$130,000 over the next two years. Enrollment is planned to increase by six students by the 2020–21 school year, and costs are projected to remain relatively flat.

The plans for WELS Church Extension Fund and WELS Foundation continue the trends of the last several years with no significant variations. Both entities are projecting surpluses that will allow them to continue serving the needs of their constituents and making the grants they have historically been able to make to WELS. The planned grants to Home Missions from WELS Church Extension Fund are expected to be \$850,000 annually, and the planned grants to WELS for general operations from WELS Foundation are expected to be \$400,000 annually.

WELS Investment Funds is projecting stable results based on unknown market conditions and the current administrative fee. If there is an increase to the WELS Investment Funds portfolio based on new investors and/or favorable market conditions, the administrative fee charged to the portfolio may be lowered.

Northwestern Publishing House is projecting a surplus for the biennium. The surplus is due to the gain from the sale of its building, which more than offsets losses anticipated during the early years of its new operating model. Projections for the next biennium show surpluses from core operations primarily due to the release of the new hymnal in fall 2021.

Please refer to the area of ministry reports contained elsewhere in this book for more details of the ministry financial plans for each area. Following is a summary of the support forecast and the proposed financial plan for each year of the biennium along with comparative information for the current biennium.

Support forecast

The support forecast for the biennium is based on the following trends and assumptions.

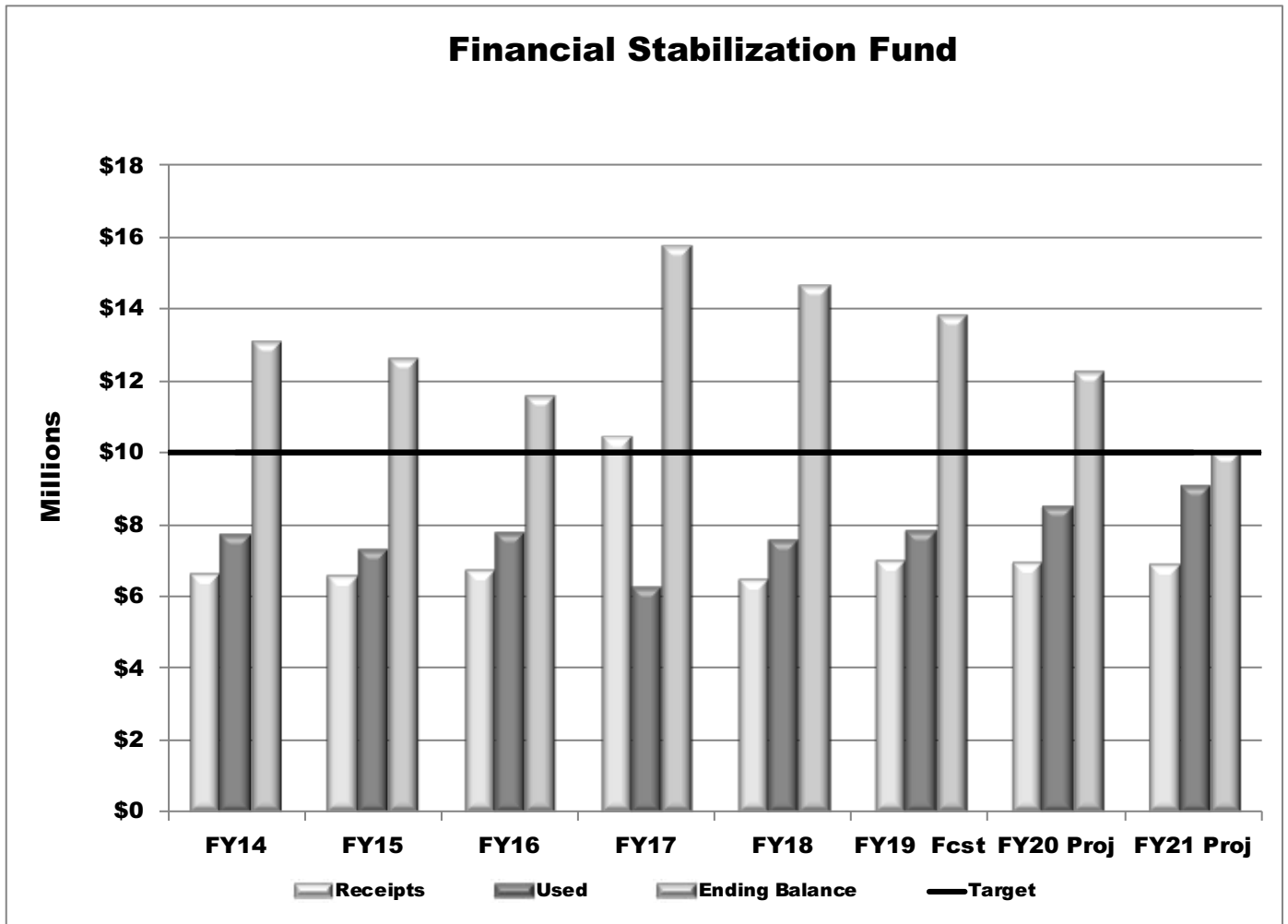
1. **Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO)**—congregations will meet their calendar year 2019 subscriptions, which are 0.9 percent lower than 2018 receipts. CMO is planned to increase 0.5 percent for calendar years 2020 and 2021.
2. **Financial Stabilization Fund (FSF)**—holds all non-CMO operating support for the year or years after receipt and includes the following:
 - a. Foundation and other grants: Includes mainly Schwan Foundation and WELS Foundation grants
 - Schwan Foundation grants were determined based on a \$1.8 million grant provided for 2019 and annual increases of 3 percent in 2019 and 2020.
 - WELS Foundation grants are based on the net asset policy as adopted by the WELS Foundation Board with distributions of \$400,000 per year expected in 2020 and 2021.
 - Other grants tracked through the WELS Foundation include distributions from a gifted interest in an LLC, which was terminated near the end of FY17. A portion of the final distribution included \$3.8 million designated to support general operations and was set up with WELS Foundation to be distributed over a 10-year period. FY20 and FY21 include \$380,000 plus interest.
 - Other grants include the removal of special fund designations on reserves without donor restrictions in the Vicar fund and Insurance Reserve fund for \$365,000 in FY20 and \$240,000 in FY21.
 - b. Gifts from individuals: Includes Mission and Ministry, Mission Partners, Walking Together, and other gifts from individuals and congregations.
 - Mission and Ministry was meant to be utilized by congregations as part of their annual mission festivals, which accent WELS' ministry work at home and around the world. This program has been discontinued by the Conference of Presidents. Donors who previously gave towards this and other sunsetted giving programs have been encouraged to direct their gifts towards the general ministries of WELS. Annual gifts of \$100,000 are forecasted in each year of the upcoming biennium.
 - Gifts estimated at \$50,000 annually are anticipated for the Mission Partners program.
 - Other gifts are based on current trends showing flat gift levels over the last few years and assumptions that donors will continue to prefer to direct their gifts to specific ministries. These gifts are forecasted to be \$900,000 annually.
 - c. Bequests: Represents estate gifts to WELS and is based on current trends and recognizing that donors are better informed of the opportunity to restrict their estate gifts to a specific ministry. Bequests without donor restrictions are estimated at \$1.6 million annually for the upcoming biennium.
 - d. Investment income: Represents returns on non-endowed funds, the continued investment in annuity contracts, and the anticipated decrease in investable reserves. Current annuity investments will terminate with the death of

the annuitant. Based on relatively flat levels of investments over the last several years and increases in interest rates, investment income is forecasted to be \$900,000 annually.

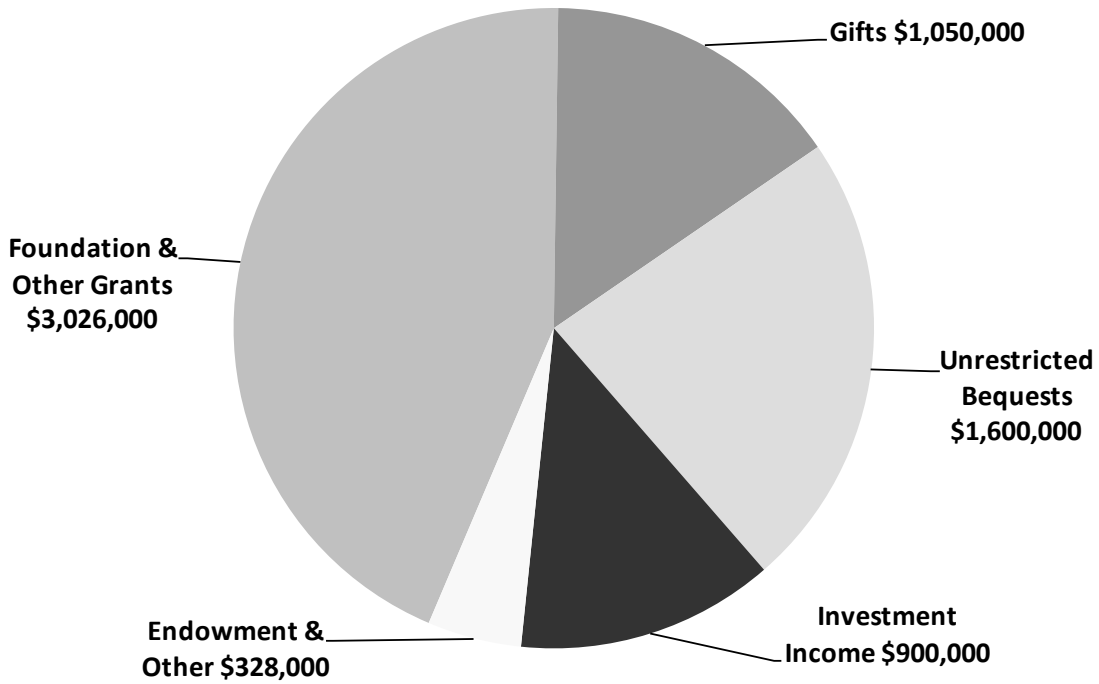
e. Endowment and other: Includes distributions from general endowment funds as well as income for services provided, rental payments as defined by the building fund policy, and the proceeds from our corporate credit card rebate program. Slight increases during the biennium were assumed.

3. Financial Stabilization Fund ending balance

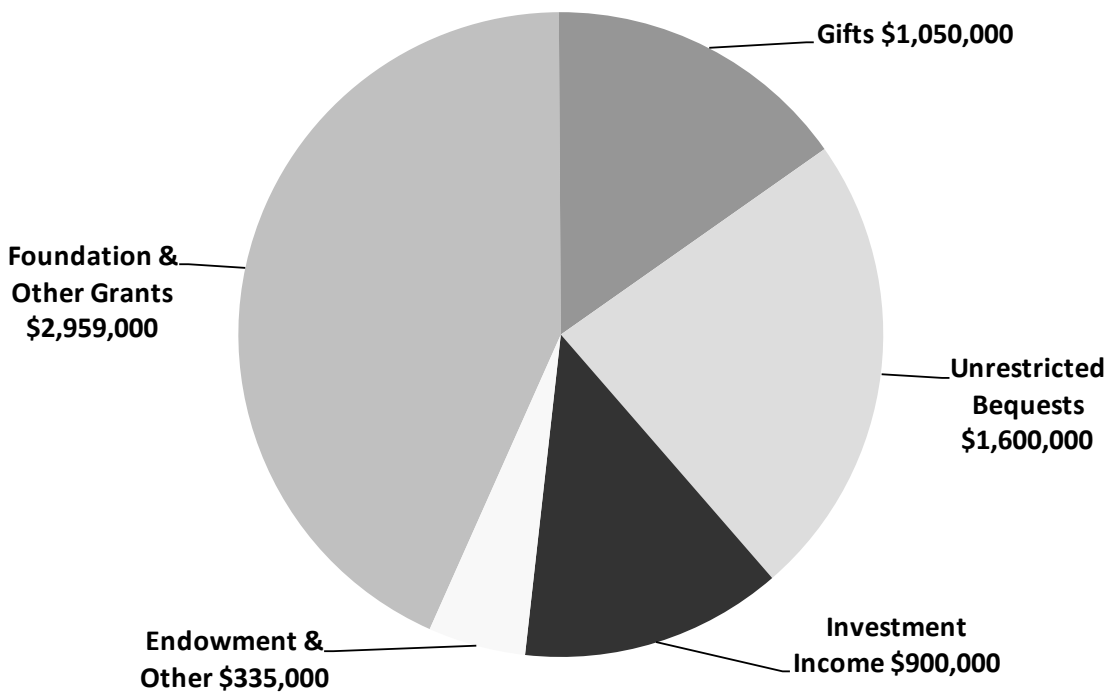
- a. Additions to the FSF are planned at \$6.9 million for FY20. With a larger increase in the planned synod support level than in CMO, transfers out of the FSF are planned at \$8.6 million, resulting in a decrease in the FSF of \$1.7 million to an ending balance of \$12.1 million.
- b. In FY21, additions to the FSF are planned at \$6.8 million. As synod support reaches \$30 million and CMO projections are only \$21.1 million, transfers out of the FSF are planned at \$8.9 million, decreasing the FSF by \$2.1 million to an ending balance of \$10 million.
- c. A critical assumption for the FSF balance in the upcoming biennium includes the estimated 0.5 percent increase in CMO in each year of the upcoming biennium. If congregations can exceed this increase, less will need to be transferred from the FSF to cover WELS' operating expenses. However, if CMO receipts fall short of this increase, additional transfers out of the FSF may be needed, which will draw the balance lower, or spending reductions may be necessary.



**FY 2019-20 Support
Financial Stabilization Fund
\$6,904,000**



**FY 2020-21 Support
Financial Stabilization Fund
\$6,844,000**



**Plan Summary of Expenses
Funded by Synod Support and Special Funds, Gifts, Tuition and Fees**

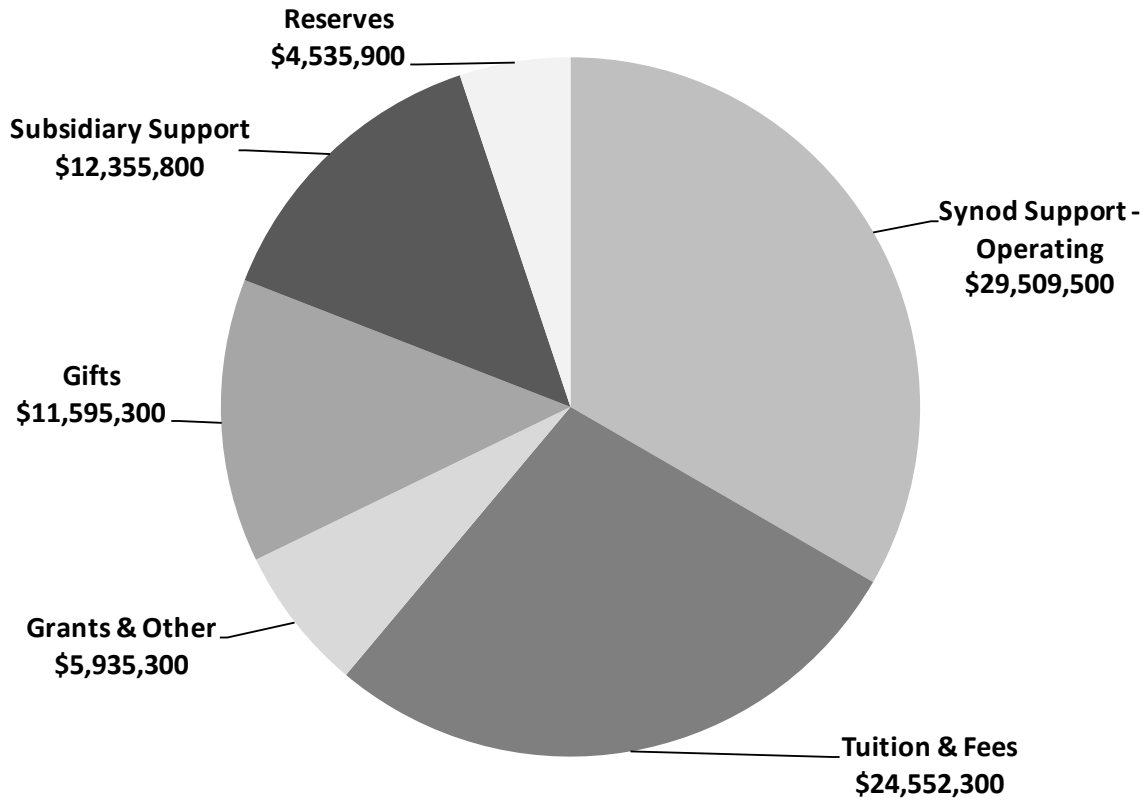
| | 2017-18 Actual | | | 2018-19 Plan | | | 2019-20 Plan | | | 2020-21 Plan | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | Synod Support | Special, gifts, tuition, fees | Total Expense | FTE | Synod Support | Special, gifts, tuition, fees | Total Expense | FTE | Synod Support | Special, gifts, tuition, fees | Total Expense | FTE |
| | Home Missions | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Board and Administration | 673,160 | 26,147 | 699,307 | 4.90 | 671,087 | 134,400 | 805,487 | 4.50 | 650,800 | 28,400 | 679,200 | 4.75 |
| Multi-cultural Ministry | 1,666,992 | 1,215,300 | 2,882,292 | 1.00 | 1,700,800 | 965,964 | 2,666,764 | 1.00 | 1,694,000 | 877,500 | 2,571,500 | 1.00 |
| Campus Ministry | 394,976 | 24,363 | 419,339 | 0.50 | 411,527 | 25,000 | 436,527 | 1.00 | 417,000 | 23,000 | 440,000 | 0.50 |
| Outreach Ministry | 2,820,872 | 2,455,060 | 5,275,932 | 3.00 | 2,772,586 | 2,808,556 | 5,581,142 | 3.00 | 2,744,200 | 3,296,700 | 6,040,900 | 3.00 |
| Joint Mission Council Ministry | - | 537,554 | 537,554 | 2.00 | - | 584,940 | 584,940 | 2.00 | - | 470,500 | 470,500 | 2.00 |
| TOTAL | 5,556,000 | 4,258,424 | 9,814,424 | 11.40 | 5,556,000 | 4,518,860 | 10,074,860 | 11.50 | 5,506,000 | 4,696,100 | 10,202,100 | 11.25 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| World Missions | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Board and Administration | 455,122 | 115,618 | 570,740 | 4.60 | 153,479 | 556,472 | 709,951 | 4.50 | 88,900 | 399,500 | 488,400 | 4.75 |
| Africa | 704,649 | 1,239,838 | 1,944,487 | 12.20 | 654,877 | 1,395,683 | 2,050,560 | 12.00 | 1,431,900 | 750,700 | 2,182,600 | 12.20 |
| Europe | 586,280 | 87,694 | 673,974 | 1.25 | 541,950 | 80,870 | 622,820 | 1.25 | 600,500 | 254,800 | 855,300 | 1.00 |
| Latin America | 685,757 | 222,847 | 908,604 | 6.50 | 664,532 | 138,460 | 802,992 | 6.00 | 768,300 | 144,500 | 912,800 | 6.50 |
| Native America | 380,387 | 219,760 | 600,147 | 3.50 | 386,835 | 90,500 | 477,335 | 3.00 | 416,900 | 182,000 | 598,900 | 3.50 |
| East Asia | 1,360,051 | 238,764 | 1,598,815 | 10.00 | 1,485,924 | 304,325 | 1,790,249 | 9.50 | 1,458,700 | 258,900 | 1,717,600 | 10.00 |
| South Asia | 547,782 | 171,729 | 719,511 | 3.50 | 572,000 | 297,046 | 869,046 | 4.00 | 561,100 | 440,800 | 1,001,900 | 4.50 |
| Asia-Pacific Rim | 597,469 | 156,209 | 753,678 | 4.00 | 633,876 | 219,463 | 853,339 | 4.00 | 689,400 | 91,000 | 780,400 | 3.25 |
| Thailand - Laos | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| New Initiatives | - | - | - | 0.00 | - | 200,000 | 200,000 | 0.00 | - | 250,000 | 250,000 | 2.00 |
| Multi-Language Publications | 1,076,025 | 23,050 | 1,099,075 | 6.50 | 1,251,632 | 93,000 | 1,344,632 | 7.00 | 384,300 | 928,100 | 1,312,400 | 6.50 |
| Joint Mission Council | - | 619,445 | 619,445 | 3.00 | - | 736,252 | 736,252 | 3.00 | - | 490,100 | 490,100 | 3.00 |
| Other | 159,478 | (162,106) | (2,628) | 0.00 | 207,895 | 67,500 | 275,395 | 0.00 | 202,000 | 75,100 | 277,100 | 0.00 |
| TOTAL | 6,553,000 | 2,932,848 | 9,485,848 | 55.05 | 6,553,000 | 4,179,571 | 10,732,571 | 54.25 | 6,602,000 | 4,265,500 | 10,867,500 | 57.20 |

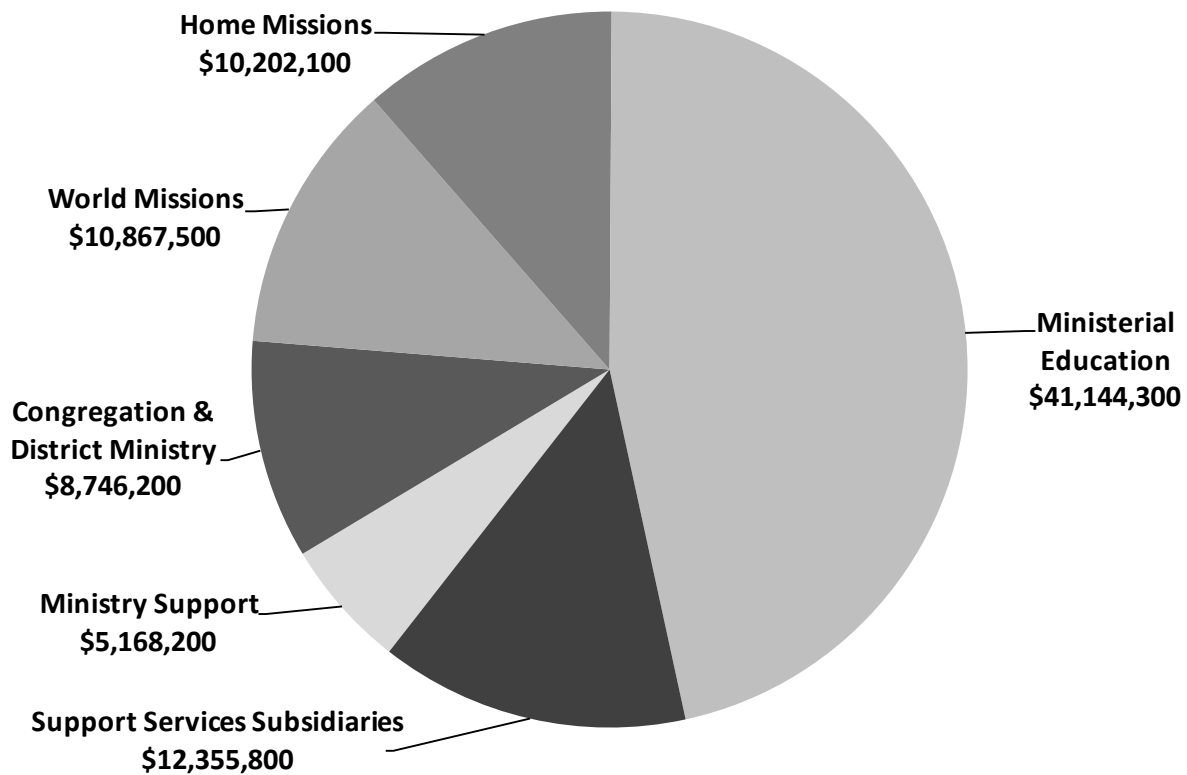
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Ministerial Education | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Board and Administration | 130,893 | 95,722 | 1,088,114 | 1.00 | 81,695 | 915,955 | 997,650 | 1.00 | 145,100 | 882,500 | 1,027,600 | 1.00 |
| Retiree Health Care | (8,775) | - | (8,775) | 0.00 | 51,300 | - | 51,300 | 0.00 | 32,700 | - | 32,700 | 0.00 |
| Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary | 1,070,737 | 4,252,824 | 5,323,561 | 34.65 | 1,070,737 | 4,967,183 | 6,037,920 | 37.65 | 983,000 | 4,859,900 | 5,842,900 | 37.55 |
| Martin Luther College | 3,300,238 | 16,777,581 | 20,077,819 | 189.90 | 3,300,238 | 19,088,482 | 22,388,720 | 191.60 | 3,469,000 | 18,734,600 | 22,203,600 | 191.40 |
| Luther Preparatory School | 2,520,130 | 5,424,476 | 7,944,606 | 62.35 | 2,520,130 | 5,654,870 | 8,175,000 | 64.00 | 2,422,000 | 5,762,000 | 8,184,000 | 64.00 |
| Michigan Lutheran Seminary | 1,108,900 | 3,189,197 | 4,298,097 | 45.75 | 1,108,900 | 3,089,349 | 4,198,249 | 45.00 | 1,142,000 | 2,711,500 | 3,853,500 | 39.00 |
| TOTAL | 8,122,123 | 30,601,299 | 38,723,422 | 333.65 | 8,133,000 | 33,715,839 | 41,848,839 | 339.25 | 8,193,800 | 32,950,500 | 41,144,300 | 332.95 |

| Plan Summary of Expenses Funded by Synod Support and Special Funds, Gifts, Tuition and Fees | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| | 2017-18 Actual | | | | 2018-19 Plan | | | | 2019-20 Plan | | | | 2020-21 Plan | | | |
| | Synod Support | Special, gifts, tuition, fees | Total Expense | FTE | Synod Support | Special, gifts, tuition, fees | Total Expense | FTE | Synod Support | Special, gifts, tuition, fees | Total Expense | FTE | Synod Support | Special, gifts, tuition, fees | Total Expense | FTE |
| Congregation & District Ministry | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Congregation Services | 1,223,600 | 1,569,956 | 2,793,556 | 16.10 | 1,228,600 | 1,778,150 | 3,006,750 | 17.00 | 1,305,700 | 2,398,000 | 3,703,700 | 17.00 | 1,354,600 | 2,470,800 | 3,825,400 | 17.00 |
| Conference of Presidents | 83,893 | 5,917 | 89,810 | | 125,300 | 160,800 | 286,100 | | 136,900 | 135,000 | 271,900 | | 138,900 | 10,000 | 148,900 | |
| Christian Giving | 1,792,530 | 25,768 | 1,818,298 | 17.20 | 2,220,800 | 4,800 | 2,225,600 | 19.20 | 2,259,000 | - | 2,259,000 | 19.20 | 2,338,000 | - | 2,338,000 | 19.20 |
| Communication Services | 524,595 | 71,159 | 595,754 | 5.50 | 560,900 | 80,000 | 640,900 | 5.50 | 573,500 | 85,000 | 658,500 | 5.50 | 593,000 | 87,000 | 680,000 | 5.50 |
| District Ministries | 1,100,555 | - | 1,100,555 | 0.00 | 1,188,200 | - | 1,188,200 | 0.00 | 1,205,500 | - | 1,205,500 | 0.00 | 1,230,000 | - | 1,230,000 | 0.00 |
| Convention | 65,963 | 103,603 | 169,566 | 0.00 | - | - | - | 0.00 | 90,000 | 110,000 | 200,000 | 0.00 | - | - | - | 0.00 |
| CICR | 41,083 | 81,681 | 122,764 | 0.00 | 38,800 | 98,100 | 136,900 | 0.00 | 18,600 | 95,000 | 113,600 | 0.00 | 23,600 | 95,000 | 118,600 | 0.00 |
| Special Support | 39,741 | 4,000 | 43,741 | 0.00 | 92,000 | - | 92,000 | 0.00 | 87,000 | 2,000 | 89,000 | 0.00 | 92,000 | 2,000 | 94,000 | 0.00 |
| Support | 170,530 | - | 170,530 | 0.00 | 250,000 | - | 250,000 | 0.00 | 245,000 | - | 245,000 | 0.00 | 310,100 | - | 310,100 | 0.00 |
| TOTAL | 5,042,490 | 1,862,084 | 6,904,574 | 38.80 | 5,704,600 | 2,121,850 | 7,826,450 | 41.70 | 5,921,200 | 2,825,000 | 8,746,200 | 41.70 | 6,080,200 | 2,664,800 | 8,745,000 | 41.70 |
| Ministry Support | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Facilities | 197,084 | 454,670 | 651,754 | 0.00 | 223,500 | 350,000 | 573,500 | 0.00 | 229,000 | 350,000 | 579,000 | 0.00 | 239,000 | 350,000 | 589,000 | 0.00 |
| Synodical Council | 79,003 | 356,866 | 435,869 | 0.00 | 89,200 | 590,000 | 679,200 | 0.00 | 90,000 | 495,000 | 585,000 | 0.00 | 95,000 | 520,000 | 615,000 | 0.00 |
| Synod Presidium | 339,213 | - | 339,213 | 2.00 | 327,400 | 130,000 | 457,400 | 2.00 | 330,200 | - | 330,200 | 2.00 | 336,400 | - | 336,400 | 2.00 |
| Special Task Forces | 254 | - | 254 | 0.00 | 6,200 | - | 6,200 | 0.00 | 4,000 | - | 4,000 | 0.00 | 4,000 | - | 4,000 | 0.00 |
| Archives | - | 84,253 | 84,253 | 1.00 | 100,000 | - | 100,000 | 1.00 | 101,300 | - | 101,300 | 1.00 | 105,600 | - | 105,600 | 1.00 |
| Technology | 1,332,761 | 29,802 | 1,362,563 | 13.00 | 1,328,075 | 76,900 | 1,404,975 | 13.00 | 1,395,400 | 36,300 | 1,431,700 | 13.00 | 1,449,100 | 77,400 | 1,526,500 | 13.00 |
| Financial Services | 820,618 | 49 | 820,667 | 7.00 | 1,034,325 | - | 1,034,325 | 8.20 | 876,600 | - | 876,600 | 7.00 | 908,300 | - | 908,300 | 7.00 |
| Human Resources | 238,269 | 238 | 238,507 | 2.00 | 252,800 | - | 252,800 | 2.00 | 260,000 | 400 | 260,400 | 2.00 | 269,500 | 400 | 269,900 | 2.00 |
| CAR | - | 1,144,362 | 1,144,362 | 1.00 | - | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 | 1.00 | - | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1.00 | - | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1.00 |
| TOTAL | 3,007,202 | 2,070,240 | 5,077,442 | 26.00 | 3,361,500 | 2,346,900 | 5,708,400 | 27.20 | 3,286,500 | 1,881,700 | 5,168,200 | 26.00 | 3,406,900 | 1,947,800 | 5,354,700 | 26.00 |

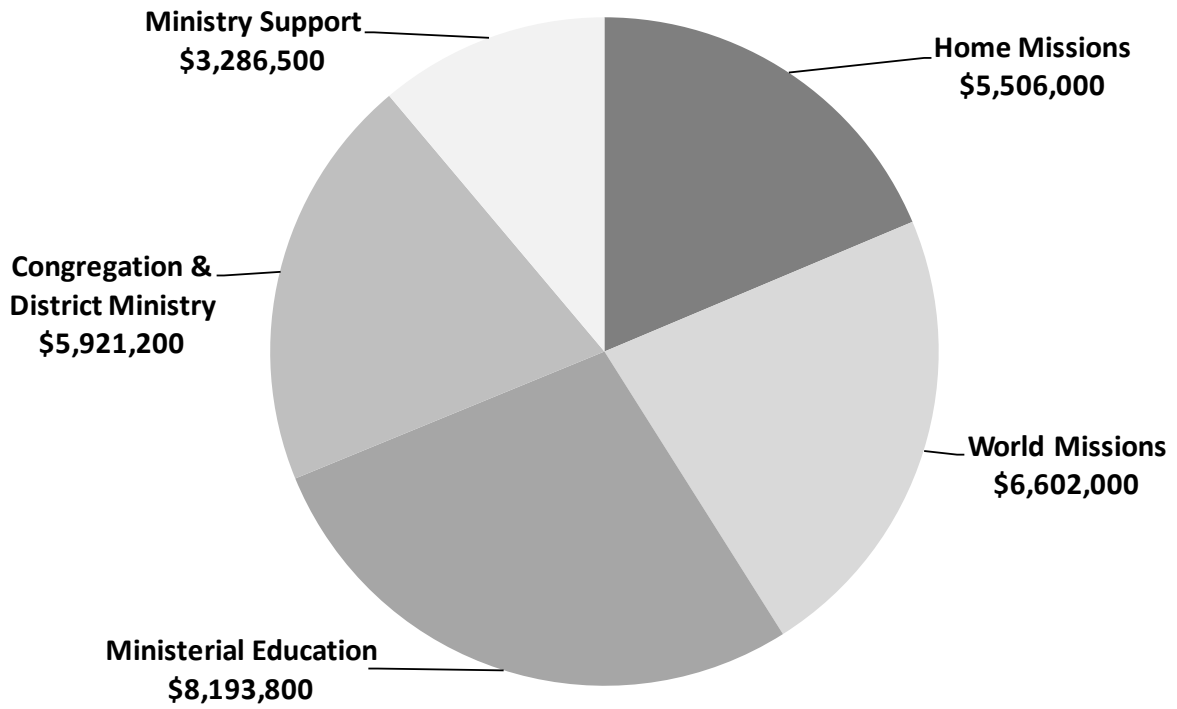
**FY 2019-20 Total Ministry Plan Support
\$88,484,100**



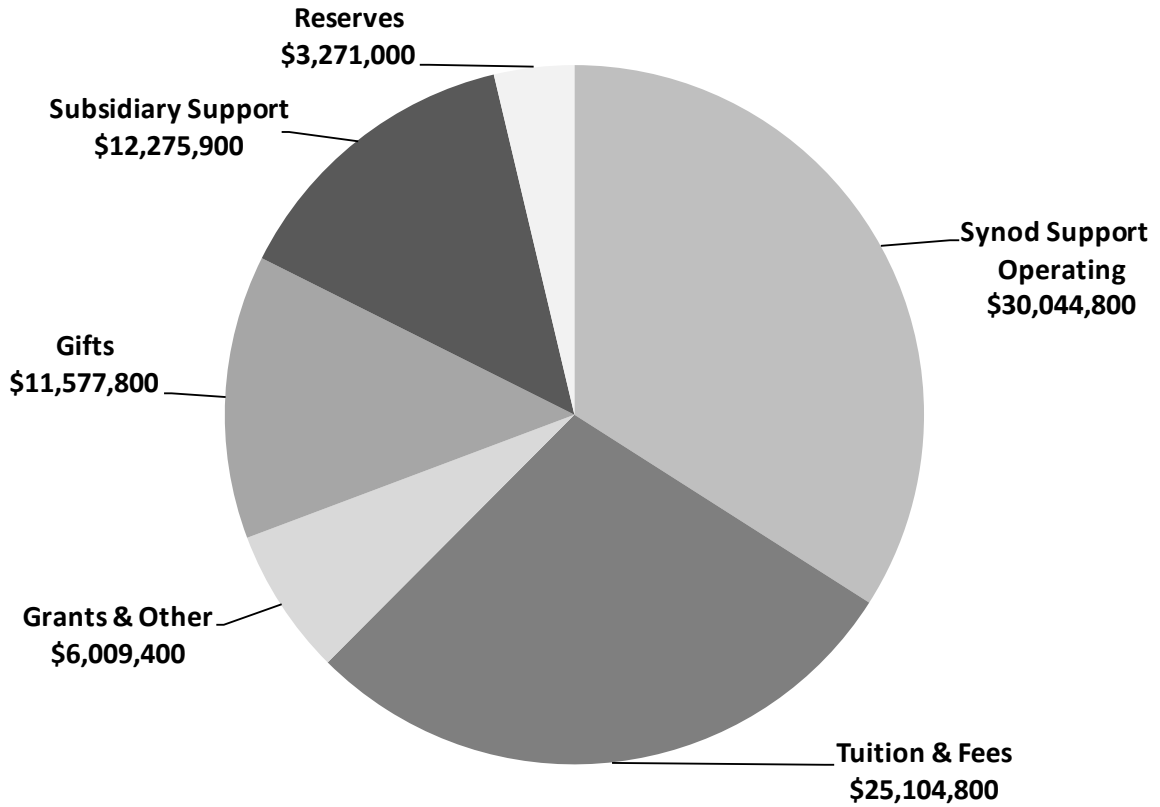
**FY 2019-20 Total Ministry Plan Expenses
\$88,484,100**



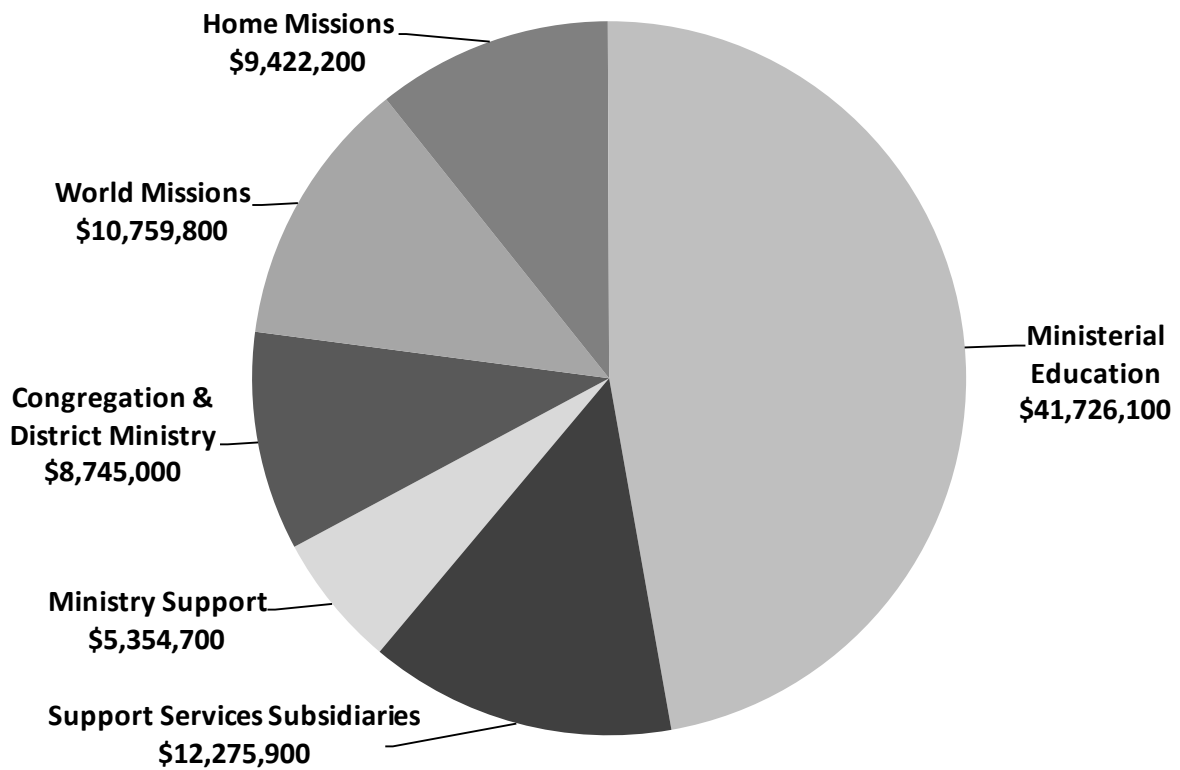
FY 2019-20 Synod Operating Support Allocation
\$29,509,500



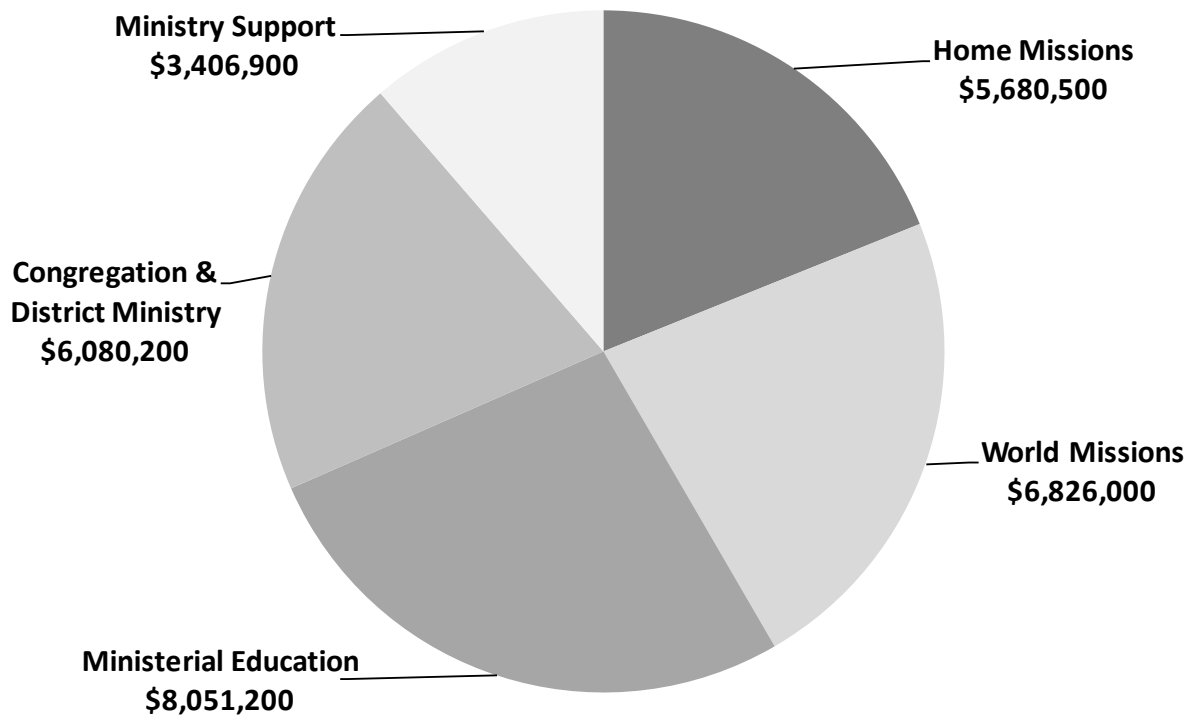
**FY 2020-21 Total Ministry Plan Support
\$88,283,700**



**FY 2020-21 Total Ministry Plan Expenses
\$88,283,700**



FY 2020-21 Synod Operating Support Allocation
\$30,044,800



WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

Consolidating Schedule of Financial Position
As of June 30, 2018

ASSETS

| | WELS | MLC | WLS | MLS | LPS | CEF | Foundation | WIF | NPH | Eliminations | Consolidated |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Cash and cash equivalents | \$ 24,220,985 | \$ 3,135,880 | \$ (8,736) | \$ 339,666 | \$ 10,327,543 | \$ 10,955,694 | \$ 1,377,386 | \$ - | \$ 912,636 | \$ 58,294 | \$ 51,319,348 |
| Cash restricted for gift annuities and trusts payable | - | - | - | - | - | - | 772,559 | - | - | - | 772,559 |
| Investments | - | 3,899,470 | - | 29,642 | - | 39,064,815 | 134,466,114 | 215,490,144 | 2,745,158 | (168,402,856) | 227,292,487 |
| Accounts receivable, net | 874,702 | 93,118 | 30,177 | 119,565 | - | 71,303 | - | - | 518,976 | - | 1,707,841 |
| Gifts and bequests | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| receivable, net | 1,073,154 | 31,200 | - | 187,921 | 60,135 | 10,002 | - | - | - | - | 1,362,412 |
| Accrued interest | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| receivable | 30,153 | - | - | - | - | 441,172 | - | - | (32,252) | - | 439,073 |
| Inventories | - | 157,405 | 70,843 | 27,687 | 16,159 | - | - | - | 1,572,287 | - | 1,844,381 |
| Loans to students, net | - | 1,074,545 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1,074,545 |
| Property and real estate held for sale, net | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1,284,945 | - | - | - | 1,284,945 |
| Loans receivable from congregations, net | - | - | - | - | - | 156,512,215 | - | - | - | (41,624) | 156,470,591 |
| Cash surrender value of life insurance policies | - | 29,921 | 38,714 | 13,488 | - | - | 1,176,584 | - | - | - | 1,258,707 |
| Assets held in trust - outside WELS | 621,243 | 1,187,373 | - | 278,361 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2,086,977 |
| Other assets | 592,262 | 159,227 | 72,345 | 2,662 | 49,831 | 377 | - | - | 109,907 | - | 986,611 |
| Interest in net assets of WELS Foundation Beneficial | 14,185,161 | 1,962,566 | 1,412,747 | 2,146,128 | 231,179 | 1,244,456 | - | - | - | (21,082,237) | - |
| Interest - assets held by WELS Foundation | 15,650,646 | 2,319,100 | 2,074,887 | 266,420 | 527,361 | - | - | - | - | (20,838,414) | - |
| Property, plant and equipment, net | 7,515,303 | 29,450,886 | 3,813,842 | 5,545,458 | 8,343,091 | - | - | - | 1,303,804 | - | 49,972,384 |
| Investment in CEF certificates | 16,715,925 | - | 1,412,710 | - | - | - | 3,478,100 | - | 685,031 | (22,291,766) | - |
| Interest in assets of WELS Foundation | 20,854,610 | 12,298,060 | 14,683,087 | 1,315,276 | 1,985,369 | - | - | - | - | (51,136,402) | - |
| Due from related party | 1,604,736 | 5,033,044 | 1,832,025 | - | (7,589,523) | (60,060) | (42,413) | 257,091 | 731,002 | (1,765,902) | - |
| TOTAL ASSETS | \$ 103,938,880 | \$ 54,731,795 | \$ 25,432,641 | \$ 10,272,274 | \$ 13,951,145 | \$ 208,239,974 | \$ 142,513,275 | \$ 215,747,235 | \$ 8,578,801 | \$(285,533,159) | \$ 497,872,861 |

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

Consolidating Schedule of Financial Position (continued)
As of June 30, 2018

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

| | WELS | MLC | WLS | MLS | LPS | CEF | Foundation | WIF | NPH | Eliminations | Consolidated |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| LIABILITIES | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Accounts payable | \$ 955,945 | \$ 276,835 | \$ 91,507 | \$ 47,768 | \$ 156,532 | \$ 456 | \$ 5,500 | \$ - | \$ 128,393 | \$ (873) | \$ 1,662,263 |
| Accrued expenses and other liabilities | 2,979,940 | 404,938 | 103,388 | 73,946 | 321,683 | 2,233,348 | 10,417 | 608,700 | 716,843 | 641,044 | 6,812,159 |
| Deferred revenue | 5,091 | 416,922 | 105,132 | 24,459 | 37,549 | - | - | - | 622,626 | - | 1,211,779 |
| Retiree health benefits payable | 1,267,639 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1,267,639 |
| Certificates payable | - | - | - | - | - | 101,683,698 | - | - | - | (22,291,766) | 79,391,932 |
| Deposits held in custody | - | 10,195 | 886 | 136,336 | 66,205 | - | - | - | - | - | 213,622 |
| Liabilities to other beneficiaries | - | 1,349,867 | - | - | - | - | 13,878,361 | - | - | - | 15,228,228 |
| Liabilities to outside agencies and organizations | 1,997,565 | 545,181 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 47,344,379 | 49,887,125 |
| Gift annuities payable, at fair value | - | - | - | - | - | - | 8,743,356 | - | - | - | 8,743,356 |
| Trusts payable | - | - | - | - | - | - | 16,161,048 | - | - | - | 16,161,048 |
| U.S. government grants refundable | - | 835,000 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 835,000 |
| Due to WELS and Schools | - | - | - | - | - | - | 51,073,406 | - | - | (51,073,406) | - |
| Due to related party | 298,716 | 290,973 | 25,921 | 80,689 | 1,051,695 | 67,865 | - | - | - | (1,815,859) | - |
| Total Liabilities | <u>7,504,896</u> | <u>4,129,911</u> | <u>326,834</u> | <u>363,198</u> | <u>1,633,664</u> | <u>103,985,367</u> | <u>89,872,088</u> | <u>608,700</u> | <u>1,467,862</u> | <u>(28,478,369)</u> | <u>181,414,151</u> |
| NET ASSETS | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unrestricted | 38,937,819 | 9,969,107 | 7,281,382 | 177,625 | 1,685,809 | 75,479,359 | 10,219,146 | 215,138,535 | 7,083,407 | (177,557,073) | 188,415,116 |
| Temporarily restricted | 31,467,591 | 29,883,644 | 9,042,975 | 8,597,663 | 9,468,462 | 3,692,361 | 22,750,204 | - | 27,532 | (60,322,711) | 54,607,721 |
| Permanently restricted | 26,028,574 | 10,749,133 | 8,781,450 | 1,133,788 | 1,163,210 | 25,082,887 | 19,671,837 | - | - | (19,175,006) | 73,435,873 |
| Total Net Assets | <u>96,433,984</u> | <u>50,601,884</u> | <u>25,105,807</u> | <u>9,909,076</u> | <u>12,317,481</u> | <u>104,254,607</u> | <u>52,641,187</u> | <u>215,138,535</u> | <u>7,110,939</u> | <u>(257,054,790)</u> | <u>316,458,710</u> |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | <u>\$ 103,938,880</u> | <u>\$ 54,731,795</u> | <u>\$ 25,432,641</u> | <u>\$ 10,272,274</u> | <u>\$ 13,951,145</u> | <u>\$ 208,239,974</u> | <u>\$ 142,513,275</u> | <u>\$ 215,747,235</u> | <u>\$ 8,578,801</u> | <u>\$ (285,533,159)</u> | <u>\$ 497,872,861</u> |

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

Consolidating Schedule of Activities
As of and For the Year Ended June 30, 2018

Unrestricted

| | WELS | MLC | WLS | MLS | LPS | CEF | Foundation | WIF | NPH | Eliminations | Consolidated |
|---|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|
| SUPPORT, REVENUES, AND RECLASSIFICATIONS | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Support: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Offerings from congregations | \$ 21,165,348 | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ 21,165,348 |
| Gifts and memorials | 4,854,148 | 629,359 | 671,328 | 35,346 | 258,190 | 63,554 | 1,636,304 | - | 6,841 | (1,717,886) | 6,437,184 |
| Bequests | 896,489 | 111,551 | 150,769 | - | - | 237,545 | 479,700 | - | - | - | 1,876,054 |
| Total Support | 26,915,985 | 740,910 | 822,097 | 35,346 | 258,190 | 301,099 | 2,116,004 | - | 6,841 | (1,717,886) | 29,478,586 |
| Revenues: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Student tuition and fees, net | - | 12,409,605 | 685,067 | 1,467,586 | 4,043,646 | - | - | - | - | - | 18,605,904 |
| Activity fees and retail sales | 2,075,566 | 909,337 | 65,523 | 198,732 | 161,790 | - | - | 13,688,986 | 5,378,750 | (14,355,998) | 8,122,686 |
| Investment returns, net | 821,075 | 339,618 | 509,146 | 286 | 74,010 | 6,723,000 | 462,861 | 15,504,432 | 213,509 | (15,085,787) | 9,562,150 |
| Change in value of trust agreements | - | - | - | 37,411 | - | - | - | - | - | (37,161) | 1,756 |
| Other | 471,834 | 128,536 | 11,575 | 3,352 | 65,376 | 11,067 | 622,786 | - | 370,276 | (55,440) | 1,629,362 |
| Transfers from other funds | 8,158,538 | 3,696,401 | 2,145,296 | 1,266,668 | 2,872,217 | - | - | - | 9,693 | (18,148,813) | - |
| Total Revenues | 11,527,013 | 17,485,003 | 3,416,607 | 2,974,035 | 7,217,039 | 6,734,067 | 1,085,647 | 29,193,418 | 5,972,228 | (47,683,199) | 37,921,858 |
| Donor redesignation | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1,995 | - | - | - | 1,995 |
| Net assets released from restriction | 9,175,635 | 5,764,499 | 1,310,791 | 1,387,514 | 660,150 | 1,046,337 | 2,601,438 | - | 24,173 | (6,659,397) | 15,311,140 |
| Total Support, Revenues, and Reclassifications | 47,618,633 | 23,990,412 | 5,549,495 | 4,396,895 | 8,135,379 | 8,081,503 | 5,805,084 | 29,193,418 | 6,003,242 | (56,060,482) | 82,713,579 |
| EXPENSES | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Program services | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ministerial education | 9,079,344 | 20,077,819 | 5,323,561 | 4,298,097 | 7,943,667 | - | - | - | - | (10,312,129) | 36,410,359 |
| World missions | 9,485,848 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | (412,567) | 9,073,281 |
| Home missions | 9,814,424 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | (751,003) | 9,063,421 |
| Congregation and district ministry | 6,904,574 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | (212,560) | 6,692,014 |
| Northwestern Publishing House | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 6,510,288 | (59,679) | 6,450,609 |
| Total Program Services | 35,284,190 | 20,077,819 | 5,323,561 | 4,298,097 | 7,943,667 | - | - | - | 6,510,288 | (11,747,938) | 67,689,684 |
| Support services | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ministry support - subsidiaries | - | - | - | - | - | 4,959,929 | 1,906,570 | 438,886 | - | (1,167,480) | 6,137,905 |
| General and administrative | 12,593,245 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | (7,684,538) | 4,908,707 |
| Transfers to other funds | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3,214,685 | 14,213,020 | - | (17,427,705) | - |
| Total Support Services | 12,593,245 | - | - | - | - | 4,959,929 | 5,121,255 | 14,651,906 | - | (26,279,723) | 11,046,612 |
| Total Expenses | 47,877,435 | 20,077,819 | 5,323,561 | 4,298,097 | 7,943,667 | 4,959,929 | 5,121,255 | 14,651,906 | 6,510,288 | (38,027,661) | 78,736,296 |
| CHANGE IN NET ASSETS | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NET ASSETS - Beginning of Year | 39,196,621 | 6,056,514 | 7,055,448 | 78,827 | 1,494,097 | 72,357,795 | 9,535,317 | 200,597,023 | 7,590,453 | (159,524,252) | 184,437,833 |
| NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR | \$ 38,937,819 | \$ 9,969,107 | \$ 7,281,382 | \$ 177,625 | \$ 1,685,809 | \$ 75,479,359 | \$ 10,219,146 | \$ 215,138,535 | \$ 7,083,407 | \$ (177,557,073) | \$ 188,415,116 |

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

Consolidating Schedule of Activities (continued)
As of and For the Year Ended June 30, 2018

| | Temporarily restricted | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|------|-----------|-----------------|---------------|
| | WELS | MLC | WLS | MLS | LPS | CEF | Foundation | WIF | NPH | Eliminations | Consolidated |
| SUPPORT, REVENUES, AND RECLASSIFICATIONS | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Support: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gifts and memorials | \$ 7,511,001 | \$ 1,182,517 | \$ 835,417 | \$ 859,883 | \$ 271,827 | \$ - | \$ 223,931 | \$ - | \$ 1,005 | \$ - | \$ 10,885,581 |
| Bequests | 312,085 | 18,555 | 56,190 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 386,830 |
| Total Support | 7,823,086 | 1,201,072 | 891,607 | 859,883 | 271,827 | - | 223,931 | - | 1,005 | - | 11,272,411 |
| Revenues: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Investment returns, net | 1,564,856 | 959,047 | 619,352 | 107,660 | 110,756 | 1,993,548 | 4,965,772 | - | - | (31,426) | 10,289,565 |
| Change in value of trust agreements | 1,893,975 | 306,656 | 216,438 | 152,279 | 51,805 | 58,496 | (1,566,977) | - | - | (2,680,176) | (1,567,504) |
| Redesignated fixed asset additions | - | 225,711 | 192,951 | 249,109 | 366,108 | - | - | - | - | (1,033,879) | - |
| Other | 77,964 | (14) | 1,078 | - | (190) | - | - | - | - | - | 78,838 |
| Transfers from other funds | - | 150,000 | 88,147 | - | - | - | - | - | - | (238,147) | - |
| Total Revenues | 3,536,795 | 1,641,400 | 1,117,966 | 509,048 | 528,479 | 2,052,044 | 3,388,795 | - | - | (3,983,628) | 8,800,899 |
| Donor redesignation | - | - | - | - | - | - | (2,932) | - | - | - | (2,932) |
| Net assets released from restriction | (9,175,635) | (5,764,499) | (1,310,791) | (1,387,514) | (660,150) | (1,046,337) | (2,601,438) | - | (24,173) | 6,659,397 | (15,311,140) |
| CHANGE IN NET ASSETS | 2,184,246 | (2,922,027) | 698,782 | (18,583) | 140,156 | 1,005,707 | 1,018,356 | - | (23,168) | 2,675,769 | 4,759,238 |
| NET ASSETS - Beginning of Year | 29,283,345 | 32,805,671 | 8,344,193 | 8,616,246 | 9,328,306 | 2,686,654 | 21,731,848 | - | 50,700 | (62,998,480) | 49,848,483 |
| NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR | \$ 31,467,591 | \$ 29,883,644 | \$ 9,042,975 | \$ 8,597,663 | \$ 9,468,462 | \$ 3,692,361 | \$ 22,750,204 | \$ - | \$ 27,532 | \$ (60,322,711) | \$ 54,607,721 |

Consolidating Schedule of Activities (continued)
As of and For the Year Ended June 30, 2018

| | Permanently restricted | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|---------------|
| | WELS | MLC | WLS | MLS | LPS | CEF | Foundation | WIF | NPH | Eliminations | Consolidated |
| SUPPORT, REVENUES, AND RECLASSIFICATIONS | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Support: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gifts and memorials | \$ 27,470 | \$ 251,902 | \$ 241,303 | \$ 150 | \$ 940 | \$ - | \$ 282,302 | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ 804,067 |
| Bequests | - | 154,746 | 85,749 | - | - | - | 183,891 | - | - | - | 424,386 |
| Total Member Support | 27,470 | 406,648 | 327,052 | 150 | 940 | - | 466,193 | - | - | - | 1,228,453 |
| Revenues: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Change in value of trust agreements | 810,064 | (5,185) | 3,510 | 56,785 | (376) | - | 20,891 | - | - | (755,903) | 129,786 |
| Other | - | 40,000 | (145) | - | - | - | 5,265 | - | - | (40,000) | 5,120 |
| Total Revenues | 810,064 | 34,815 | 3,365 | 56,785 | (376) | - | 26,156 | - | - | (795,903) | 134,906 |
| Donor redesignation | - | - | - | - | - | - | 937 | - | - | - | 937 |
| CHANGE IN NET ASSETS | 837,534 | 441,463 | 330,417 | 56,935 | 564 | - | 493,286 | - | - | (795,903) | 1,364,296 |
| NET ASSETS - Beginning of Year | 25,191,040 | 10,307,670 | 8,451,033 | 1,076,853 | 1,162,646 | 25,082,887 | 19,178,551 | - | - | (18,379,103) | 72,071,577 |
| NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR | \$ 26,028,574 | \$ 10,749,133 | \$ 8,781,450 | \$ 1,133,788 | \$ 1,163,210 | \$ 25,082,887 | \$ 19,671,837 | \$ - | \$ - | \$ (19,175,006) | \$ 73,435,873 |

Synodical salary range assignments

Salary matrices are available on pp. 106 and 107.

| | |
|---|-------|
| Early childhood ministry teacher (no degree) | A |
| Early childhood ministry teacher (associate degree) | B |
| Teacher (BS or BA base) | C - F |
| Secondary teacher | D - G |
| Early childhood ministry director | D - G |
| Prep professor | D - G |
| Staff minister | D - G |
| Principal | E - H |
| Christian giving counselor | E - H |
| Prep vice president | E - H |
| Prep dean | E - H |
| College professor | E - H |
| Pastor | E - H |
| Home missionary | E - H |
| World missionary | E - H |
| CMM associate administrator | E - H |
| CMM associate director | E - H |
| CMM national coordinator | E - H |
| Mission counselor | E - H |
| CMM administrator | F - I |
| CMM director | F - I |
| Prep president | F - I |
| College vice president | F - I |
| College dean | F - I |
| Seminary professor | F - I |
| Seminary vice president | F - I |
| College president | G - I |
| Seminary president | G - I |
| Synod president | J |

Note: A periodic review (minimally once per year) should be undertaken to evaluate an individual's compensation level. Changing call responsibilities and educational levels may lead to a salary adjustment.

NOTES:

1. The online Called Worker Compensation Calculator at cwcompcalc.wels.net helps a calling body consider the impact of additional responsibilities and education in determining where in the suggested salary range the worker ought to be placed.
2. Columns C-J increase in 5 percent increments over column C. (For example, Rate Range E is 10 percent greater than Rate Range C, Rate Range F is 15 percent greater, etc.)
3. Each called worker's actual salary is determined by finding the applicable experience row and determining the appropriate rate range. (For example, a teacher with 10 years' experience should receive a salary between \$34,430 and \$39,594. Salaries greater than \$34,430 would recognize additional education credentials and responsibility levels).
4. The basis for the housing equity allowance is the entry level base salary (matrix column "C", 0 years of service).
5. The cost of living adjustment (COLA) is applied to the worker's salary.
6. SECA tax reimbursement, housing allowances, and housing equity are provided in addition to the salary amount.

Above base compensation components for called workers

1. Cost of living adjustment using Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER) or similar COLA index.
2. Cash housing allowance if not provided housing (using HUD Fair Market Rental Values established upon hire date + adjusted annually based on the percent change for the salary matrix. For 2019–20 and 2020–21 this adjustment would be .75 percent).
3. Social Security (SECA) allowance (7.65 percent of salary, cost of living, and housing value/cash housing/fair market rental of parsonage-teachership).
4. Housing equity of 2 percent of entry-level base (Column C, 0 years of service) for workers in provided housing (parsonage/teachership).
5. VEBA health insurance.
6. WELS Pension.
7. Reimbursement for business-related expenses such as travel and conferences.

Note: A web-based Called Worker Compensation Calculator can be found at cwcompcalc.wels.net.

Additional called worker compensation resources including the salary matrices are available at welsrc.net/human-resources or on the Human Resources page under “compensation” on WELS Cloud at cloud.wels.net.

Compensation for synod president and congregational support for vice presidents

The synod president is compensated with a salary based on column “J.” In addition to the base salary and the other components of compensation listed with the compensation guidelines, in 2019–20 the president will receive above base compensation in the amount of \$42,370, which reflects a .75 percent increase from 2018–19. In 2020–21, this component of the president’s compensation will be increased by .75 percent to \$42,688.

The proposed budget for the next biennium includes funding for the first and second vice presidents’ congregations in the amount of \$20,000 and \$10,000, respectively. The congregations of the vice presidents are free to request and utilize these funds as they see fit to cover expenses and lost ministry time as a result of the synodical duties of their pastors.

WELS Compensation Plan Worksheet

Visit cwcompcalc.wels.net for the Called Worker Compensation Calculator with options to print/save a worksheet.

Synod schedule

0.75% Inflation Rate Adjustment

WELS COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

Salary matrix

2019-20

| Range spread | 11,805 | 12,542 | 14,756 | 15,494 | 16,231 | 16,969 | 17,707 | 18,445 | 19,182 | 19,920 |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <i>Service increments</i> | 393 | 418 | 492 | 516 | 541 | 566 | 590 | 615 | 639 | 664 |
| Ranges | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J |
| <i>Experience</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| 0 | 23,609 | 25,084 | 29,511 | 30,987 | 32,462 | 33,938 | 35,413 | 36,889 | 38,364 | 39,840 |
| 1 | 24,002 | 25,502 | 30,003 | 31,503 | 33,003 | 34,504 | 36,003 | 37,504 | 39,003 | 40,504 |
| 2 | 24,396 | 25,920 | 30,495 | 32,020 | 33,544 | 35,069 | 36,593 | 38,119 | 39,643 | 41,168 |
| 3 | 24,789 | 26,338 | 30,987 | 32,536 | 34,085 | 35,635 | 37,184 | 38,733 | 40,282 | 41,832 |
| 4 | 25,183 | 26,756 | 31,478 | 33,053 | 34,626 | 36,201 | 37,774 | 39,348 | 40,922 | 42,496 |
| 5 | 25,576 | 27,174 | 31,970 | 33,569 | 35,167 | 36,766 | 38,364 | 39,963 | 41,561 | 43,160 |
| 6 | 25,970 | 27,592 | 32,462 | 34,086 | 35,708 | 37,332 | 38,954 | 40,578 | 42,200 | 43,824 |
| 7 | 26,363 | 28,010 | 32,954 | 34,602 | 36,249 | 37,897 | 39,545 | 41,193 | 42,840 | 44,488 |
| 8 | 26,757 | 28,429 | 33,446 | 35,119 | 36,790 | 38,463 | 40,135 | 41,808 | 43,479 | 45,152 |
| 9 | 27,150 | 28,847 | 33,938 | 35,635 | 37,331 | 39,029 | 40,725 | 42,422 | 44,119 | 45,816 |
| 10 | 27,544 | 29,265 | 34,430 | 36,152 | 37,872 | 39,594 | 41,315 | 43,037 | 44,758 | 46,480 |
| 11 | 27,937 | 29,683 | 34,921 | 36,668 | 38,413 | 40,160 | 41,905 | 43,652 | 45,397 | 47,144 |
| 12 | 28,331 | 30,101 | 35,413 | 37,184 | 38,954 | 40,726 | 42,496 | 44,267 | 46,037 | 47,808 |
| 13 | 28,724 | 30,519 | 35,905 | 37,701 | 39,495 | 41,291 | 43,086 | 44,882 | 46,676 | 48,472 |
| 14 | 29,118 | 30,937 | 36,397 | 38,217 | 40,036 | 41,857 | 43,676 | 45,496 | 47,316 | 49,136 |
| 15 | 29,511 | 31,355 | 36,889 | 38,734 | 40,578 | 42,423 | 44,266 | 46,111 | 47,955 | 49,800 |
| 16 | 29,905 | 31,773 | 37,381 | 39,250 | 41,119 | 42,988 | 44,856 | 46,726 | 48,594 | 50,464 |
| 17 | 30,298 | 32,191 | 37,872 | 39,767 | 41,660 | 43,554 | 45,447 | 47,341 | 49,234 | 51,128 |
| 18 | 30,692 | 32,609 | 38,364 | 40,283 | 42,201 | 44,119 | 46,037 | 47,956 | 49,873 | 51,792 |
| 19 | 31,085 | 33,027 | 38,856 | 40,800 | 42,742 | 44,685 | 46,627 | 48,571 | 50,513 | 52,456 |
| 20 | 31,479 | 33,445 | 39,348 | 41,316 | 43,283 | 45,251 | 47,217 | 49,185 | 51,152 | 53,120 |
| 21 | 31,872 | 33,863 | 39,840 | 41,832 | 43,824 | 45,816 | 47,808 | 49,800 | 51,791 | 53,784 |
| 22 | 32,266 | 34,281 | 40,332 | 42,349 | 44,365 | 46,382 | 48,398 | 50,415 | 52,431 | 54,448 |
| 23 | 32,659 | 34,700 | 40,824 | 42,865 | 44,906 | 46,948 | 48,988 | 51,030 | 53,070 | 55,112 |
| 24 | 33,053 | 35,118 | 41,315 | 43,382 | 45,447 | 47,513 | 49,578 | 51,645 | 53,710 | 55,776 |
| 25 | 33,446 | 35,536 | 41,807 | 43,898 | 45,988 | 48,079 | 50,168 | 52,259 | 54,349 | 56,440 |
| 26 | 33,840 | 35,954 | 42,299 | 44,415 | 46,529 | 48,644 | 50,759 | 52,874 | 54,988 | 57,104 |
| 27 | 34,233 | 36,372 | 42,791 | 44,931 | 47,070 | 49,210 | 51,349 | 53,489 | 55,628 | 57,768 |
| 28 | 34,627 | 36,790 | 43,283 | 45,448 | 47,611 | 49,776 | 51,939 | 54,104 | 56,267 | 58,432 |
| 29 | 35,020 | 37,208 | 43,775 | 45,964 | 48,152 | 50,341 | 52,529 | 54,719 | 56,907 | 59,096 |
| 30 | 35,414 | 37,626 | 44,267 | 46,480 | 48,693 | 50,907 | 53,120 | 55,334 | 57,546 | 59,760 |
| 31 | 35,807 | 38,044 | 44,758 | 46,997 | 49,234 | 51,473 | 53,710 | 55,948 | 58,185 | 60,424 |
| 32 | 36,200 | 38,462 | 45,250 | 47,513 | 49,775 | 52,038 | 54,300 | 56,563 | 58,825 | 61,088 |

See p. 104 for current synodical salary range assignments and above base compensation for called workers.

Synod schedule

0.75% Inflation Rate Adjustment

WELS COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

Salary matrix

2020-21

| | 11,893 | 12,636 | 14,866 | 15,610 | 16,353 | 17,096 | 17,839 | 18,583 | 19,326 | 20,069 |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Range spread | 396 | 421 | 496 | 520 | 545 | 570 | 595 | 619 | 644 | 669 |
| <i>Service increments</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ranges | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J |
| <i>Experience</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| 0 | 23,786 | 25,272 | 29,732 | 31,219 | 32,705 | 34,192 | 35,678 | 37,165 | 38,652 | 40,138 |
| 1 | 24,182 | 25,693 | 30,228 | 31,739 | 33,250 | 34,762 | 36,273 | 37,784 | 39,296 | 40,807 |
| 2 | 24,579 | 26,114 | 30,723 | 32,260 | 33,795 | 35,332 | 36,867 | 38,404 | 39,940 | 41,476 |
| 3 | 24,975 | 26,536 | 31,219 | 32,780 | 34,340 | 35,902 | 37,462 | 39,023 | 40,585 | 42,145 |
| 4 | 25,372 | 26,957 | 31,714 | 33,300 | 34,885 | 36,471 | 38,057 | 39,643 | 41,229 | 42,814 |
| 5 | 25,768 | 27,378 | 32,210 | 33,821 | 35,430 | 37,041 | 38,651 | 40,262 | 41,873 | 43,483 |
| 6 | 26,165 | 27,799 | 32,705 | 34,341 | 35,976 | 37,611 | 39,246 | 40,882 | 42,517 | 44,152 |
| 7 | 26,561 | 28,220 | 33,201 | 34,861 | 36,521 | 38,181 | 39,840 | 41,501 | 43,161 | 44,821 |
| 8 | 26,957 | 28,642 | 33,696 | 35,382 | 37,066 | 38,751 | 40,435 | 42,120 | 43,806 | 45,490 |
| 9 | 27,354 | 29,063 | 34,192 | 35,902 | 37,611 | 39,321 | 41,030 | 42,740 | 44,450 | 46,159 |
| 10 | 27,750 | 29,484 | 34,687 | 36,422 | 38,156 | 39,891 | 41,624 | 43,359 | 45,094 | 46,828 |
| 11 | 28,147 | 29,905 | 35,183 | 36,942 | 38,701 | 40,461 | 42,219 | 43,979 | 45,738 | 47,497 |
| 12 | 28,543 | 30,326 | 35,678 | 37,463 | 39,246 | 41,030 | 42,814 | 44,598 | 46,382 | 48,166 |
| 13 | 28,940 | 30,748 | 36,174 | 37,983 | 39,791 | 41,600 | 43,408 | 45,217 | 47,027 | 48,835 |
| 14 | 29,336 | 31,169 | 36,669 | 38,503 | 40,336 | 42,170 | 44,003 | 45,837 | 47,671 | 49,504 |
| 15 | 29,733 | 31,590 | 37,165 | 39,024 | 40,881 | 42,740 | 44,598 | 46,456 | 48,315 | 50,173 |
| 16 | 30,129 | 32,011 | 37,661 | 39,544 | 41,426 | 43,310 | 45,192 | 47,076 | 48,959 | 50,841 |
| 17 | 30,525 | 32,432 | 38,156 | 40,064 | 41,971 | 43,880 | 45,787 | 47,695 | 49,603 | 51,510 |
| 18 | 30,922 | 32,854 | 38,652 | 40,585 | 42,517 | 44,450 | 46,381 | 48,315 | 50,248 | 52,179 |
| 19 | 31,318 | 33,275 | 39,147 | 41,105 | 43,062 | 45,019 | 46,976 | 48,934 | 50,892 | 52,848 |
| 20 | 31,715 | 33,696 | 39,643 | 41,625 | 43,607 | 45,589 | 47,571 | 49,553 | 51,536 | 53,517 |
| 21 | 32,111 | 34,117 | 40,138 | 42,146 | 44,152 | 46,159 | 48,165 | 50,173 | 52,180 | 54,186 |
| 22 | 32,508 | 34,538 | 40,634 | 42,666 | 44,697 | 46,729 | 48,760 | 50,792 | 52,824 | 54,855 |
| 23 | 32,904 | 34,960 | 41,129 | 43,186 | 45,242 | 47,299 | 49,355 | 51,412 | 53,469 | 55,524 |
| 24 | 33,300 | 35,381 | 41,625 | 43,707 | 45,787 | 47,869 | 49,949 | 52,031 | 54,113 | 56,193 |
| 25 | 33,697 | 35,802 | 42,120 | 44,227 | 46,332 | 48,439 | 50,544 | 52,650 | 54,757 | 56,862 |
| 26 | 34,093 | 36,223 | 42,616 | 44,747 | 46,877 | 49,009 | 51,138 | 53,270 | 55,401 | 57,531 |
| 27 | 34,490 | 36,644 | 43,111 | 45,268 | 47,422 | 49,578 | 51,733 | 53,889 | 56,045 | 58,200 |
| 28 | 34,886 | 37,066 | 43,607 | 45,788 | 47,967 | 50,148 | 52,328 | 54,509 | 56,690 | 58,869 |
| 29 | 35,283 | 37,487 | 44,102 | 46,308 | 48,512 | 50,718 | 52,922 | 55,128 | 57,334 | 59,538 |
| 30 | 35,679 | 37,908 | 44,598 | 46,829 | 49,058 | 51,288 | 53,517 | 55,747 | 57,978 | 60,207 |
| 31 | 36,075 | 38,329 | 45,094 | 47,349 | 49,603 | 51,858 | 54,112 | 56,367 | 58,622 | 60,876 |
| 32 | 36,472 | 38,750 | 45,589 | 47,869 | 50,148 | 52,428 | 54,706 | 56,986 | 59,266 | 61,545 |

See p. 104 for current synodical salary range assignments and above base compensation for called workers.

Missions

Board for Home Missions Floor Committee #7

Our calling

Over the course of many years, district mission boards, assisted by mission counselors and supported by the Missions staff at synod headquarters, have worked to plant missions. A great deal of time goes into the process. Lengthy conversations and well thought out ministry plans and prayerfully considered goals for the proposed mission are a part of the process. To put it simply, there is a lot of planning that goes into starting a new mission. But then, for whatever reasons, the plan that seemed to make a lot of sense and received not only the support of a district mission board but also the support of the Board for Home Missions did not come to fruition. It happens, doesn't it, that the plans of human beings don't always materialize.

Thankfully as our church body looks to plant new missions we do so under the canopy of a perfect plan—the plan of the Triune God already in place from eternity. It was a plan with intricate details. It was a plan carried out in history going forward step by step. The plan was that a Savior would come to this world in the person of Jesus Christ. The plan was that Jesus would live and die and rise for mankind so that through Spirit-given faith, the forgiveness of sins would be received and the doors of heaven would be open. By God's grace I pray all who read this book and celebrate in the perfect plan that God saw to completion.

With the results of God's perfect plan in mind, the children of God want to tell more about our Savior. Thus, Home Missions' district mission boards, mission counselors, mission staff, and a host of other folks who assist continue to put forward their best human plans in an attempt to tell more people about God's fulfilled perfect plan. We in WELS plant churches so more souls can be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our current situation

In the springs of 2017 and 2018 as well as in the fall of 2018, Home Missions was able to authorize a total of 14 mission starts. In addition, 10 existing ministries were enhanced with 2 to 4 years of financial support. These enhanced ministries included supporting:

- 3 WELS churches to call a bilingual pastor to reach into Hispanic communities;
- 2 WELS churches to call a second full-time worker to reach out to families whose children are attending Lutheran elementary schools in the Wisconsin school voucher program; and
- 5 WELS churches that received some financial support in order to fund a full-time pastor.

These 10 congregations met specific Home Missions criteria so these churches would be so considered for enhancement subsidy.

In starting 14 missions and enhancing another 10 ministries, the cost for just the first year at 22 of these locations was \$1,665,000 (2 of the new missions are unsubsidized new start missions). At this time (spring 2019), Home Missions supports and serves 88 subsidized missions. The total amount of financial support Home Missions is offering to the 88 subsidized missions in 2018–19 is \$6,647,100.

Unsubsidized missions

Home Missions also supports 35 unsubsidized missions. Unsubsidized missions are missions in every way except these missions don't receive financial support. For example, in spring 2018 there was a request from the Western Wisconsin District Mission Board for an unsubsidized multi-site mission to start in Horicon, Wis. Supported by St. John, Juneau, Wis., this mission-minded congregation saw an opportunity to start Saturday services in Horicon.

Following Home Missions guidelines, a submission was made and their request was approved. Since June 2018, worship services have been taking place in Horicon. While there is no direct financial support, the Western Wisconsin District Mission Board, the mission counselor, and the Missions staff offer support in varying degrees.

District mission boards

Home Missions is thankful for the ministry of all 14 of its district mission boards. The mission boards are made up of pastors and laymen who work extremely hard and dedicate a good amount of time to finding new locations where our church body can plant missions. They are volunteers. Please understand, new missions just don't happen. There is a lot of faithful, persistent work that takes place long before any paperwork is submitted to the Board for Home Missions or any mission pastor knocks on the first door.

Mission counselors

Another essential cog in helping to plant missions in North America is the ministry of mission counselors. Mission counselors are pastors whose full-time call is to assist district mission boards in looking for where to start the next mission and to work closely with mission congregations and mission pastors. Their value can't be overstated on the Home Missions team.

Rev. Mark Birkholz and Rev. Matt Vogt are the Home Missions mission counselors. On March 31, Rev. Ed Schuppe retired after 18 years as a mission counselor. Over the years Schuppe has been a strong and passionate advocate for the lost souls in North America. He has reminded the Home Missions team to keep the focus on planting churches. He has been a great partner in holding people accountable. Over the years he has served the South Atlantic, South Central, Southeastern Wisconsin, Northern Wisconsin, and Minnesota Districts. We pray the Lord richly bless Schuppe and his wife, Joyce, as he retires.

Cross-cultural missions

Of the 88 subsidized missions, 18 are considered cross-cultural missions. Either the mission is serving a certain people group like the Hispanic, Vietnamese, or Hmong or there is a multi-ethnic membership. \$1,196,00 of subsidy supports the 18 cross-cultural missions in 2018-19.

Ten of the 18 subsidized cross-cultural ministries are Hispanic ministries. To help support these missions as well as to work toward starting more Hispanic ministry, Home Missions has a Hispanic outreach consultant, Rev. Tim Flunker. In addition to serving and assisting the 10 subsidized congregations, each year Flunker works with a dozen or more established congregations to help them ascertain the viability of doing inter-cultural outreach in their neighborhood. He helps them with outreach plans, provides individualized training sessions, and works with individuals to implement assimilation efforts in their inter-cultural setting.

Flunker does not work alone. Two Spanish-speaking pastors and a seminary professor work with him to mentor the new efforts that are being developed. Called the Hispanic Mentor Corps, this group of four aims to help WELS reach the largest minority people group in the United States with the gospel.

As it relates to financially supporting the work of the three mission counselors and the Hispanic outreach consultant, Home Missions budgets just over \$520,000 for this outreach ministry.

Campus ministry

Serving WELS congregations who reach out to students on college campuses is the work of the Campus Ministry Committee. In a way, the Campus Ministry Committee is like a fifteenth mission board. Rev. Charlie Vannieuwenhoven is the chairman of the Campus Ministry Committee, which is made up of seven pastors and four laymen. On an annual basis the Campus Ministry Committee has two face-to-face meetings, one usually taking place at a WELS campus ministry site. A special word of thanks to "Pastor Vann." He has served on the Campus Ministry Committee for many years and terms out on June 30. We appreciate his get-it-done spirit and the leadership he has provided to the Campus Ministry Committee.

The Campus Ministry Committee continues to look at ways to expand Campus Ministry. One of those ways would be through a half-time campus ministry mission counselor, whose job would be to find, evaluate, develop, and nurture new campus ministry opportunities; work with new campus pastors and existing campus ministries to enhance and strengthen their programs; and work with high schools and congregations to promote campus ministry throughout our church body.

Every two years in May the Campus Ministry Committee sponsors a Campus Ministry Staff Conference. That conference is taking place May 20 and 21, 2019, at the Holiday Inn, Pewaukee, Wis. In years when there is no Campus Ministry Staff Conference, the Campus Ministry Committee is planning to have a pastors' conference for campus ministries that receive funding from the Campus Ministry Committee. Keeping in mind the six-year goals of Home Missions in its ministry plan to be more active at more campus ministry locations, the prayer is that these annual conferences will assist in that direction.

A way in which all WELS members and congregations can assist Campus Ministry is to submit names of WELS members in or entering a college. The Campus Ministry Committee would like to receive the names, e-mails, and cellphone numbers of high school seniors heading off to college or young adults already at a college. Currently there are around 6,500 names of WELS students in our Campus Ministry database. Thanks for helping to make that number grow. This fiscal year (2018–19), \$414,000 has come from the Home Missions budget to support 12 larger subsidized campus ministries and another 20 or so smaller subsidized campus ministries in addition to costs needed to operate and promote Campus Ministry.

The Missions team

In supporting and serving the subsidized, unsubsidized, and campus ministries (along with the Joint Missions Council and the Board for World Missions), give thanks for the 7 Missions staff working at the Center for Mission and Ministry in Waukesha, Wis. As the ministries of both Home and World Missions have grown these past years (there were 53 subsidized home missions in 2011 and now there are 88 and in 2011 there were 10 unsubsidized home missions and now there are 35), the Missions staff has stepped up its game. The Missions staff is overseen by Mr. Sean Young, director of WELS Missions Operations, who serves both Home and World Missions. In addition to the staff's costs, the costs for our district mission boards to serve the missions; the annual training of district mission board members; the travel that is done by the BHM administrator, BHM chairman, and the director of WELS Missions Operations; plus the April and September Board for Home Missions meetings are covered by \$670,000 from the Home Missions budget to support the supporters.

Rounding out the Missions team is the Board for Home Missions chairman, Rev. Wayne Uhlhorn, who was elected to a four-year term at the 2017 synod convention. He also serves as a full-time pastor at Beautiful Saviour, Carlsbad, Calif. He is a vital cog in the ministry of Home Missions.

Home Missions works closely with the Board for World Missions and the Board for Ministerial Education through the Joint Mission Council, which coordinates ministry efforts between these three areas of ministry. Currently the Joint Mission Council subsidizes three home missions. See p. 122 for a full report from the Joint Mission Council.

Strategic plan

Over the years Home Missions has produced its share of strategic plans. In its recent effort, Home Missions has used the Vision Traction Organizer (VTO) model. In October 2017 the Board for Home Missions Executive Committee spent two-and-a-half days working through the VTO process. A six-year strategic plan was put together. From there the district mission boards have received training (August 2018) on putting together their own VTO with the goal of having all 14 mission districts presenting and implementing a strategic plan (VTO) by September 2019.

Multi-site strategy

In November 2018, the second WELS National Multi-Site Conference was held in Pewaukee, Wis. Around 130 attended to hear keynotes and attend breakout sessions. While the multi-site strategy won't fit for every spot where Home Missions looks to plant the next mission, it is another option for mission boards and congregations to consider.

WELS Church Extension Fund

WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF) is a valuable Home Missions partner. Through the ministry of CEF, loans are made to mission churches to purchase land and help build the first worship facility. Not only does CEF give loans, through its grant programs mission churches receive additional financial support that lowers the loan. Since 1993, more than \$38 million in grants have been made to mission congregations.

At the 2013 synod convention, Section 7.10 of the Synod Bylaws (WELS Church Extension Fund, Inc.) was changed. In addition to loans and grants for land and facilities, the CEF Board of Directors can also make "grants to Home Missions" (CEF grants) to help support additional Home Missions ministry. This bylaw change allows the CEF Board of Directors flexibility in helping to financially serve Home Missions.

Since that time, rejoice with us in Home Missions at the gifts the CEF board has been able to grant to Home Missions. From the Home Missions CEF endowment fund Home Missions has received these gifts: FY16—\$832,000; FY17—\$843,000; FY18—\$840,000; FY19—\$858,000. Also, at the Sept. 12, 2018, CEF board meeting, the board granted Home Missions \$1 million from operating earnings in FY2019. Without these grants, Home Missions would not have been able to open as many missions the past two fiscal years.

The total grant figures that mission churches have received from CEF for land purchase and for worship construction total: FY16—\$1,884,380; FY17—\$3,369,776; FY18—\$2,729,768.

What both Home Missions and CEF are noticing is that loan requests are becoming larger. Research provided by CEF supports that observation by comparing loan approvals from 2008 through 2013 and 2014 through 2019. Loan approvals in the 2008–13 period averaged 20 in number annually at roughly \$505,000 each while the 2014–19 period is averaging 26 annually at \$1,039,000. It naturally follows as land and construction costs grow, so do loan requests. At the same time, that not only requires more funds from the missions but also from CEF. As land and construction costs continue to escalate, it is proving more challenging for Home Missions and its missions to keep loans at a reasonable size where the younger missions can still afford to do outreach ministry while paying off a sizeable debt.

Other partners

In addition to WELS Church Extension Fund, Home Missions gives thanks for the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society (LWMS), WELS Christian Aid and Relief, Mission Journeys, Praise and Proclaim, the Ministry of Christian Giving, Kingdom Workers, WELS Foundation, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Martin Luther College, WELS Military Services, WELS Women's Ministry, and Multi-Language Publications. What follows is a little more information on the activity of the LWMS and its support of both Home and World Missions.

The 55th National Convention of the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society was held in Green Bay, Wis., at the end of June 2018. Through offerings given to special projects plus the worship offerings, close to \$150,000 in gifts were offered to Home and World Missions projects. We thank the women of the LWMS for this generous support.

The LWMS has prayer calendars for WELS missions and supports the Befriend a Missionary program. At spring and fall rallies, the LWMS features mission work around the world. At the rallies, offerings are collected. Both Home and World Missions receive special project funds so missions can do "extra ministry" over and above their budgets. We give thanks to the Lord for the continued generous support of the LWMS. The LWMS's 56th national convention will be held in Des Moines, Iowa, on June 27–30, 2019.

Missions advancement and promotion

Three members of the Missions staff work specifically on Missions advancement and promotions. Projects they have been working on include updating and enhancing the Missions speaker request process. This in turn encourages groups to promote their mission festivals with newly developed resources. Staff members are also engaging with Missions donors through additional, more personalized communications and new promotional pieces that convey how the Holy Spirit is blessing our efforts across the globe.

A new WELS Missions Facebook page was launched in June 2018. "Like" the page at fb.com/WELSmissions for an easy way to stay up-to-date on news from Home and World Missions fields, read inspiring stories of the gospel at work, and take advantage of the many resources WELS Missions has to offer. Another way in which the message of Missions is getting out is through weekly blogging. To subscribe to Missions blogs, visit wels.net/subscribe. For any promotional materials (videos, blogs, fact sheets, PowerPoints, photos, etc.) to use in making Home Missions presentations, visit the WELS Resource Center: missions.welsrc.net. You can also learn more about Home Missions by visiting wels.net/homemissions.

A look ahead

The direction WELS has given Home Missions is simple—keep planting churches so more souls can be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ. To serve as a road map in 2019 and beyond, Home Missions continues to implement the strategic plan laid out in its VTO document.

Through the past eight years (FY11–FY18) through the work of district mission boards and mission counselors, on average 20 new start and new ministry requests came to Home Missions. Over this same period of time, again on average, 10 requests were authorized. Often, the reason some of those additional requests were not approved and

authorized was due to lack of funds. While Home Missions appreciates every dollar of synod support and every gift WELS members make to Home Missions, join us in praying that if the Lord wills, more gifts and more support might be available for Home Missions and for all areas of WELS' ministry. We have the only message that saves people from the fires of hell so that they can enjoy the everlasting, refreshing joys of heaven. May the Lord bless us to do all we can in sharing the saving name of Jesus Christ with many more.

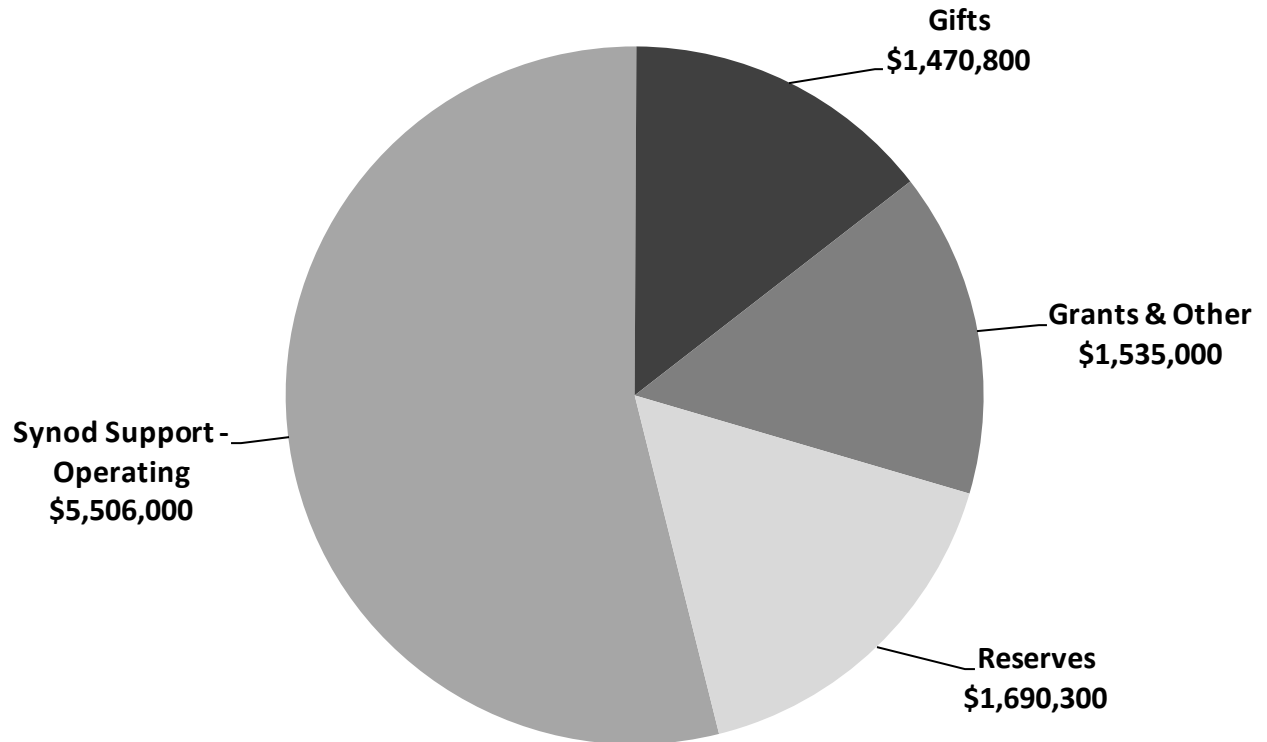
Rev. Keith Free, reporter

Rev. Wayne Uhlhorn, chairman
Rev. Timothy Bode, Minnesota Mission District
Mr. Bruce Burger, Nebraska Mission District
Mr. Dwayne Coryell, North Atlantic Mission District
Mr. Ronald Demulling, Western Wisconsin Mission District
Mr. John Deschane, Northern Wisconsin Mission District
Mr. Matthew Dettmann, Colorado Mission District
Rev. John Dorn, Northern Wisconsin Mission District
Rev. Matthew Frey, Colorado Mission District
Rev. Mark Gabb, South Atlantic Mission District
Rev. Harland Goetzinger, WELS-Canada Mission District
Mr. Mark Greiner, Michigan Mission District
Mr. Mark Hartman, South Central Mission District
Rev. Steven Hillmer, Arizona-California Mission District
Mr. Mel Kam, Pacific Northwest Mission District
Rev. Shane Krause, Nebraska Mission District
Rev. Robert Krueger, Michigan Mission District
Mr. Noel Ledermann, Arizona-California Mission District
Mr. Werner Lomker, WELS-Canada Mission District
Rev. Jeffrey Mahnke, Western Wisconsin Mission District
Mr. Jude Peck, South Atlantic Mission District
Senior Master Sergeant Gerald Pepke, Dakota-Montana Mission District
Mr. David Sauer, Minnesota Mission District
Rev. Caleb Schoeneck, South Central Mission District
Rev. Mark Wagner, Southeastern Wisconsin Mission District
Rev. Craig Wasser, Pacific Northwest Mission District
Rev. Kevin Wattles, North Atlantic Mission District
Rev. Jonathan Werre, Dakota-Montana Mission District
Mr. Steven Wolf, Southeastern Wisconsin Mission District

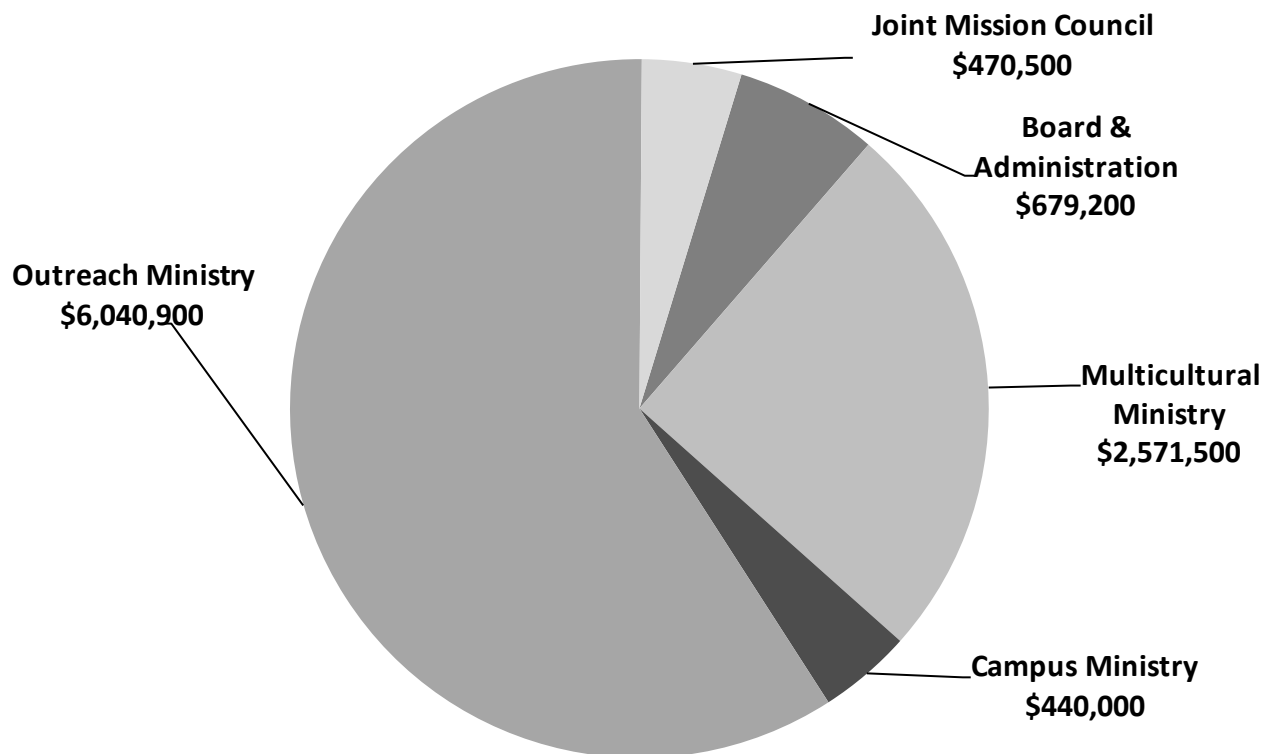
Advisory:

Rev. Keith Free, administrator of WELS Board for Home Missions
Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president
Mr. Sean Young, director of WELS Missions Operations

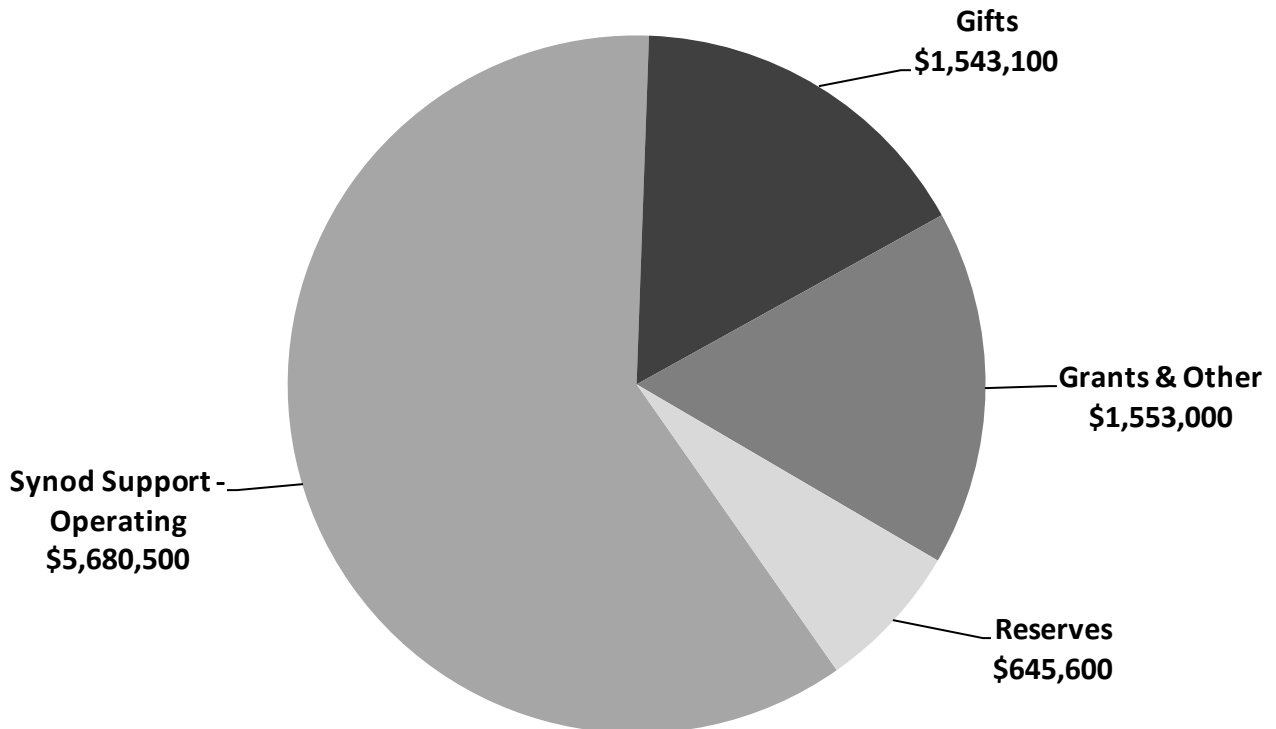
**FY 2019-20 Support
Home Missions
\$10,202,100**



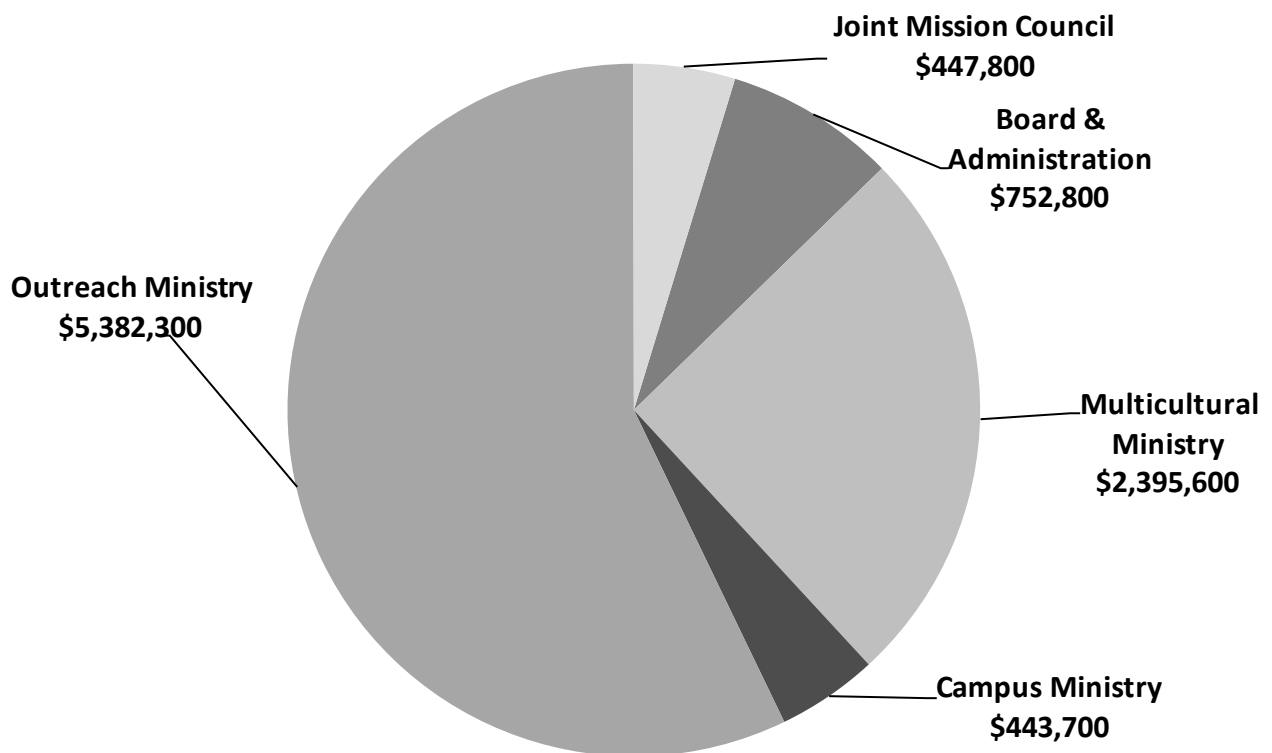
**FY 2019-20 Expenses
Home Missions
\$10,202,100**



**FY 2020-21 Support
Home Missions
\$9,422,200**



**FY 2020-21 Expenses
Home Missions
\$9,422,200**



Board for World Missions

Floor Committee #8

Our calling

Christ's love has done what no human being could ever imagine. He came to this world and gave himself to guarantee our eternity at his side. This love fills our hearts and by God's powerful Spirit overflows to touch the lives of those around us. Christ has called us to keep reaching even further with his love. Our calling includes being witnesses to the multitudes on this planet who still do not know what our loving Savior has done. In response to our calling, the Board for World Missions is directed to carry out "... the responsibility of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ for the discipling of all people living outside the United States of America and Canada and those people who, because of cultural barriers, have not been made the responsibility of other agencies of WELS" (WELS Bylaws, Sec. 6.1). Into a world that desperately needs it, our missionaries and national church partners bring the light of God's Word. With this powerful tool deployed and in the hands of the Lord of the Church, our work is bearing much fruit.

Our current situation

WELS World Missions conducts and encourages gospel outreach in 40 foreign countries and is exploring outreach opportunities in 14 prospective new mission fields. World Missions brings the light of God's Word through evangelism efforts, church planting, training national workers for ministry, and providing religious materials in foreign languages. Forty-one world missionaries partner with more than 400 national pastors to conduct outreach and train more than 380 seminary students for service in Christ's kingdom.

Every country and opportunity has its own story. It would be impossible to report on all the work that is currently going on in this report. To give you an idea of the scope of this work, take a look at the following list of countries where WELS World Missions conducts, partners, supports, or encourages gospel outreach.

World Missions partners

* Countries where missionaries reside.

Africa

Mission partners

- Cameroon
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Malawi*
- Nigeria
- Zambia*

Exploratory mission work

- Liberia
- Mozambique
- Rwanda
- Sierra Leone
- South Sudan
- Uganda
- Zimbabwe

Asia-Pacific Rim

Mission partners

- Australia
- Indonesia
- Laos
- Philippines
- Thailand*
- Vietnam

East Asia

Mission partners

- China
- Hong Kong*
- Japan
- South Korea
- Taiwan

South Asia

Mission partners

- India
- Nepal
- Pakistan

Europe

Mission partners

- Albania
- Bulgaria
- Czech Republic
- Finland
- Germany
- Latvia
- Norway
- Portugal
- Russia*
- Sweden
- Ukraine

Latin America

Mission partners

- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Chile
- Colombia
- Dominican Republic
- Haiti
- Mexico*
- Peru
- Puerto Rico

Exploratory mission work

- Argentina
- Costa Rica
- Cuba
- Ecuador*
- Nicaragua
- Paraguay
- Venezuela

North America

Mission partners

- Apache Reservation*

Every aspect of the work our mission teams carry out in so many ways and so many places is worthy of note. Summaries of this work can be found at wels.net/missions.

Information concerning independent sister churches who receive specialized help from WELS can also be found in the report of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations (p. 20). Notice the gospel work that WELS encourages through our worldwide fellowship with the church bodies in the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC).

Highlights

In 2015 the Board for World Missions (BWM) began reorganizing the work under our administrative committees into regional teams we began calling One Teams. The basic concept was to bring the missionaries on the ground into the planning and supervision decisions being carried out by USA-based administrative committees. Online communication makes regular meetings an easy reality and provides a much closer connection to our national church partners. An additional benefit is that local missionaries can be asked to assist in outreach and communication with contacts in nearby countries. Missionary and national church experience and best practices can be shared across borders. There are now One Teams functioning in Latin America, Africa, East Asia, and Europe. Native American Missions hopes to add new tribes to their work, and South Asia and Asia-Pacific Rim teams are being organized this year.

African outreach visits continue to explore contacts in additional countries. In 2018 more than 10 trips took place to enhance outreach opportunities in Liberia, Rwanda, Mozambique, Uganda, and to South Sudanese refugees in Kenya and Ethiopia. Our mission team in Cameroon has been unsettled due to unrest in the country. A church body in Kenya has been received into fellowship with our sister church, the Lutheran Church of Central Africa–Zambia and will be welcomed into WELS fellowship at this convention.

In **Asia-Pacific Rim and South Asia**, retiring missionaries and new opportunities have begun the organization of a team to meet the worker training needs in Indonesia, Thailand, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Vietnam, and the Philippines. There are hundreds of men in these churches requesting training! This team will also be poised to assist with new outreach contacts in Bangladesh and Vietnam.

In **East Asia** the well-trained team of pastors will soon have a second cohort of workers graduating from Asia Lutheran Seminary to join the efforts. The pressures from local government on Christian work in general, but especially work connected to USA churches, adds urgency to our mentoring efforts to prepare these competent national leaders.

In **Europe** the work in Russia is being carried on more and more by our Russian national pastors. This has freed up our missionary's time to help address worker training needs in the many partner churches we have in Europe. The outreach work to the Roma people, led by a Roma pastor, continues to grow.

In **Latin America** new church planters are being visited in Paraguay, Argentina, Ecuador, Cuba, and Venezuela. Most of these contacts have come through the online efforts of Academia Cristo. This platform provides training, worship, and outreach materials and is connected to more than two million Facebook users each week and fifty thousand weekly visits to the web page for materials and classes. This platform also is strengthening ties between our Latin American churches and Hispanic workers and members in our WELS churches in the United States.

The **Native American** field celebrated the 125th anniversary of WELS' outreach to the Apache tribes in Arizona in 2018. Schools in Peridot and East Fork are thriving, and enrollments are maxed. The Apache Christian Training School is working to add even more Apache workers to these gospel efforts.

Multi-Language Publications continues to supply needed materials in the many languages present in our fields. Its work in support of Academia Cristo has led to the launch of the TELL Network. This English platform is designed to identify new Christians that are willing to share the truth with others in their local settings. The second TELL Network online class in March had more than 300 students from 44 different countries. Thirty of those countries do not yet have Lutheran churches in our fellowship! The goal is not only to connect online but to encourage on-the-ground outreach efforts in places where we can't easily go. As the TELL Network grows, it is intended to be a platform for other languages. This tool has potential to be used by WELS members in North America to reach their cross-cultural neighbors as well.

A look ahead

The number of people on this planet who need to hear about the love of the Savior God who came into this world to save them is growing. More than six-and-a-half billion people need what we already have. Without the gospel message, they will be lost for eternity.

Online contacts are booming, and we are working to connect people with online communities that provide a more complete understanding of the Bible. These people are planting churches. Church bodies in the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference provide additional contacts to explore. The Board for World Missions also serves as

the World Missions exploration arm of WELS. There are efforts to plant churches underway in Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Venezuela, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, and among the Roma people in Europe as well as the Navajo, Sioux, and Mescalero Native American tribes.

God's grace has opened doors to an unprecedented mission opportunity in communist Vietnam. WELS has been invited by the government to work with the Hmong in Vietnam. The Lord is opening a door to reach the more than two million Hmong people who live in Vietnam and the surrounding countries. Plans are underway to build a training center in Hanoi to assist in training leaders from the Hmong Fellowship Church, a body of more than 100,000 members.

Over this biennium the BWM efforts to organize our work under One Teams should be finalized. These teams currently operate as extensions of our administrative committees. We will continue to work to make these teams the spot to coordinate the efforts of the Pastoral Studies Institute Team and to support requests coming through the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations and the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference. WELS is being connected to global efforts in ways that we have never seen before, and proactive steps are being taken to facilitate that work under these regional teams.

We are excited to welcome sister synods from Taiwan and Kenya as they are recognized as sister churches of WELS at this convention. We thank the many missionaries and Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference partners who worked for years to help make that happen.

Your World Missions team treasures the ongoing support of the members of WELS. Your prayers, attention, and gifts allow us to carry out the witnessing work the Lord has given to us all. May the Lord bless our work together as we hear his calling and take the treasure of Christ's love to share it with a world that will be lost without it.

Rev. Larry M. Schlomer, reporter

Rev. Paul Janke, chairman

Dr. Robert Anderson, secretary

Mr. Arlin Bornschlegl

Rev. Glen Hieb

Mr. Mark Schulz

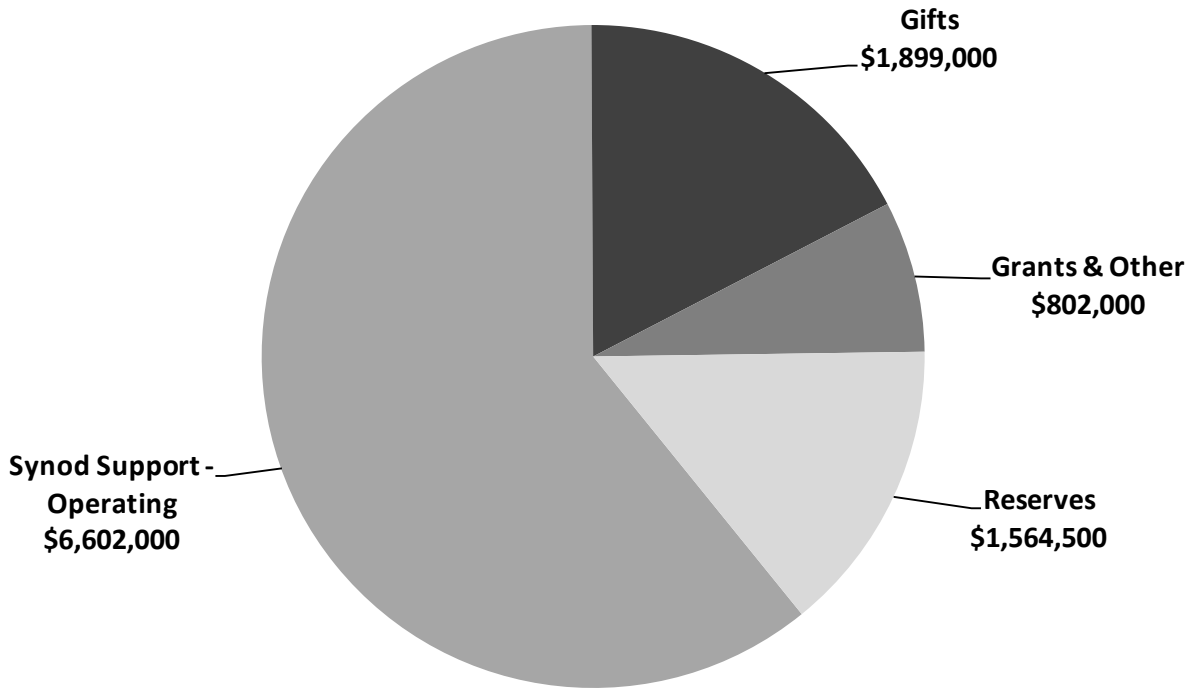
Advisory:

Rev. Larry M. Schlomer, administrator of WELS Board for World Missions

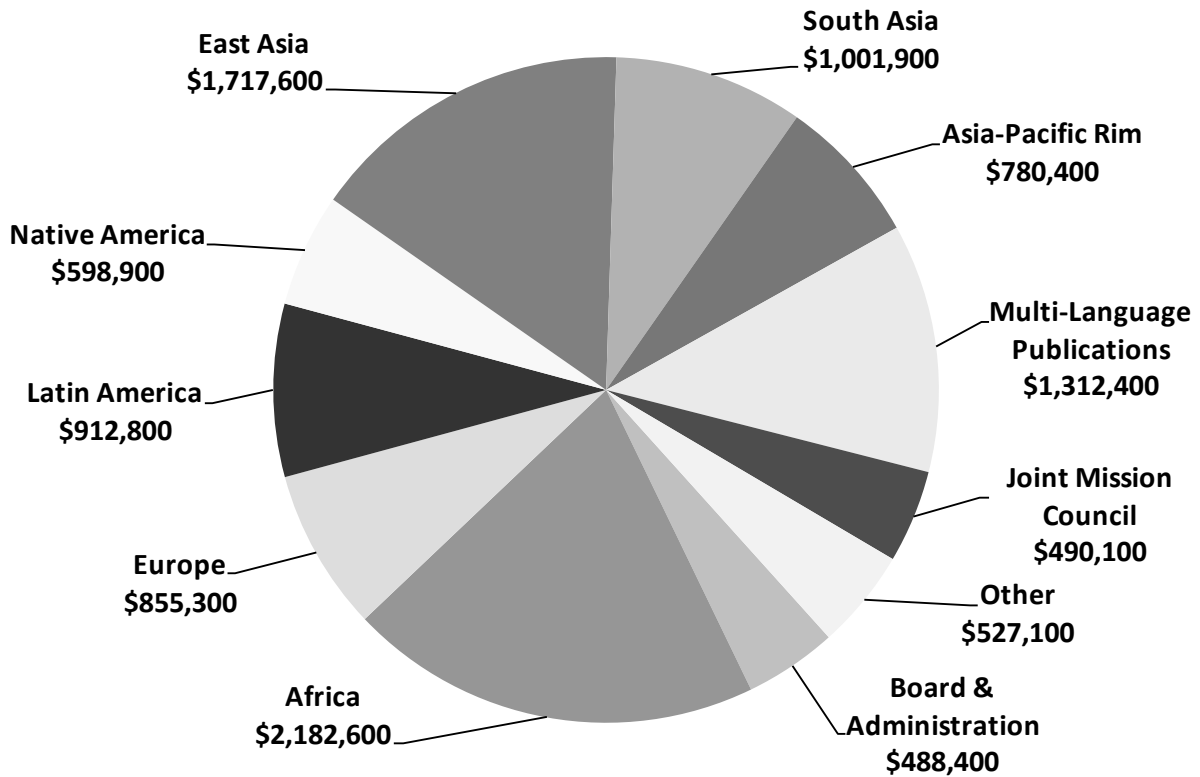
Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president

Mr. Sean Young, director of WELS Missions Operations

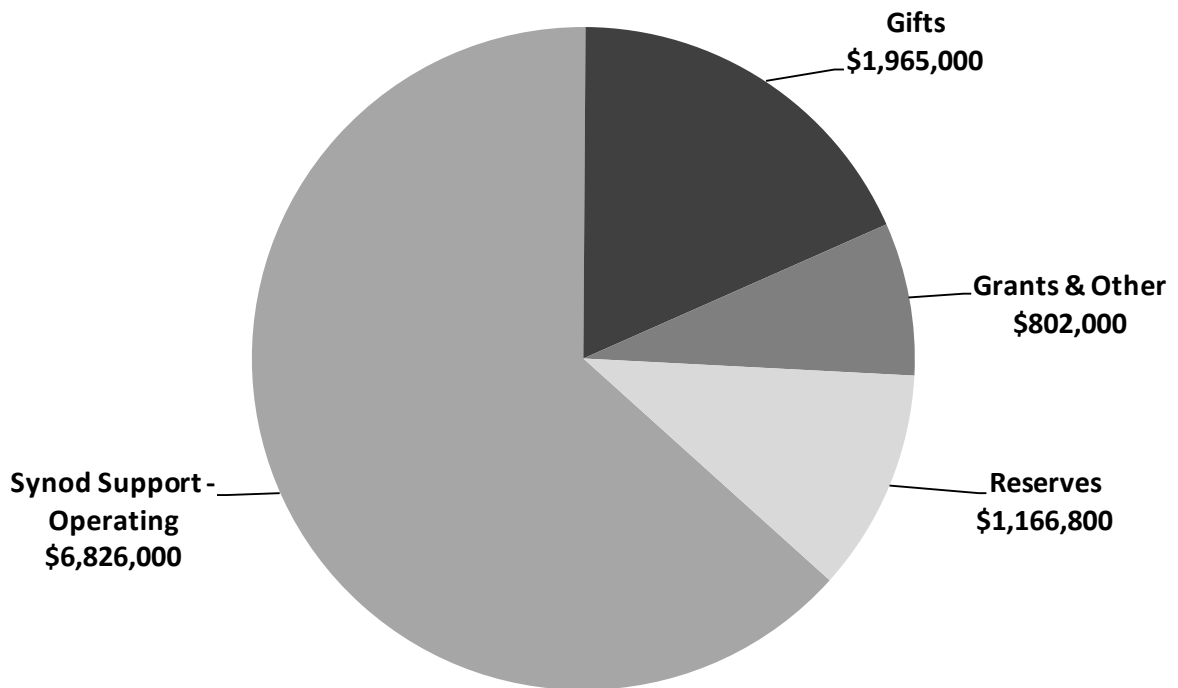
**FY 2019-20 Support
World Missions
\$10,867,500**



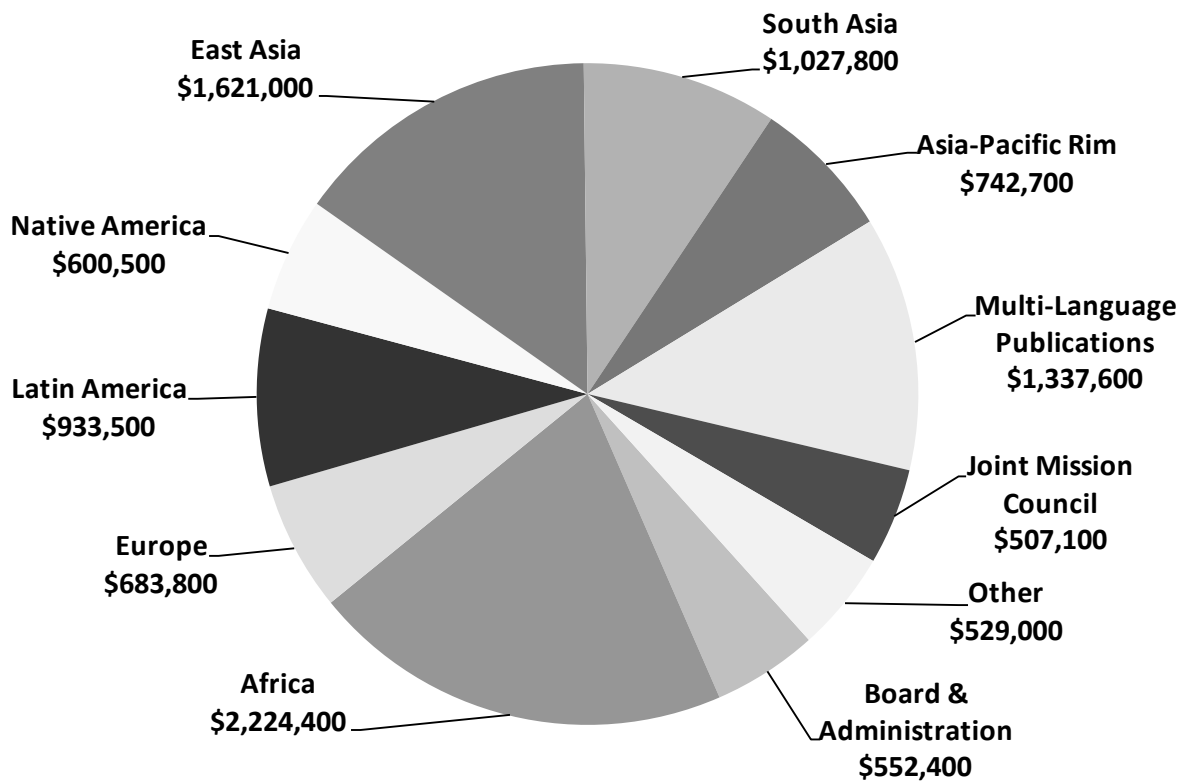
**FY 2019-20 Expenses
World Missions
\$10,867,500**



**FY 2020-21 Support
World Missions
\$10,759,800**



**FY 2020-21 Expenses
World Missions
\$10,759,800**



Joint Mission Council

Floor Committee #8

Our calling

WELS Joint Missions supports mission opportunities that are the responsibility of Home Missions, World Missions, and Ministerial Education. Much of this work centers around people group ministries, where immigrants who have joined our fellowship in the United States and Canada are able to take the gospel back to friends and family in their country of origin. The Joint Mission Council (JMC) administers the work of the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) and assists in other cross-cultural outreach efforts and new programs like WELS Mission Journeys.

Coordination and cooperation are helpful to all of WELS and the church bodies in our fellowship. Since the gospel is for all people, we don't want to miss anyone, and the Joint Mission Council is proactively looking for opportunities to make connections by being flexible in structure.

Our current situation

Pastoral Studies Institute

The Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary leads and facilitates much of the work of the Joint Mission Council. Prof. Jon Bare, Prof. Brad Wordell, and Prof. E. Allen Sorum are the three men who make up the Pastoral Studies Institute Team.

In Africa, the Pastoral Studies Institute Team consults in three main ways:

1. Collaboration with the One Africa Team and the Lutheran Church of Central Africa to offer degrees from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to pastors in our sister church bodies. Ten men will graduate in summer 2019 with a Bachelor of Theology from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary; four men are in the Masters of Theology program and are receiving courses through the Pastoral Studies Institute.
2. Collaboration with the Global South Sudanese Committee and national churches in Kenya and Ethiopia for the training of Nuer pastors in refugee camps in those countries.
3. Collaboration with the One Africa Team on joint vetting projects such as Liberia where Pastoral Studies Institute students have connected us to church bodies that are now seeking training and fellowship.

In Asia, the Pastoral Studies Institute Team coordinates an annual continuing education seminar for the pastors of the church body of our fellowship in Indonesia and is also preparing a student to study at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in the 2019-20 school year. The team is also helping to develop the curriculum, organize the course schedule, and arrange the visiting teachers for pastors of the Hmong Fellowship Church who have been chosen to study at the new training center in Hanoi, Vietnam.

In Latin America, the Pastoral Studies Institute Team has been asked to be part of an ad hoc committee with the One Latin America Team members to determine the partners, the structure, and the program for an online seminary for all of Latin America.

In Europe, Pastoral Studies Institute Team members have been teaching in Russia as well as providing seminary training for a Russian man in Novosibirsk, continuing education for four of the pastors in Russia, and Masters in Sacred Theology course work to our missionary in Russia and to a Bulgarian pastor. Team members recently began working with a Lutheran pastor seeking partnership with our sister church body in Russia. In Bulgaria, the Pastoral Studies Institute Team works with Roma (Gypsy) outreach sites.

In North America, the formation of an Urban Advisory Board is helping efforts to train urban black men for local urban black ministry. The Pastoral Studies Institute Team continues to be the arm of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary that responds to requests for training from second-career men. While for many of these men, the normal route is still Martin Luther College through its Seminary Certification Program, for some with unique situations, the Pastoral Studies Institute works with the local pastor to prepare men to attend Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Two such men have completed their pre-seminary training and will be enrolling at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary this coming school year. The Pastoral Studies Institute Team also continues to train immigrants to the United States for service to their

local people group. Eighteen such men are currently enrolled in the program and are committed to completing the Pastoral Studies Institute training program. In both of these areas, the Pastoral Studies Institute continues to receive a large number of requests.

People group committees

The Joint Mission Council has formed the Global South Sudanese Committee so that South Sudanese immigrants of our fellowship can take administrative responsibility for outreach to Nuer-speakers in the U.S. and abroad. The Joint Mission Council has also formed the Global Hmong Committee so that Hmong immigrants of our fellowship can take administrative responsibility for outreach to Hmong speakers. Finally, the Joint Mission Council is considering formation of a Global Lusophone Committee so that Portuguese speakers could take administrative responsibility for outreach to countries where Portuguese is spoken. When Spanish-speaking immigrants are interested in taking the gospel back to their countries of origin, the One Latin America Team has been handling those arrangements.

Mission Journeys

WELS Mission Journeys, the official WELS program for short-term mission trips, provides an opportunity for all WELS members to walk together in the Great Commission. Through church- or school-based volunteer trips to WELS mission fields at home and abroad, members have the opportunity to engage in Christian service. Pre-trip training led by a congregational team leader equips volunteers to have significant impact during their trip. While volunteering, the learning and sharing of outreach ideas allows teams to explore how they can use their God-given abilities to lead an outreach event upon their return home. With the Lord's blessing, these trips will inspire a lifelong journey of service and outreach for all who volunteer.

Individual efforts

The Joint Mission Council has identified people from Bangladesh, China, Colombia, Cuba, India, Korea, Liberia, Pakistan, Vietnam, and other countries who have interest and training to take the gospel to their own people groups here in the United States and in their countries of origin.

For example, two Liberian refugees (from Las Vegas, Nev., and New Hope, Minn.) have connected with WELS and are in the middle of training to become pastors through the Pastoral Studies Institute. Besides leading congregations of African immigrants here in the United States, both pastors lead churches back in Liberia. They are working with the Pastoral Studies Institute and the One Africa Team to bring the gospel message back to their home country.

An International Friendship Center was launched in partnership with Christ, Pewaukee, Wis., to reach out to the South Asian population that resides in the area. Pastor Paul, a Pakistani man who relocated to the U.S., leads this ministry. Small group Bible studies, family fun nights, driver's education classes, and English classes are just a few of the ways they reach out in love to their community.

Opportunities seem to arise daily for us to take the gospel to all nations.

Rev. Paul Prange, reporter

Rev. Paul Prange, chairman

Rev. John Bortulin, secretary

Dr. Robert Anderson, representative of WELS Board for World Missions

Rev. Keith Free, administrator of WELS Board for Home Missions

Rev. Paul Janke, chairman of WELS Board for World Missions

Mr. Jude Peck, representative of WELS Board for Home Missions

Rev. Larry M. Schlomer, administrator of WELS Board for World Missions

Rev. Earle Treptow, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Rev. Wayne Uhlhorn, chairman of WELS Board for Home Missions

Mr. Sean Young, director of WELS Missions Operations

Board for Ministerial Education Floor Committee #9

Our calling

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Timothy 2:2).

The scriptural purpose of our ministerial education program is the preparation of candidates for the public ministry of the gospel to proclaim Christ’s love in the congregations, schools, and mission fields of our fellowship. The schools also include in their purpose the continuing education of those who already serve in the ministry of the gospel. A special emphasis of this biennium has been to partner with people groups looking for distinctively Lutheran training for their existing pastors, teachers, and evangelists across the nation and across the world. Our report gives you an overview of the efforts to coordinate the work. The WELS Resource Center always has the most recent reports from the individual schools at bme.welsrc.net.

Our current situation

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS), Mequon, Wis., offers an excellent theological training program for men who intend to enter the pastoral ministry of WELS. It serves both first-career and second-career students. In recent years, Grow in Grace, the institute for pastoral growth at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, has also significantly expanded opportunities for theological and professional growth to called workers already serving in the ministry of our confessional fellowship. Efforts to improve the resignation rate for new pastors in WELS through a mentoring program have been blessed with a reduction of the rate to almost zero. For the sake of its domestic programs of continuing education and to offer support for our sister schools overseas, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary has taken the first step in the process of accreditation by the Association of Theological Seminaries. Continuing efforts will be overseen by the new seminary president, Prof. Earle Treptow. A grateful synod thanks outgoing Pres. Paul Wendland for his 15 years of faithful service. For more information about the seminary, visit wls.wels.net.

Martin Luther College

Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn., is the WELS College of Ministry. It trains a corps of Christian witnesses who are qualified to meet the ministry needs of WELS and who are competent to proclaim the Word of God faithfully and in accord with the Lutheran Confessions. Martin Luther College began the year with 764 undergraduates, 564 in the education track and 200 in the preseminary track, representing 33 states and 8 countries. Nine hundred thirty students were enrolled in continuing education and graduate studies programs. For more information about Martin Luther College, visit mlc-wels.edu.

Michigan Lutheran Seminary

Michigan Lutheran Seminary (MLS) is a boarding high school in Saginaw, Mich., with the single purpose of preparing high school students for the public ministry of the gospel and encouraging them to enroll at Martin Luther College. Michigan Lutheran Seminary receives grants from the MLS Foundation, including financial assistance and sponsorship of capital improvements. Michigan Lutheran Seminary began the year with 192 students. More information is available at mlsem.org.

Luther Preparatory School

Luther Preparatory School (LPS) is a boarding high school in Watertown, Wis., with the single purpose of encouraging and preparing young people for a lifetime of service in the public ministry of WELS. LPS participates in the Racine,

Milwaukee, and Wisconsin Parental Choice Programs, allowing some Wisconsin families to use vouchers from the state to pay for the cost of education. Luther Preparatory School began the year with 419 students. More information is available at lps.wels.net.

Finances

The Board for Ministerial Education (BME) distributes synod support to the ministerial education schools from a block grant supplied by the Synodical Council. The model has resulted recently in stable reserves and normal annual tuition increases. Special efforts in the past biennium helped to stabilize the financial situation at Michigan Lutheran Seminary. Martin Luther College, in collaboration with WELS, is assisting Michigan Lutheran Seminary and Luther Preparatory School with accounting, financial reporting, and planning functions. WELS is studying opportunities to consolidate functions to reduce costs and increase quality.

Recognizing concern expressed from the districts and the synod convention, the Board for Ministerial Education and the Synodical Council are partnering with Martin Luther College to reduce the educational debt of its graduates. The Synodical Council provided additional financial support to Martin Luther College for financial assistance. Martin Luther College has established programs to train students in good stewardship and to increase funds available for student assistance. The upcoming capital campaign addresses this issue with its second pillar. The Congregational Partnership Grant Program provides matching funds for tuition assistance provided by congregations to students who attend Martin Luther College. In most cases this assistance is given in addition to any other financial assistance the student might receive.

Vacancy rates

Pastoral vacancies in WELS stabilized in 2017–18 but are still over 100. Average graduating classes at WLS are around 30. Corresponding trends in the numbers of teacher graduates mean that vacancies in principal and early childhood director positions are often difficult to fill. The trends that caused those vacancy rates have been addressed, and we should see the graduating classes at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary return to around 40 in 2023. Michigan Lutheran Seminary and Luther Preparatory School are seeing increasing numbers of their graduates entering the preseminary course at Martin Luther College. The 21st-Century Lutheran Principal Initiative, approved by the 2017 synod convention, is a process to recruit and fully train experienced teachers to serve as principals and should help with the principal vacancy rate.

Capital projects

Capital campaigns for buildings at the schools are conducted in coordination with the Ministry of Christian Giving, reviewed and adopted as a regular part of WELS' ministry planning process. The Conference of Presidents has approved a partnership of Martin Luther College and the Ministry of Christian Giving, called "Equipping Christian Witnesses," in 2019–21. The report on that campaign is an appendix to this one, found on p. 127.

The synod in convention has established a Capital Projects Committee to work on the long-range capital plans of the ministerial education schools. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is improving the interior circle area by the dormitories as well as restrooms in the academic area. Martin Luther College is improving its student housing even as it embarks on a capital campaign with more details in the appendix to this report. Michigan Lutheran Seminary is improving its athletic facilities with new outdoor bleachers, restrooms, and a press box with funding provided by the MLS Foundation. Luther Preparatory School has received permission to investigate building a new music auditorium. The Lord gives us our daily bread, and we are grateful that the campuses are well maintained, with very few immediate projects unfunded in the ministry plan for the current biennium.

For more information on capital projects, see p. 80.

Partnerships

With the blessing and encouragement of Home and World Missions administrations, the ministerial education schools are establishing increasingly close partnerships with the world mission fields and self-supporting churches in our fellowship in order to help develop their particular ministerial education programs. In the past few years, we have seen a dramatic increase in requests to the Pastoral Studies Institute at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary for help in training existing pastors and evangelists of various people groups to become confessional Lutherans. The reports of the Joint Mission Council and the Commission on Inter-Church Relations detail some of those efforts. In order to facilitate the work, the administrator for Ministerial Education has been appointed as chairman of the Joint Mission Council and administrator for Inter-Church Relations.

Our domestic ministerial education schools have seen some success in their plan to increase the numbers of underrepresented minorities on their campuses and in their programs. A special emphasis in the next biennium is the strengthening of our partnerships with the congregations serving urban Wisconsin populations that are using Parental Choice vouchers to enroll in their Lutheran elementary schools. The rapid expansion of the schools using this model has strained their ability to staff their classrooms with ministry-certified teachers, especially black and Hispanic men and women, who are trained to work with students living in poverty.

A look ahead

We give thanks that the Lord of the Church continues to supply our synod with young men and women who are willing to serve anywhere that the Church needs them, who believe that the Bible is the infallible Word of God, who treasure the precious Lutheran heritage of proclaiming the unconditional gospel that has been passed to our generation with remarkable clarity, and who present themselves for service as faithful ministers of the gospel who subscribe without reservation to the Lutheran Confessions. We also give thanks for the individual congregations and members in those congregations who still think—contrary to the practice of just about every other national church body—that the investment of energy and financial resources in the thorough preparation of candidates for the public ministry of the gospel and the deepening of those who are already serving is a sound and wise synodical commitment.

Rev. Paul Prange, reporter

Rev. Duane A. Rodewald, chairman

Rev. John P. Bortulin, secretary

Rev. Kenneth Brokmeier

Rev. Gregory Gibbons

Teacher Richard Gibson

Mr. Paul Hahm

Mr. Kyle Koltz

Teacher Kurt Rosenbaum

Rev. Jonathan Scharf

Mr. Brian Scheele

Mr. Dean Waldschmidt

Rev. Michael Woldt

Teacher Gerald Zeamer

Advisory:

Pres. Matthew Crass, Luther Preparatory School

Pres. Mark Luetzow, Michigan Lutheran Seminary

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer and treasurer

Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of WELS Board for Ministerial Education

Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president

Pres. Paul O. Wendland, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Pres. Mark Zarling, Martin Luther College

Appendix 1: “Equipping Christian Witnesses”

A celebratory capital campaign to observe the silver anniversary of Martin Luther College

The mission of Martin Luther College, the WELS College of Ministry, is to train a corps of Christian witnesses to meet the ministry needs of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. In 1995, Dr. Martin Luther College and Northwestern College amalgamated. Now it is Martin Luther College that carries the precious commission mission that has been part of our church body for 153 years. What an awesome privilege entrusted to us to train future gospel servants in the unconditional gospel of the living Savior Jesus and to send out a confessional Lutheran “corps of Christian witnesses” to serve in our churches and schools and around the world as pastors and teachers and staff ministers.

The WELS Conference of Presidents granted permission for the college to conduct a two-year synodwide capital campaign surrounding the 2020 silver anniversary. The title of this campaign, “Equipping Christian Witnesses,” reflects not only the mission of our institution but also the three pillars of the campaign.

Pillar 1: Recruitment

This is the most important pillar of the campaign. The time is now for each WELS member not only to be a witness of Christ but also to join their college in recruiting full-time gospel servants to go out and equip others with the Word of Life. It is our prayer that MLC undergraduate enrollment will reach 900 to 1,000 students within five years of the campaign. To that end . . .

- in every visit or meeting connected with this campaign, we will ask God’s people to pray for workers in the harvest field, just as Jesus directed.
- we will ask every WELS member and congregation to proactively recruit for ministry—both traditional students and second-career students.
- we will provide materials for an annual Ministerial Education Sunday and for recruitment in Lutheran elementary schools.
- we will provide ways for the names of potential students to be submitted through an “Equipping Christian Witnesses” website.

Pillar 2: Financial aid

The second campaign pillar supports the Congregational Partner Grant Program, in which MLC matches dollar for dollar, up to \$1,000, the gift a congregation gathers to apply to the tuition of its MLC student. We have set a goal of \$3 million to \$5 million from congregations and individuals to enable MLC to continue matching the Congregational Partner Grant Program congregational gifts for up to 10 years. And we will encourage participation in the Congregational Partner Grant Program by all congregations with eligible students. God has blessed this partner grant program with wide participation thus far, and we pray that he continues to bless it.

Pillar 3: Facilities

The third campaign pillar addresses the facilities needed for a growing student body preparing for gospel ministry. While we understand that the most important components of ministry preparation are the Word of God, faithful faculty and staff, and high-quality instruction, we also want to provide our students with a living and learning environment that invites, engages, and supports full stewardship of their gifts. With the assistance of two consulting firms, we have prioritized our needs and set a goal of \$10 million to \$13 million to build two new facilities—a four-story, 150-bed residence hall (\$10 million) and a turfed recreation and practice facility (\$3 million).

Structure and coordination

In coordination with the WELS Conference of Presidents, we are developing a structure that will provide for easy communication and fuller participation.

- **Congregational liaisons**—We will ask every WELS congregation to consider appointing a congregational liaison to provide a two-way street for “Equipping Christian Witnesses” information and to encourage participation through a local champion trained for that role. When possible, MLC will suggest candidates for this position, but each pastor and congregation will recruit and appoint their own liaison.
- **Conference coordinators**—We are recruiting conference coordinators to facilitate the work of the congregational liaisons. These men will provide a vital link in the plan of securing synodwide participation in the campaign. Currently we have 31 out of 45 conference coordinators in place.

It’s time! Please partner with us in “Equipping Christian Witnesses.”

Endless opportunities

Our Savior Jesus is not willing that any should perish. Never before in our synod’s history have we seen so many mission opportunities. Hundreds of people all over the world are approaching WELS for scriptural instruction and evangelism assistance. Technology is enabling us to reach countless homes in many different countries with the gospel. And today’s young Christians are travelers, eager to take the gospel anywhere in the world.

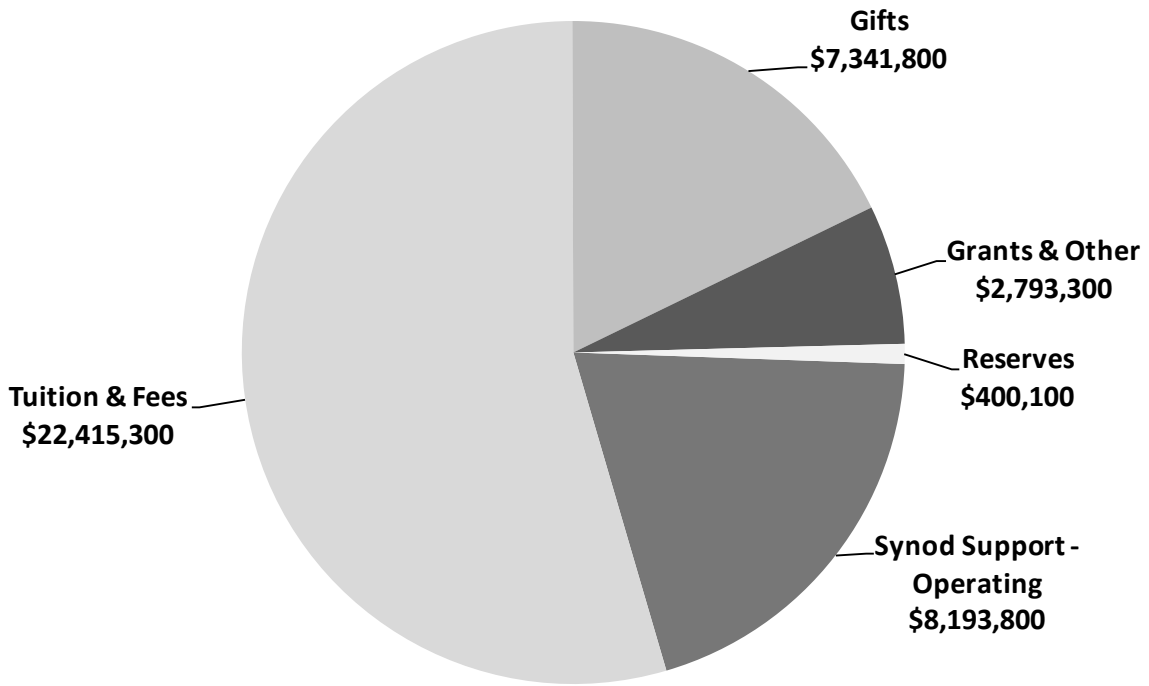
Deep needs

We need more workers—not only to fill our vacancies but also to grasp these new opportunities, to seize the day the Lord has provided us to impact the world with his Word.

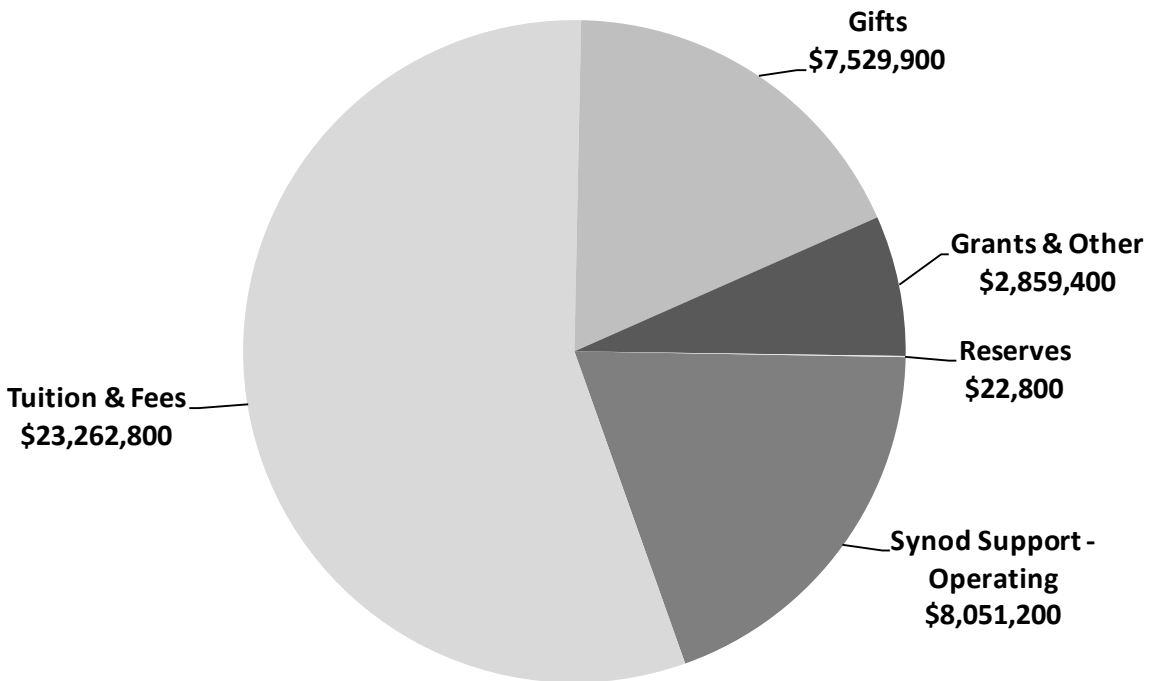
Bold prayers

“Equipping Christian Witnesses” is a celebration of God’s goodness—not only for 25 years of MLC ministry, but for more than 150 years of the unconditional gospel in our midst. Pray boldly that we use this celebration to recruit with rigor countless Christian witnesses, to increase our financial support of our students, and to provide the necessary facilities to equip our students for their future ministries.

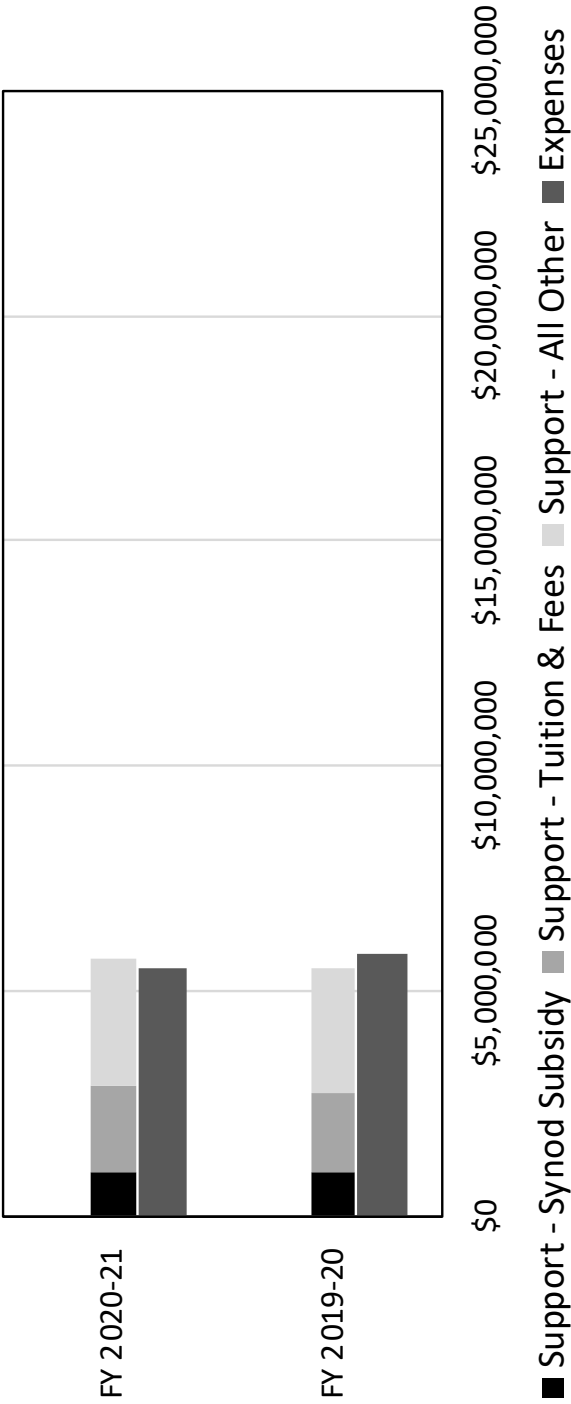
**FY 2019-20 Support
Ministerial Education
\$41,144,300**



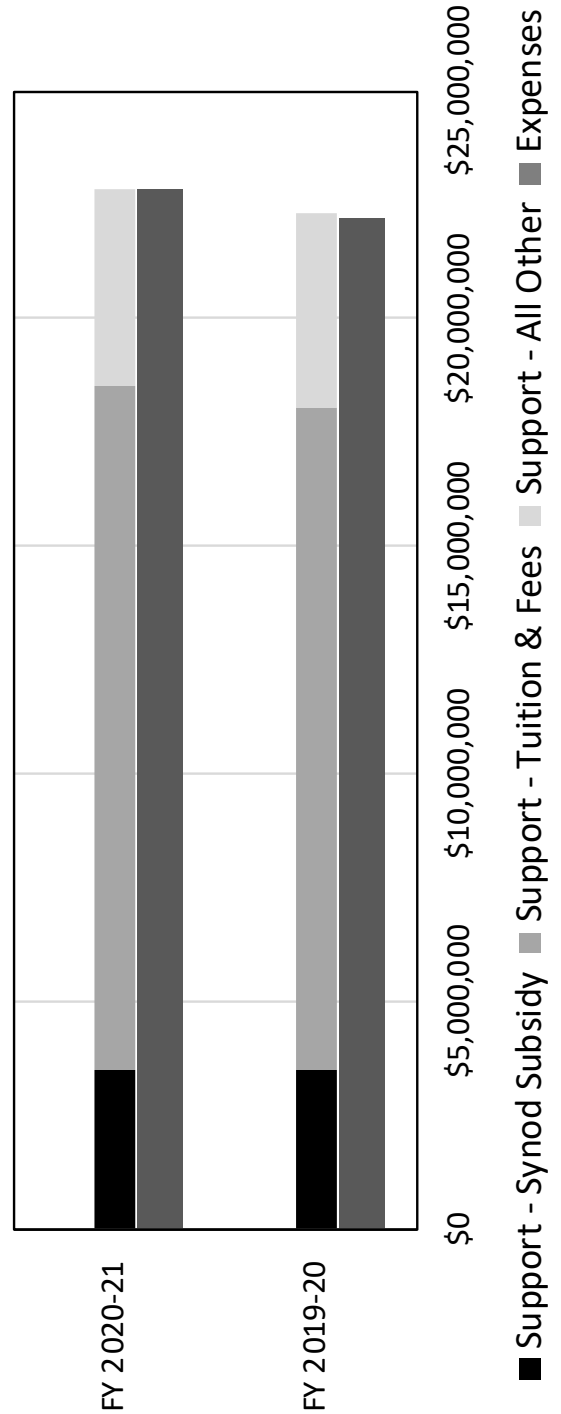
**FY 2020-21 Support
Ministerial Education
\$41,726,100**



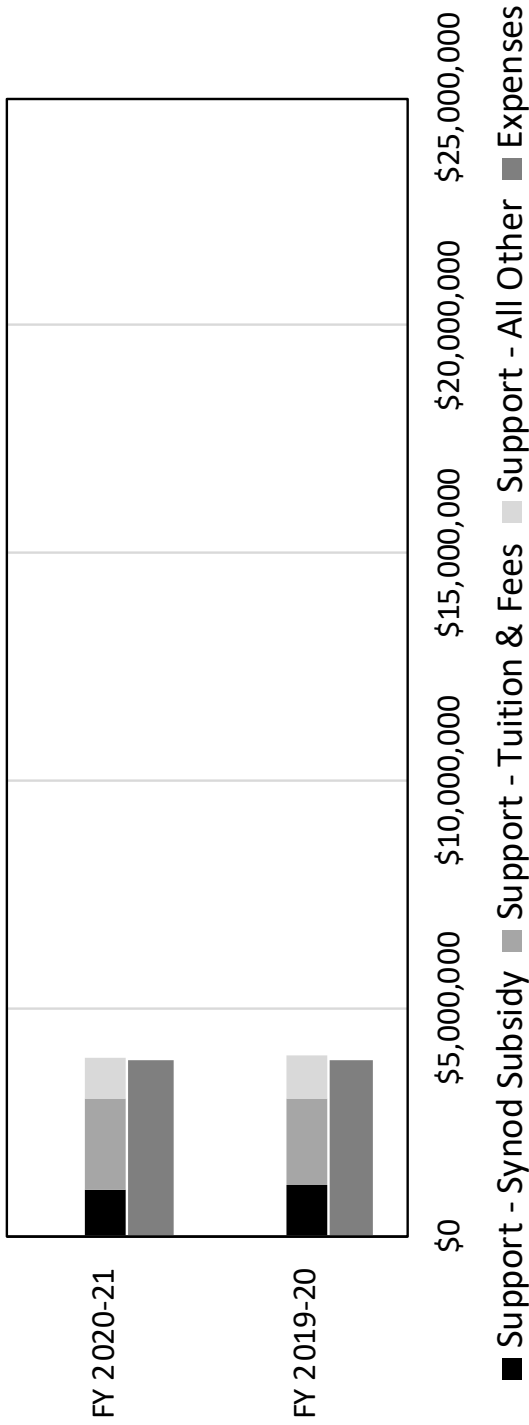
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
 FY2019-20 and FY2020-21 Support and Expenses



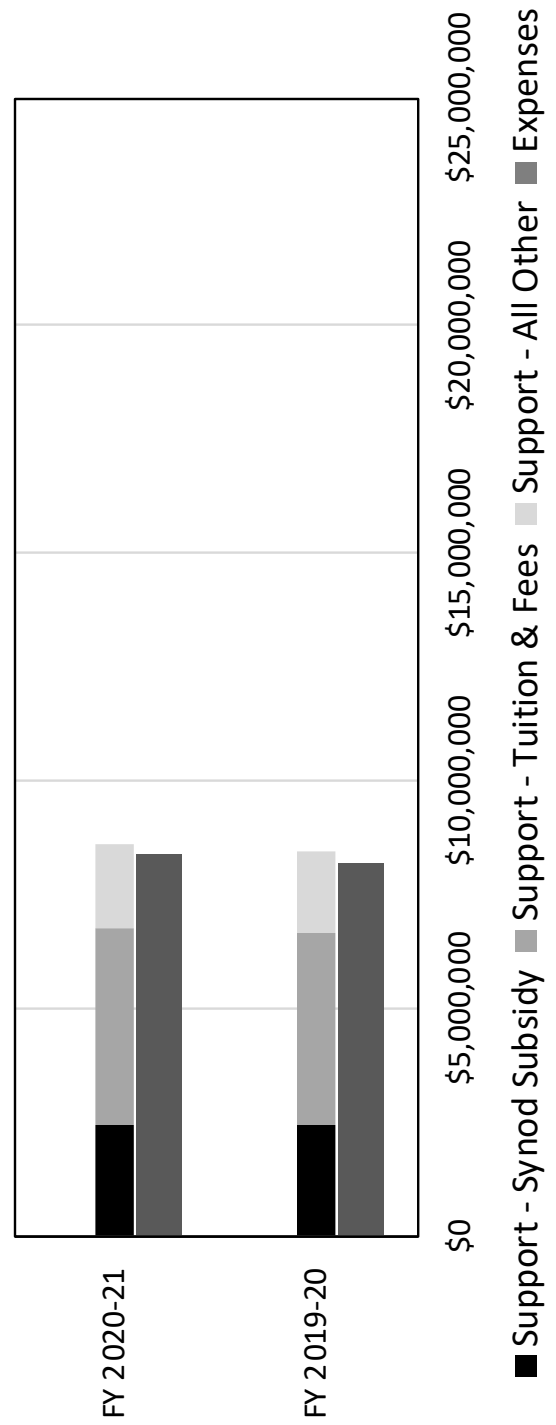
Martin Luther College
 FY2019-20 and FY2020-21 Support and Expenses



Michigan Lutheran Seminary
 FY2019-20 and FY2020-21 Support and Expenses



Luther Preparatory School
 FY2019-20 and FY2020-21 Support and Expenses



Subsidiaries and Benefit Plans

A number of subsidiary groups and one affiliate serve the synod. These entities do not receive support from the synod's operating budget. Each is governed by a board that is accountable to the synod via the Synodical Council.

WELS Historical Institute Floor Committee #14

Our calling

The WELS Historical Institute had its first meeting on Oct. 28, 1981, at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wis. The initial idea of an organization of WELS members dedicated to preserving and relating the history of our synod goes back to a bibliographic conference in 1978 at what was then Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. Soon after the founding of the institute, the 1863 church building of Salem Lutheran Church, 107th Street and Fond du Lac Avenue, Milwaukee, was designated as the official WELS museum. The constituting convention of WELS was held in a log church very near the site of the 1863 building on May 26, 1850. Today the site and event are celebrated by a Wisconsin state historical marker.

The institute's bylaws outline the scope of its work: 1) To promote interest in the history of WELS and Lutheranism in general; 2) To assist WELS' archivist in the collection and preservation of articles and artifacts of historical value; 3) To stimulate historical research and to publish its results in journals, newsletters, and other such publications; 4) To maintain Salem Lutheran Landmark Church and Museum.

The institute is a self-funded organization, entirely dependent on membership dues, gifts, and memorials given for its important ongoing work.

Our current situation

The institute—like many historical organizations of a similar nature—has been experiencing a gradual erosion of its membership base. In the second issue of the WELS Historical Institute Journal (Fall 1983), Rev. Roland "Cap" Ehlke, the institute's president, reported: "The institute's charter membership stands at almost 600. This represents numerous laypeople as well as pastors and teachers." Thirty-six years later, the membership secretary reports that the institute is currently around 200 members, a loss of nearly two-thirds of its membership in the decades since its founding. The major reason for this membership erosion is demographics. Many of the institute's founders and charter members have gone to be with the Lord in heaven, and they have not been significantly replaced with a newer, younger membership base. Generation X and Millennials are not nearly as inclined to join a historical organization as their grandparents or parents have done in the past. This reality represents a long-term and potentially serious problem for the sustainability of the WELS Historical Institute. The Historical Institute's Board of Directors is acutely aware of this situation and is working to develop plans for the long-term health and viability of the organization. We are also working diligently to inspire newer and younger generations of WELS members to take an interest in synodical history and the work of the institute.

Despite the ongoing challenges of maintaining a sustainable membership base, the past two years have witnessed some resounding successes on several different fronts related to the institute's work. Two major improvement projects have been successfully completed at Salem Landmark Church and Museum. The highlight of 2017 was the refurbishing, painting, and stenciling of both of the sidewalls of the church. The highlight of 2018 was the reshingling of the entire roof of the structure along with repair work to its bell tower. Together these capital improvement projects totaled more than \$30,000 in expenditures. This preservation work could not have been accomplished

without the generous gifts of individuals, congregations, and organizations who have taken a special interest and love in the work of the institute. We thank all donors for their hearts of generosity.

There were many other highlights of our work during the past biennium. In August 2017 the institute hosted another bus tour of sites relating to Milwaukee-area Lutheranism. The bus tour began an informative day of WELS history at David's Star, Jackson, Wis., followed by a tour of the WELS Archives and the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry in Waukesha. After a lunch stop at Wisconsin Lutheran College, the group finished the day by touring St. Lucas, Bayview, and St. Marcus, Milwaukee. The next bus tour is tentatively scheduled for Aug. 7, 2020, with visits to WELS sites in the Watertown, Wis., area.

Each year numerous groups of various sizes come to tour the Landmark Church, view the historical exhibits, and walk the grounds where the synod was founded. These groups represent a cross-section of WELS congregations, schools, organizations, and individuals.

Twice a year, under the editorship of Prof. John Brenner of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, the *WELS Historical Institute Journal* is published, which features scholarly articles on various persons, places, and events connected with WELS history and American Lutheranism. Past issues of the *Journal* up through the fall of 2018 are available at wels.net/wels-history. In addition to the *Journal*, a semi-annual newsletter is also published, informing the institute's members of happenings and upcoming events.

Since its founding, the WELS Historical Institute has endeavored to offer annual lectures and presentations that are of interest to WELS members and the general public. Mr. James Moeller has hosted informative tours of West Granville Cemetery for the past several years, which are usually held the second Saturday in June. The cemetery is located across from Salem on 107th Street. It is the burial place of many of Salem's original members. The institute, together with members of the current Salem Ev. Lutheran Church, has opened the Landmark Church for the popular "Doors Open Milwaukee" event, which attracts numerous visitors from the general public to Salem. We look forward to continuing these events in the future.

The annual meeting of the institute always features a presentation on either WELS or Lutheran history. At the 2017 annual meeting, Prof. John Brenner presented the paper: "From Federation to Final Amalgamation: The Birth of the Wisconsin Synod as We Know It Today" in honor of the century anniversary of the current synodical structure of WELS. At the institute's 2018 annual meeting, Prof. Joel Pless read Prof. Edward C. Fredrich II's 1986 paper: "The WELS Mission Enterprise among the Apaches." This was in honor of the 125th anniversary of WELS' mission work among the Apaches and in loving memory of the sainted Prof. Fredrich (1917–1995), near the century anniversary of his birth. Prof. Fredrich was one of the founding members of the institute. The annual meeting of the WELS Historical Institute is most always held the third Sunday of October at 3:00 p.m. in the chapel at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry.

Over the last biennium, there have been some significant changes to the make-up of the board of directors. The institute's president, Prof. Robert Bock, was called home to heaven in September 2017. In addition to a long and distinguished teaching career in WELS schools, the last 40 as a professor at Northwestern and Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., Bock served for many years on the WELS Historical Institute Board.

The institute also wishes to honor the memory of a man who did a tremendous amount of often unsung work in organizing and preserving the archival material of our beloved synod. Mr. Norbert M. Manthe was called home to heaven on Aug. 7, 2018. Manthe served as the controller of WELS for many years. During his retirement he did extensive volunteer work sorting and cataloguing items in the synod's archives at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. We rejoice that he lived to see the day that WELS has its own full-time archivist, Mrs. Susan Willems, and a new and larger facility to house the synod's archives, in the lower level of the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry.

The website of the WELS Historical Institute has been incorporated into the WELS website at wels.net/wels-history. This will enable the institute to update its information in a timelier manner to better serve its constituency. The institute also now has its own Facebook page. Like, follow, and share the activities of the WELS Historical Institute on Facebook at [Facebook.com/WELSHistoricalInstitute](https://www.facebook.com/WELSHistoricalInstitute).

A look ahead

The WELS Historical Institute continues to assume responsibility of the upkeep and maintenance of Salem Lutheran Landmark Church. There is still much work that needs to be done to fulfill the institute's goal of restoring the building

to its original 1863 appearance. The institute is now raising funds to refurbish the back of the church and its ceiling, which will then reveal to guests more of how the 1863 building appeared at the time of its construction. The long-term goal is to have the Landmark Church completely refurbished by the time WELS celebrates the 500th anniversary of Lutheranism in 2030.

The past biennium witnessed the departure from the board of longtime member and treasurer of the Institute, Mr. Duane W. Kuehl. Kuehl is a charter member of the institute. He has held numerous positions of responsibility while faithfully doing the Lord's work over his long life.

The institute also wishes to thank Prof. John Hartwig of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary for his work in and on behalf of the synod archives while the archives were located at the seminary. Hartwig has announced his retirement at the end of the 2019–20 academic year.

Earlier this year, the board of directors gave preliminary approval for the transfer of the routine accounting duties from the treasurer of the institute, Mr. Ryan Haines, to the WELS accounting office at the Center for Mission and Ministry. This will provide better continuity in the operation of the organization. The process of the renewal of memberships and the receiving and acknowledging of contributions to the institute will be also improved. The board will continue to be in charge of the institute's finances and will continue to approve all bills.

At the 2018 annual meeting, at the request of the synod and upon the recommendation of the board of directors, the WELS Historical Institute adopted a revised constitution, which now enables the institute to be more in line with synodical nomenclature, procedures, and terms of service.

The board of directors and its advisors are dedicated WELS men and women who are committed not only to their local congregations but also to their synod. While historically board members have resided in southeastern Wisconsin, one of our newer board members, Rev. Ben Schaefer, serves a WELS congregation in California. He is able to be present at our board meetings via teleconferencing and serves as a representative and spokesman for the institute on the West Coast. Also new to the board is Rev. Robert Weiss of St. Peter, Collins, Wis., in the Manitowoc area. We thank these men for their willingness to serve. The board this year also welcomed Mrs. Amanda Raabe in her advisory role of co-designer and curator, to assist Ms. Charlotte Sampe, who has served as designer and curator of the displays at the Landmark Church since the museum's beginnings.

WELS congregations, schools, organizations, and individuals have a standing invitation from the institute to tour the Landmark Church and its grounds. Normally tours are conducted from April through October, although special arrangements can be made for out-of-town guests. To arrange a tour, contact Dr. Joel Pless at 414-443-8930 (office), 262-677-2109 (home), or joel.pless@wlc.edu. There is also a standing invitation to attend the special events that the institute sponsors, including the 2019 annual meeting, tentatively scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 20, 2019, at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry at 3:00 p.m.

The finances of the WELS Historical Institute remain solvent, but the institute needs and gratefully receives donations to fund its general operations and the continual upkeep and improvement of Salem Lutheran Landmark Church. The Landmark Church remains in the ownership of the current Salem Ev. Lutheran Church, but since 1984 it has been perennially leased to the WELS Historical Institute for a nominal dollar a year. The Landmark Church is 156 years old and is one of the oldest church buildings in the city of Milwaukee.

If you have a deep interest and love of WELS history and are willing to devote time, wisdom, energy, or resources for the promotion of WELS and Lutheran history, contact one of the officers of the WELS Historical Institute. Board and voting membership is open to both men and women who are active members of a WELS congregation. The board of directors meets four times a year to oversee the work of the institute and to provide general governance. Board meetings are normally held in February, April, September, and October.

Besides committed board members, what the institute really needs the most in regard to human resources are new members of the institute. For a very reasonable cost, members receive semi-annually both the *WELS Historical Institute Journal* and a newsletter, in addition to receiving invitations to attend various events and presentations throughout the course of the year, not to mention the joy of preserving and telling the history of WELS. For information on becoming a member of the WELS Historical Institute and participating in its historical preservation work, visit wels.net/wels-history.

Finally, the board of directors of the WELS Historical Institute wishes to direct the attention of the members of our synod—and especially to the 2019 synod convention delegates—to some significant church anniversaries both in the near and distant future. The month of July will not only see the opening of the synod convention, but it will also be the 500th anniversary (July 4–14, 1519) of Martin Luther’s famous Leipzig Debate with Roman Catholic theologian John Eck. Another important anniversary in 2019 is the 400th anniversary of the first documented arrival of Lutherans in the Western Hemisphere, including the first Lutheran pastor, Rev. Rasmus Jensen. Jensen was part of an ill-fated expedition of Danish Lutherans who were searching for the legendary Northwest Passage to the Far East, who spent the winter of 1619–1620 in the Hudson Bay area, near what is now Churchill, Manitoba, Canada. A significant date in the next biennium, April 18, 2021, will be the 500th anniversary of Luther’s courageous stand at the Diet of Worms (April 18, 1521).

Farther ahead, WELS will celebrate its 175th anniversary on May 26, 2025. Moreover, it is not too early to begin preliminary planning for the year 2030. That year will arguably mark the 2000th anniversary of the first Pentecost, deemed the birthday of the holy Christian Church. The year 2030 will also be the 500th anniversary of the founding of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, when the Augsburg Confession was publically read for the first time (June 25, 1530). From special thanksgiving services to a WELS congregation or a group of congregations hosting a public reading of the Augsburg Confession, the opportunities are endless for praising God for the preservation of his Word and his church among us.

The inspired New Testament writer Jude wrote to his first-century readers: “Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints” (Jude 3). The members of the WELS Historical Institute and its governing board believe that if the WELS as we know it today is to be preserved and if it is to grow in faith and numbers, collectively it will take some serious “contending for the faith,” which has been entrusted to us. Let’s heed Jude’s call and contend for the faith, and let’s do it together!

Dr. Joel Pless, reporter

Dr. Joel Pless, chairman

Mr. Daniel Nommensen, vice chairman

Mrs. Naomi Plocher, secretary

Mr. Ryan Haines, treasurer

Rev. David Dolan

Rev. Joel Leyrer

Mr. Steve Miller

Mr. Carl Nolte

Prof. Joel Otto

Rev. Benjamin Schaefer

Rev. William Schaefer

Rev. Robert Weiss

Advisory:

Prof. John Brenner, editor, *WELS Historical Institute Journal*

Mrs. Amanda Raabe, co-designer and curator

Ms. Charlotte Sampe, co-designer and curator

Mrs. Susan Willems, WELS archivist

WELS Church Extension Fund, Inc.

Floor Committee #14

Our calling

WELS Church Extension Fund, Inc. (CEF), is a self-supporting, not-for-profit, wholly-owned subsidiary corporation of WELS. WELS CEF serves the synod through the Synodical Council as a tool for gospel outreach by the sale of investments and receipt of gifts to provide loans and grants to mission congregations for parsonages, land, church buildings, and other necessary facilities and grants to Home Missions. To the extent WELS CEF's financial condition allows, it also provides loans to World Missions, non-mission WELS congregations, and WELS-affiliated ministries for land, facilities, and other loans for the advancement of the objectives of WELS.

Our current situation

WELS CEF continues to be blessed with financial strength. Through the first half of fiscal year 2019, WELS CEF's net assets without donor restrictions increased \$1.0 million due to loan interest payments exceeding interest paid to investors and grants. Net assets without donor restrictions decreased \$3.5 million due to investment loss of \$2.4 million and a distribution of \$1.1 million from endowment earnings. As of Dec. 31, 2018, WELS CEF's assets of \$202 million exceeds liabilities of \$100 million, which results in net assets of \$102 million. The net assets with donor restrictions total \$25 million. Of the \$77 million balance of net assets without donor restrictions, the WELS CEF Board has designated \$62 million to meet grant program needs, loan demand, and the balance to ensure liquidity needs can be met.

Investment offerings

WELS members, WELS congregations, and WELS-affiliated ministries are eligible to invest in CEF certificates, savings accounts, and Individual Retirement Accounts. Presently, investors have entrusted WELS CEF with more than \$96.2 million as of December 2018. Investments by group are:

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| WELS ministries | \$ 17,119,000 |
| WELS congregations | \$ 26,146,000 |
| WELS members | \$ 52,959,000 |
| TOTAL | \$ 96,224,000 |

These member investments provide funding for 61 percent of the loan program. Accumulated operating earnings, which are reported as net assets without donor restrictions, provide the balance of the funding for the loan program.

Loan Program

WELS CEF loans and loan commitments to 217 congregations totaled more than \$193 million as of Dec. 31, 2018. In the first half of the fiscal year, WELS CEF approved loans and grants totaled \$32.6 million and \$3.01 million, respectively. Another 11 congregations are in the CEF lending pipeline as potential borrows at more than \$19.0 million in construction and nearly \$1.5 million in grants. CEF's lending interest rate structure is published annually in the Offering Circular. As of Dec. 31, 2018, the lending interest rate is 4.42 percent for mission congregations and 4.67 percent for non-mission congregations.

Grant Program

Earnings from WELS CEF operations, along with gifts, memorials, and bequests are used to provide qualifying mission congregations with matching grants. A 10 percent down payment on the purchase of up to 5 acres of land and 7,500 square feet of facility construction or purchase qualifies the mission status congregation for a "4 to 1" land and a "2 to 1" facility matching grant of the respective down payments. A congregation's down payment combined with a WELS CEF matching grant allows the mission congregation to move forward with a more manageable loan payment. \$3.01 million in grant dollars await disbursement to the 9 mission congregations presently in construction. We anticipate up to \$1.5 million of additional grant dollars to 6 congregations in our loan pipeline. Since 1993, more than \$38.4 million in WELS CEF matching grants have been disbursed to mission congregations across North America and the West Indies.

Special grants to Home Missions

In addition to the mission congregation grant program, WELS CEF has distributed nearly \$7.7 million to the Board for Home Missions in the past 10 years through special grants and the WELS CEF endowment. The primary source for special grants is approval by the CEF Board of Directors for disbursement of accumulated operating earnings, or surpluses, more than the funding needed for loans, mission congregation grants, and liquidity. The WELS CEF endowment was established by the WELS CEF Board in FY2015 and uses restricted net asset investments as its base for providing annual grants to Home Missions. Of the \$7.7 million disbursed by the CEF Board, \$3.4 million has come from the endowment and \$4.3 million was the result of special grants with the most recent grant of \$1 million approved by the WELS CEF Board in fall 2018.

A look ahead

We pray by God's grace that WELS CEF will continue to benefit from positive operational results and be able to continue to provide special grants over and above our congregation matching grant programs to allow Home Missions to increase the number of new mission and ministry starts.

WELS CEF anticipates that its loan portfolio will continue to experience growth during the 2019–21 biennium and into the future if we can continue to maintain a healthy and disciplined approach regarding operations and a fair and competitive interest rate environment for investors and borrowers. To meet this growing loan demand, WELS CEF is looking to increase investments by WELS members, congregations, and affiliated ministries through continued encouragement to support mission congregations with their investments. WELS CEF began offering a special, limited time rate of 4 percent for investors on April 1. This 4 percent rate is available on new loan certificates and retirement or IRA certificates. The new investments will allow WELS CEF to provide more loans to the increasing number of ministries starting building projects.

We continue to encourage individual WELS members, congregations, and affiliated organizations to consider investing in CEF loan, savings, and retirement/IRA certificates and to consider gifts and bequests to WELS CEF to help support our mission and close partnership with Home Missions.

Much more information about God's blessings to WELS CEF and how members, congregations, and ministries can become a part (or a greater part of) of WELS CEF can be found at wels.net/cef. Or contact WELS CEF at 1-866-511-7793 or cef@wels.net.

Mr. Scott Page, reporter

Mr. Seth Hansen, chairman

Mr. Timothy Boerneke, vice chairman

Mr. Brad Beal, secretary

Rev. Timothy Gauger

Mr. Timothy Gensmer

Mr. Mark Hartman

Mr. David Hirons

Mr. Ron Kerr

Mr. Joel Koch

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer and treasurer

Advisory:

Rev. Keith Free, administrator of WELS Board for Home Missions

Mr. Sean Young, director of WELS Missions Operations

WELS Foundation, Inc.

Floor Committee #14

Our calling

Established in 1965, WELS Foundation, Inc., is one of seven Support Services subsidiaries of WELS. The corporation serves the Synodical Council by organizing exclusively to provide, direct, channel, and manage funds for religious, charitable, and educational purposes consistent with the principles of the synod.

Our current situation

WELS Foundation exists to help God's people support gospel ministry through WELS. It provides planned giving services and administrative support for gifts benefiting WELS congregations and ministries. WELS Foundation strives to be the foundation of choice for members, entities, and affiliates of WELS. It is the only foundation whose purpose is to facilitate donors' desires to support synod ministries. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018, WELS Foundation had the privilege to administer and distribute \$5.7 million in donor-directed gifts to various ministries throughout WELS. During the six-month period ending Dec. 31, 2018, an additional \$3.8 million was distributed.

WELS Foundation provides various giving opportunities including charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, donor advised funds, and endowment funds. It currently administers nearly 1,200 charitable gifts on behalf of WELS members for the benefit of WELS ministries.

As of Dec. 31, 2018, the total assets were \$132.2 million with net assets of \$47.4 million. The net assets held by WELS Foundation are managed for the benefit of WELS ministries as designated by the donor. These ministries include WELS Missions and Ministerial Education schools (Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Martin Luther College, Luther Preparatory School, and Michigan Lutheran Seminary), congregations, and numerous affiliated ministries such as area Lutheran high schools. Assets held with a long-term time horizon are invested through WELS Investment Funds.

Endowment funds

Endowment funds are permanently restricted funds established to receive and administer all gifts that are designated by the donor(s) for an endowment from sources such as cash, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, bequests, life insurance, charitable gift annuities, insurance policies, trusts, real estate, personal property, or any other gift, whether current or deferred.

Lord willing, expenditures from endowments further the work of the church by providing ongoing financial support for ministry until the Lord returns.

Donor designated endowments can be established through the WELS Foundation for the benefit of WELS congregations, area Lutheran high schools, or other WELS-affiliated ministries. WELS Foundation also administers synodical endowment funds for WELS, WELS Home and World Missions, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Martin Luther College, Luther Preparatory School, and Michigan Lutheran Seminary.

As of Dec. 31, 2018, WELS Foundation administered 325 endowment funds with a total market value of \$77.5 million.

Charitable gift annuities

A charitable gift annuity is a contract between a WELS member and WELS Foundation by which the member makes a gift of cash or securities in exchange for fixed quarterly annuity payments for life. After the Lord calls the member home, the remainder of the gift annuity will be distributed to the congregation or ministry as designated. Income payments from a charitable gift annuity may begin immediately, may be deferred until a specific date in the future, or may be deferred until an unspecified date in the future.

As of Dec. 31, 2018, WELS Foundation administered 665 charitable gift annuities with a total market value of \$9.8 million.

Charitable remainder trusts

A charitable remainder trust is created when a donor transfers cash, securities, or real estate into a charitable trust

but keeps a specified income interest—usually for life. When the trust ends per the donor’s designation, the assets in the trust pass to the designated beneficiaries such as the church and/or synod.

As of Dec. 31, 2018, WELS Foundation served as trustee for 163 charitable remainder trusts with a combined market value of \$27.3 million.

Donor advised funds

A donor advised fund is a charitable giving vehicle wherein an individual, family, or corporation makes an irrevocable, tax-deductible contribution of cash, securities, or other property to WELS Foundation and at any time thereafter can recommend grant distributions to qualified WELS ministries. The fund can be established with current gifts, deferred gifts (i.e. charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts), and testamentary gifts (i.e. wills, living trusts, beneficiary designations of life insurance policies, or retirement accounts).

The WELS Foundation donor advised fund program provides an alternative to a private family foundation. WELS members can accomplish many of the same goals but with far less administrative work and expense.

As of Dec. 31, 2018, WELS Foundation administered 69 donor advised funds with a total market value of \$2.6 million.

Other gift administration services

WELS Foundation also provides gift administration for letters of instruction, gifts of securities, qualified charitable distributions from IRAs, real estate gifts, life insurance contracts, agricultural crops, and other donor designated gifts.

Educational webinars

In 2018, WELS Foundation hosted a series of 12 educational webinars. The monthly webinars were timely presentations on various planned giving topics and made available by WELS Foundation at no cost to WELS Christian giving counselors, advancement officers, and congregational planned giving committee leaders.

A look ahead

To carry out its mission, WELS Foundation will continue to identify the most cost-effective means to:

- Provide knowledgeable planned giving support to members through WELS Christian giving counselors and other WELS advancement representatives.
- Provide various planned giving opportunities including charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, donor advised funds, and endowment administration.
- Provide printed and online educational material regarding planned giving opportunities benefiting WELS ministries.

Mr. James Holm, reporter

Mr. Mark Maurice, chairman

Mr. Timothy Boerneke, vice chairman

Mr. Michael Brereton, secretary

Mr. Nathan Birkholz

Rev. Jonathan Kolander

Mr. Michael Krueger

Mr. Scott Neitzel

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer and treasurer

Advisory:

Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, director of WELS Ministry of Christian Giving

Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of WELS Board for Ministerial Education

WELS Investment Funds, Inc.

Floor Committee #14

Our calling

Established in 1997, WELS Investment Funds, Inc., is one of seven Support Services subsidiaries of WELS. The corporation shall serve under the Synodical Council by providing investment portfolios for the benefit of WELS and its schools, congregations, and other affiliated organizations.

Our current situation

WELS Investment Funds provides cost-effective, professionally-managed investment portfolios. WELS Investment Funds currently manages approximately \$200 million for more than 200 synodical ministries including 182 congregations. WELS congregations, area Lutheran high schools, and other affiliated ministries are encouraged to utilize WELS Investment Funds for their long-term investment needs, such as endowment and scholarship funds. By pooling our God-given talents and resources with other congregations, we can take advantage of lower-cost, institutional-priced investment opportunities that are not available to smaller investment accounts. As more congregations and organizations invest in WELS Investment Funds, the cost reduction benefits also increase. It's another way we can help support each other.

The WELS Investment Funds Board of Directors is responsible for the overall operations of WELS Investment Funds. The directors are members of WELS congregations, nominated from throughout the synod, vetted by WELS Human Resources, and appointed by the Synodical Council. Currently there are eight qualified directors serving on the board. The day-to day affairs are carried out by WELS employees leased to WELS Investment Funds.

The board has retained Vanguard Institutional Advisory Service as the investment consultant for WELS Investment Funds. As a co-fiduciary, Vanguard Institutional Advisory Service is responsible for making investment recommendations to the board. Once the recommendation is approved by the board, the investment consultant has the discretion to implement and oversee the investment recommendations.

In 2018, after a lengthy study and in consultation with Vanguard Institutional Advisory Services, the board approved a new investment portfolio designed specifically to meet the objectives of endowment funds. The new portfolio, WELS Endowment Fund, is comprised of 75 percent equity and 25 percent fixed income. In addition to this new option, WELS Investment Funds will continue to offer the WELS Balanced Fund (60 percent equity and 40 percent fixed income), WELS Equity Fund, and WELS Income Fund.

WELS Investment Funds does not receive financial support from the WELS operating budget but instead charges a fee to the portfolios it manages to cover its operating expenses. Effective Aug. 1, 2018, the board reduced the operating expenses fee from 0.21 percent to 0.19 percent. Over the last 20 years, the operating expense fee has been reduced from the initial fee of 0.48 percent to the current fee of 0.19 percent today. The underlying mutual fund expense ratios have also declined from more than 0.50 percent to 0.15 percent.

Additional information, including director biographical information, investment policy statement, audited financial statements, and the 2018 annual report to WELS Ministries, is available at wels.net/welsfunds.

A look ahead

WELS Investment Funds is committed to continuing to serve WELS congregations, area Lutheran high schools, and other affiliated ministries. Those responsible for overseeing the long-term investments for their organization are encouraged to review their investment objectives, asset allocation, investment costs, and time horizons.

WELS Investment Funds is hoping to continue to grow the investment portfolios and is willing to work with ministries to review their investment needs. To schedule a free review, either in person or via conference call, contact us at 414-256-3206 or jim.holm@wels.net.

Mr. James Holm, reporter

Directors:

Mr. Dennis Walters, chairman
Mr. Joel Luehmann, vice chairman
Mr. John Wenker, secretary
Mr. Jon Bruss
Rev. Charles Degner
Mr. Seth Hansen
Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer and treasurer
Mr. Ronald Schmitz
Mr. Max Wenck

Advisory:

Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, director of WELS Ministry of Christian Giving

WELS Benefit Plans Floor Committee #14

Our calling

The WELS Benefit Plans Office serves synodical workers and organizations through the administration of the WELS Voluntary Employee Benefits Association (VEBA), the WELS Pension Plan, and the WELS Shepherd Plan. Oversight of the VEBA Plan is the responsibility of the WELS VEBA Commission, and oversight of the Pension and Shepherd Plans is the responsibility of the WELS Retirement Program Commission. The commission members are appointed by the WELS Synodical Council. Each commission is composed of four laymen, a pastor, and a male teacher from the called worker roster. Contributions toward the cost of plan benefits and operations are held in separate trusts, each invested in diversified accounts with outside money managers overseen by an independent investment advisory firm. The plans employ outside professionals that provide benefit design, actuarial, consulting, banking, legal, and auditing services.

Our current situation

Over the past year, Benefit Plans has continued to position the VEBA, Pension, and Shepherd Plans for long-term stability, which is vitally important for the workers and calling bodies that we serve. Growing participation levels and enhanced cost control opportunities have supported this effort.

Over the past two years participation in the Shepherd Plan has grown significantly, with the Plan gaining more than 50 new calling bodies and 325 new workers during this period. The total market value of Shepherd Plan assets as of Dec. 31, 2018, was \$124.1 million, compared to \$100.1 million as of Dec. 31, 2016 (+24 percent). Participants have benefited from this recent Plan growth, as administration fees paid by participants have decreased by 15.7 percent since 2016.

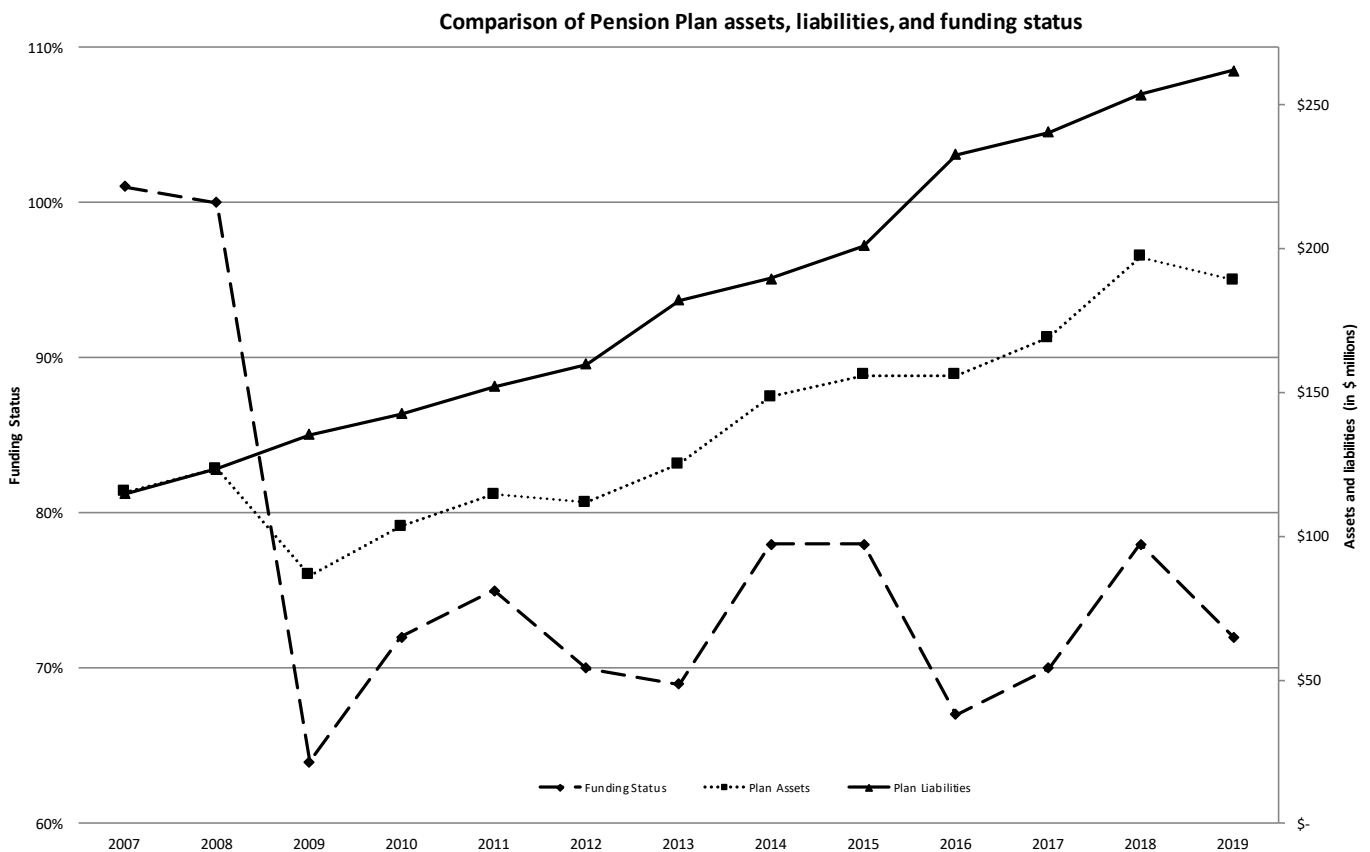
Benefit Plans has continued to monitor significant developments in the health care reform law (the Affordable Care Act or ACA). The new presidential administration has enacted some changes to the ACA, most notably repealing the mandate for individuals to maintain qualifying health insurance or pay a penalty to the federal government beginning in 2019. The public exchanges through which Americans can purchase health insurance have recently experienced modest enrollment decreases with some stabilization in premiums, although annual premium rate changes vary significantly by geographic area. The stability provided by WELS VEBA during this unpredictable period has been highly valued by our participants, as more than 80 percent of all eligible workers and WELS calling bodies continue to participate in the VEBA Plan. The total number of lives covered by the Plan (i.e. including spouses and children) is now at the highest level since 2014. The Plan rate increases in 2018 and 2019 (6 percent and 2 percent, respectively), which are below the national averages for employer group health plans in those years, have helped to preserve assets for ministry at participating calling bodies.

The Pension Plan is currently funded to more than meet its benefit obligations to in-benefit participants. However, longer life expectancies, aging participant demographics, and uncertain financial markets have increased the Plan's benefit liabilities and caused its funding status (which compares the Plan's assets with the benefit payments earned by participants) to remain in the mid-60 percent to mid-70 percent range since the economic downturn of 2008-09. Strong investment returns during 2017 yielded an 8 percent increase to the Plan's funded status, but the investment losses during the final three months of 2018 wiped away much of the gain for 2018, with the Plan's funded status at 72 percent as of Jan. 1, 2019. This is a 2 percent improvement from the 70 percent funded status as of Jan. 1, 2017. In light of these challenges, the Retirement Program Commission has continued its recovery plan, which includes the following actions to improve the Plan's funding status:

- The contribution rate charged to sponsoring organizations has more than doubled since 2012 (+108 percent).
- Contributions paid after the due date are subject to a late payment penalty that recoup lost investment earnings to the Pension trust.
- To slow the long-term growth rate of benefit liabilities, the benefit basis for new retirees has not increased since 2012.
- The overall volatility of investments in the Plan trust portfolio has been reduced to protect against future market downturns.

These changes have been made to preserve the security of benefits for current and future retirees while minimizing the financial impact on workers and calling bodies. The Retirement Program Commission closely monitors the Plan's contribution level and its impact on the Plan's funded status, and the recent significant increase to the contribution rate has greatly improved the plan's financial situation. As a result, the commission expects the annual contribution rate change to return to historical norms (i.e. 3- to 6-percent annual increases) for 2020 and may have the opportunity to consider a contribution rate decrease if the Plan's funded status improves as projected.

The Pension and VEBA trusts achieved investment losses of -5.1 percent and -3.0 percent, respectively, in 2018, while the trusts achieved investment gains of 16.1 percent and 10.3 percent, respectively, in 2017. Unaudited results from the 2018 Plan year show net assets available for benefits in the Pension and VEBA trusts as \$188.8 million and \$29.4 million, respectively. In comparison, final audited results from the 2017 Plan year showed net assets available for benefits in the Pension and VEBA trusts as \$168.3 million and \$27.5 million, respectively. Both commissions continue to evaluate investment allocation and diversification strategies that are expected to achieve target returns with reduced risk.



A look ahead

Benefit Plans will continue its emphasis on maintaining long-term stability for the VEBA, Pension, and Shepherd Plans while considering new ways to engage participants and calling bodies through improved communications.

Given the uncertainties with the future of the ACA and the U.S. health insurance market, the VEBA Commission and its advisors will be carefully monitoring developments in this area and the impact on WELS VEBA. In addition, the VEBA Commission and Benefit Plans will be more closely observing worker participation in the VEBA Plan and health care arrangements at each participating calling body to protect the Plan's long-term sustainability in the rapidly-changing health care environment. Providing an affordable health plan with consistent nationwide benefits is essential to supporting synodwide mission and ministry activities.

The Retirement Program Commission will continue to work with the retirement benefit strategy committee appointed in late-2017 to study options in retirement benefit program design on behalf of workers and calling bodies. While this study is underway, the commission will focus its efforts on better engaging workers and calling bodies on the importance of planning for retirement, utilizing both the Pension and Shepherd Plans in this process.

Benefit Plans, as well as the VEBA and Retirement Program Commissions, are acutely aware of the need to keep benefit plan costs as low as possible to allow calling bodies to preserve valuable assets to fund ministry efforts. The primary goal for the benefit plans going forward is to strike the best balance between acceptable costs to calling bodies and meaningful benefits to participants.

Mr. Joshua Peterman, reporter

WELS VEBA Commission:

Mr. Richard Hudock, chairman

Mr. Charles Adrian, vice chairman

Mr. Robert Bullens, secretary

Teacher Douglas Dast

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer and treasurer

Rev. Joel Sauer

Mr. Jon Wirkkula

Advisory:

Ms. Christine Hitter, membership manager

Mr. Joshua Peterman, director of Benefit Plans

Ms. Lori Schrank, claims manager

WELS Retirement Program Commission:

Teacher Robert Fischer, chairman

Mr. David McCulloch, vice chairman

Mr. Thomas Medema, secretary

Mr. James Brenn

Rev. Philip Hoyer

Mr. Lee Miller

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer and treasurer

Advisory:

Ms. Christine Hitter, membership manager

Mr. Joshua Peterman, director of Benefit Plans

Northwestern Publishing House

Floor Committee #15

Our calling

The WELS constitution indicates, “The object and purpose of the synod shall be to extend and conserve the true doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.” As outlined in the constitution, Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) fulfills this object and purpose “by printing, publishing, purchasing, selling, and disseminating literature that maintains Lutheran doctrine and practice” and “by furnishing appropriate literature for parish schools, Sunday schools, missions, institutions, and churches.”

The mission of Northwestern Publishing House is to deliver biblically sound, Christ-centered resources within the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and beyond. For 128 years, NPH has prepared materials that are consistent with this mission and aligned with Lutheran doctrine and practice. The proceeds NPH receives from sales of materials to individuals, congregations, and schools are used to develop and publish new materials. Our calling, then, is to continue to proclaim God’s love in Christ through the careful use of the resources God grants to us through purchases of the materials we make available.

Our current situation

Christian publishing has faced many challenges in recent years. Interest in Christian books has deteriorated. Publishers affiliated with church bodies have declined significantly in number and size. There has been a dramatic shift by consumers toward purchasing online rather than at physical retail store locations. NPH is impacted by these broader realities and by trends within our own synod. Declining church membership and school enrollment have directly impacted demand for materials for our members and students.

A number of actions have been prayerfully taken over the past 12 months in response to these significant and ongoing challenges, including closing of the NPH retail store, outsourcing distribution, relocating office operations to the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry, and reducing staffing. Through these steps, God willing, NPH has positioned its ministry for long-term, sustained service to the Church and fulfillment of the synod’s objective of publishing literature that maintains our Lutheran doctrine and practice.

Print publishing program

NPH continues to publish new books, music, and other materials for our pastors, teachers, and WELS members. These new materials along with previously published NPH books, Bible studies, curriculum, church supplies, and a selection of books and materials from other publishers are available through NPH’s website, nph.net, and by phone at 800-662-6022.

During the last biennium, NPH published 5 books for pastoral growth, 12 books for layperson growth, 3 personal devotionals, 5 Bible studies, 5 worship resources, 2 vacation Bible school courses, and 33 music titles. NPH collaborated in development of 2 WELS films and 1 film for children. NPH also produced new catechism curricula and two Yearbooks. In addition, NPH continues to publish *Forward in Christ*, *Meditations*, and *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* periodicals. Visit the NPH website regularly to discover resources that support your ministry and materials that will strengthen the faith of you and your fellow members.

Digital publishing program

NPH delivers content in ways that are relevant today with more than 200 books in eBook format, distribution of more than 118 titles through Logos, more than 560 downloadable products, digital *Forward in Christ* subscriptions, and the *Meditations Daily Devotional* app. Although digital publishing is an important strategy for NPH, distribution of digital products represents a relatively small portion of a publisher’s sales, and therefore print versions will remain critical to NPH’s success as a ministry.

New catechism curricula

Every year it seems that an increasing number of students enter catechism class with a very limited knowledge of Bible history. In response to this challenge, NPH has published two new catechism curricula, both of which teach biblical doctrine in the context of Bible history. *Growing in the Word* is a 58-lesson course that teaches Bible history

in chronological order, bringing in the parts of the catechism as they apply. *Growing in Grace* is a 32-lesson course that teaches the six chief parts of the catechism. Lessons include brief accounts from Bible history to underscore the connection between our Lutheran doctrine and God's plan of salvation.

The courses offer a wide range of flexibility. Some pastors begin first-year students with *Growing in the Word* to establish a foundation of understanding in Bible history and then teach *Growing in Grace* for the second year. Some teach *Growing in Grace* in class and assign lessons from *Growing in the Word* as homework. Teachers' guides include answers and additional notes as well as a resource CD with additional teaching resources.

Bible studies

NPH publishes Bible studies on a variety of subjects, including books of the Bible; current religious, moral, and social topics; and studies of our Lutheran heritage. Additionally, NPH in collaboration with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and WELS Commission on Discipleship produces the monthly *Teach the Word* e-newsletter that provides practical advice and information to help pastors better understand adult and child learning and to strengthen teaching skills. At present, 862 pastors subscribe to *Teach the Word*. To subscribe, visit nph.net/teach-the-word.

Publication Coordinating Commission

The Publication Coordinating Commission helps to subsidize publishing projects of NPH that are deemed valuable but, due to limited market size, would not recover the cost of production. In 2018 the Publication Coordinating Commission received an allocation of \$50,000 from the Synodical Council. This, along with limited existing Publication Coordinating Commission funds, have been designated for several future professional books and potentially an updated version of the *Come Worship Christ* Bible study. An additional project currently being explored is development of a film on Luther and the Diet of Worms to be funded from remaining Reformation 500 restricted funds.

Four publishing projects made possible through the assistance of Publication Coordinating Commission fund subsidies were completed in the past biennium:

- *Contemporary 95 Theses*
- *The Election Controversy* (J. Brenner)
- *A Christian Guide to Mental Illness, Vol. 2* (S. Saunders)
- *Commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (D. Kuske)

Collaborative projects

NPH is or was recently engaged in a number of exciting collaborative projects with WELS commissions, committees, and WELS-affiliated ministries. The list of projects includes a hymnology curriculum, a special project to distribute *Show Me Your Mighty Hand* to more than one hundred Jesus Cares Ministries programs, working with WELS Congregational Services to identify mutual opportunities, and developing the marketing plan for the new hymnal with the Hymnal Project Committee.

Close collaboration continues between NPH and WELS Multi-Language Publications with NPH providing content translated by Multi-Language Publications for use throughout the world. This content includes books and other materials along with Christmas and Easter for Kids. Over the last two years, NPH has also worked with Multi-Language Publications to transition the majority of its 850 books and materials from hard copy to digital format for more economical and efficient international distribution through the NPH website. NPH further supports Multi-Language Publications' efforts by providing customer service staffing and expertise.

In collaboration with WELS Communications, an in-depth *Forward in Christ* survey and research project was recently completed. The goal of the project is to gain deeper insights into reader preferences and congregation usage. Input from the survey will be evaluated for potential updates to the content and design of the periodical to ensure it remains relevant to readers and effective in meeting its objectives.

Evangelical Heritage Version

The Evangelical Heritage Version (EHV) is a Bible translation developed by the Wartburg Project. The EHV New Testament & Psalms edition was introduced in May 2017. The complete EHV Bible will be released in Summer 2019. NPH will continue to pursue an "eclectic approach" in its publications, as directed by synod convention resolution, with authors utilizing the best translation for the context of a given work.

Business and ministry

Northwestern Publishing House is a self-funding ministry. This means that NPH reinvests the returns it receives from sales of materials and resources it develops for WELS pastors, teachers, and church members. NPH also makes

available for sale church supplies and, after careful review, resources from other publishers and again reinvests the returns from these materials to develop materials and resources for WELS.

NPH is working diligently and investing in programs to maximize its ministry reach. NPH has expanded its e-mail contact, reintroduced its Book Fairs program, and increased its Facebook presence. As a result, customers are increasingly responding to efforts to reach them and engaging in new ways with NPH. These are encouraging trends in the face of the challenges mentioned earlier, but NPH remains reliant upon the work of pastors in getting the word out about NPH and the resources it makes available for their church members.

A look ahead

New hymnal

The WELS Hymnal Project led by Pastor Michael Schultz includes many pastors, teachers, and laypeople engaged in development of the new hymnal and related materials. In collaboration with NPH, production plans and timelines are being completed. With a planned introduction in Fall 2021, the new hymnal program will include an extensive line of print and digital resources. Print materials include:

For members

- Hymnal—pew edition
- Hymnal—gift edition
- Psalter—pew edition

For musicians

- Hymns accompaniment
- Liturgy, Psalms, verse of the day accompaniment
- Psalter accompaniment

For presiding minister

- Altar book
- Pastor's companion
- Pastor's agenda

Pastor resources

- Hymn selection guide
- Commentary on the Propers: Year A
- Commentary on the Propers: Year B
- Commentary on the Propers: Year C
- Commentary on the Propers: Minor festivals & occasions

Other supporting resources

- Pastor's guide
- Musician's guide
- Parish sourcebook
- Devotions for laypeople

Planning continues for the introduction of a “service builder” digital program that will greatly assist pastors, musicians, and support staff in their worship planning and production of worship folders. The program will provide digital access to the hymnal's vast resources while dramatically reducing time devoted to worship folder creation.

A “musician's resource” is also planned for introduction. This powerful tool will allow musicians to access, purchase, and print scores for a wide variety of instruments for all the rites, psalms, and hymns in the new Hymnal and Psalter, enabling them to contribute their talent in worship.

As the introduction of the new hymnal approaches, materials will be provided to help churches inform their congregations of the extensive resources that will be available. One of these materials is a printed “preview” that will be sent to all churches. The preview will feature the colors, look, and design layout of the new hymnal resources, along with samples of new rites, psalms, and hymns. The goal of the preview is to assist churches in their efforts to gain an understanding of the breadth of content available in the new hymnal materials, to generate enthusiasm for the new hymnal, and to begin developing funding plans. The preview is anticipated to be available in January 2020.

Additional information on the WELS Hymnal Project is available at welshymnal.com.

Hymnology curriculum

Mr. Jeremy Bakken, director of worship and sacred music at NPH, is working with a subcommittee of the WELS Commission on Worship that is preparing a hymnology curriculum for Lutheran elementary schools. The curriculum will include hymns from the current and upcoming hymnals. Year one of this three-year curriculum will be available for use in the fall 2020 school year.

Business and ministry

Northwestern Publishing House is “open for business.” With the recent transitions, it is important to know that NPH continues to fulfill its objectives outlined in the WELS Constitution and to serve its customers. NPH’s publishing program continues, and pastors, teachers, and WELS members can find books from NPH and other publishers, along with church supplies, gifts, and other materials at nph.net or by calling 800-662-6022. Southeastern Wisconsin churches can continue to take advantage of local pick up of communion supplies and sheet music from NPH in our new offices at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry.

An encouragement to pastors

Northwestern Publishing House’s role can in a large part be summarized as assisting our pastors in their fulfillment of Jesus’ urging, “Feed my lambs.” NPH provides books and other materials that encourage those you serve to remain in God’s Word. Whether devotionals, apologetics, or books on Christian living, everything NPH publishes and makes available from other publishers for your members is theologically accurate and doctrinally trustworthy. Further, as the synod’s publisher, NPH produces Bible studies for adults and curriculum for children that are biblically sound and centered on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We ask that pastors recognize the role NPH plays in service to them and to their church members and actively encourage their members to make use of NPH as a resource to help them grow in their faith. A pastor’s use of materials from NPH and advocacy for NPH is critical to our ability to reach his church members with the books and other materials we develop for them.

Our thanks

We thank the called workers and employees who faithfully serve the ministry of Northwestern Publishing House. Their day-in and day-out dedication to the mission of NPH is both inspiring and humbling. Throughout the many transitions they have faced over the last 12 months, they have demonstrated support for one another and a renewed commitment to those we serve. We pray for God’s continued blessing upon each of them.

We also give thanks for the many pastors and teachers who make others aware of the resources NPH provides. Our ability to reach those we serve is determined in no small part by how you promote materials from NPH among your members and school parents. On behalf of the NPH Board of Directors and the entire NPH ministry, we thank you. May God bless you in your service to him.

As we look ahead, we thank and praise God for the blessings he has provided. The future is not for us to know and rests securely in his hands. We look ahead with a positive—even hopeful—attitude in anticipation of his plan unfolding before us and rely on his promise: “Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans” (Proverbs 16:3).

Mr. Bill Ziche, reporter

Prof. John Hartwig, chairman

Rev. Joel Schroeder, vice chairman

Mr. Dwight Luedtke, treasurer

Mr. Christopher Snyder, secretary

Mr. Matthew Groth

Mr. Michael McCormick

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer and treasurer

Mr. Joel Raasch

Rev. Luke Werre

Prof. Keith Wessel

Administrative officers:

Mr. Bill Ziche, president

Rev. Curt Jahn, vice president, editorial

Mr. Eric Krueger, vice president, finance and accounting

Committee on Constitutional Matters Floor Committee #17

Our calling

The Committee on Constitutional Matters serves under the Conference of Presidents to interpret the constitution and bylaws for the synod and its constituency. It is responsible for maintaining and distributing accurate updates of these documents as changes are made by the synod in convention. The current WELS Constitution and Bylaws and the Constitution for the Districts are available at wels.net/about-wels/synod-reports. If you are unable to access the documents on the website, you may contact the President's Office to request a printed copy.

Our current situation

In addition to revising the document to incorporate the amendments approved by the 2017 convention, the committee has been asked to address 17 specific questions on constitutional matters since the convention to the date of this report. The delegates to the 2019 convention will have several proposed amendments to the bylaws to consider. They have been submitted by the Conference of Presidents, the Synodical Council, or the Board for Ministerial Education and are contained in the "Proposed bylaw revisions" document that follows this report. The italicized words in the document provide the background for each of the proposed changes. Strikethrough indicates deletion and underlining indicates an addition. These proposed amendments will be assigned to the Floor Committee on Constitutional Matters, Floor Committee #17. The convention may also consider any other proposed amendments to the constitution or bylaws which have been sent to all voting and advisory delegates at least 60 days prior to the convention.

We thank Rev. Steven Korth, who not only concluded his faithful service to our Savior on the Committee on Constitutional Matters but was also taken home to heaven by our loving Savior this year.

A look ahead

Our committee will meet as soon as possible after the convention to incorporate any amendments approved by the delegates and publish the revised Constitution and Bylaws. Notice will be given when the document is complete. It will be available, as it is now, at wels.net/about-wels/synod-reports, or by contacting the President's Office for a printed copy.

As we look ahead we note that the Conference of Presidents has been working on a major revision of the bylaws that deals with discipline and appeals. These proposed changes will be ready for the district conventions to consider in 2020.

Rev. Eric Steinbrenner, reporter

Rev. Eric Steinbrenner, chairman

Mr. Kenneth Gosch

Proposed bylaw revisions

The following bylaw changes have been recommended either by the Synodical Council, the Conference of Presidents, or the Board for Ministerial Education. Background rationale is provided for each recommended change. Only those areas of the bylaws recommended for change are included here; those not being amended are not printed in this recommendation but can be found in the synod Constitution and Bylaws if reference is needed.

Recommendation #1

Background: These additions clarify the usage of the terms "WELS" and "synod." If approved, all bylaws where these

terms are used will be revised to reflect the proper usage. In addition, "Affiliated ministries" will replace the often misunderstood term "Parasynodical organizations."

DEFINITIONS

Section 1.00

As used in this constitution and these bylaws the words below are defined as follows:

(h) ~~"Parasynodical organizations" are those WELS-affiliated organizations listed under "Church-Related and Charitable Organizations" in the most current synod yearbook. "WELS" refers to the corporate entity which includes its ministerial education schools and subsidiaries.~~

(i) "Synod" refers to WELS members, congregations, and ministries.

(j) "Affiliated ministries" refers to any ministry entity created and carried out by WELS members that are listed under "Affiliated Ministries and Charitable Organizations" or "Lutheran College and High Schools" in the current WELS Yearbook.

Recommendation #2

Background: This amendment removes the requirement that the recording secretary publish the names of convention delegates in Forward in Christ. It retains the requirement that he publish the list of delegates on the synod website or through other suitable electronic means.

OFFICERS

Section 2.40

Recording Secretary

(b) At the direction of the president, the recording secretary shall give notice of each convention of the synod by publication in *Forward in Christ* and/or on the WELS website and/or other suitable electronic means, the first such notice to be published not less than 90 days prior to the convention. The recording secretary shall also publish the list of voting delegates ~~in *Forward in Christ* and/or on the WELS website and/or~~ through other suitable electronic means at least 60 days prior to the convention.

Recommendation #3

Background: In the event of a change in the office of synod president, this amendment gives the Synodical Council the ability to ask the departing president to assist the new president in a time of transition as determined by the Synodical Council.

Section 2.80

Election of the President, Vice Presidents, and Recording Secretary

(e) The term of any newly elected officer shall begin immediately after the close of the regular convention at which the officer is elected. In the event of the election of a new synod president, the Synodical Council may ask the departing synod president to assist the newly elected president in a time of transition as established by the Synodical Council.

Recommendation #4

Background: This amendment must be changed if the proposed amendment to 7.00(b) is approved. The amendment to 7.00(b) states that board members are appointed by the Synodical Council rather than elected by the synod in convention. This makes selection of NPH board members consistent with the way board members are appointed to all other synodical subsidiaries.

CONVENTIONS

Section 3.40

Nominating Committee

(e) In January of the convention year, the Nominating Committee shall nominate by ballot three candidates for each position on the following boards as terms expire: the Board for World Missions; ~~the board of directors of Northwestern Publishing House;~~ the Board for Ministerial Education; the chairmen of the following boards: Home Missions, World Missions, and Ministerial Education; the Board of Appeals; and the chairmen of the Governing Boards of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Martin Luther College, Luther Preparatory School and Michigan Lutheran Seminary; all of whom shall be parish pastors. It shall nominate candidates to serve as chairmen of the commissions

of Congregational Services, all of whom shall be pastors with the exception of the chairman of the Commission on Lutheran Schools, who shall be a teacher. It shall nominate the pastor and teacher at large members of the Synodical Council as their terms expire.

Recommendation #5

Background: Specifically lists the calling of the executive editor of Forward in Christ as a responsibility of the Conference of Presidents, as is current practice. Other appointments of editors and the doctrinal consultant are moved to this section from Section 4.30 (c).

CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS

Section 4.00

Conference of Presidents Duties and Responsibilities

(e) The Conference of Presidents shall call the executive editor of Forward in Christ who shall report to the Conference of Presidents through the synod president. The Conference of Presidents shall appoint the contributing all other editors of Forward in Christ and a professor of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to serve as the doctrinal consultant for Forward in Christ.

Recommendation #6

Background: Changes terms of Commission on Inter-Church Relations members to four-year terms with ability to succeed themselves twice. This is consistent with other elected and appointed positions.

Section 4.10

Commission on Inter-Church Relations

(b) The commission shall be composed of five parish pastors, three professors from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, and two professors from the other synodical schools. The Conference of Presidents shall recommend members to the president. The president shall appoint commission members for a term of ~~six~~ four years. Commission members may succeed themselves ~~once~~ twice. Insofar as practicable the membership shall represent diverse geographic areas.

Recommendation #7

Background: Reflects the approved change to combine adult discipleship and youth and family ministry into a single Commission on Discipleship.

Section 4.15

Congregational Services

(a) There shall be an appropriate number of commissions that shall serve under the Conference of Presidents to provide services and resources to congregations, schools, and individuals in the following areas of ministry: evangelism, worship, ~~youth and family ministry~~; Lutheran schools, ~~adult~~ discipleship, special ministries, and congregational counseling.

(b) The Conference of Presidents will recommend the appropriate number and nature of the commissions to the synod in convention.

Recommendation #8

Background: Wording added to reflect the term normally used to refer to the synod's budget.

Section 4.20

Ministry of Christian Giving

(b) The Ministry of Christian Giving shall assist the Conference of Presidents in carrying out their responsibility for funding the synod's ministry financial plan.

Recommendation #9

Background: Calling and appointment of Forward in Christ editors and consultant moved from this section to Section 4.00 (e).

Section 4.30

Office of Communication Services

c) The Director of Communications will work in close cooperation with the editor and staff of *Forward in Christ* to coordinate and facilitate clear and consistent communication to the constituency of the synod. ~~The editor of Forward~~

in Christ shall be called by the Conference of Presidents and shall report to the Conference of Presidents through the synod president. A Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary professor shall be appointed by the Conference of Presidents to serve as the doctrinal consultant for *Forward in Christ*.

Recommendation #10

Background: Changes terms of committee members to four years with ability to succeed themselves twice, consistent with other elected and appointed positions.

Section 4.40 Support Committee

(b) The committee shall be composed of five district first vice presidents. The Conference of Presidents shall recommend members to the president. The president shall appoint committee members for a term of ~~two~~ four years. The president shall appoint one of the members to serve as chairman. The committee members may succeed themselves ~~five times~~ twice.

Recommendation #11

Background: Since many of the members of this committee are retired, the change allows for more than five members. The change also brings the terms of service into consistency with other elected and appointed positions and clarifies that the committee reports to the Conference of Presidents through the synod president.

Section 4.50 Publication Review Committee

(b) The committee shall consist of a minimum of five pastors, active or retired, appointed by the president. Appointments shall be made for a term of ~~six~~ four years. ~~The terms of two members, respectively, one will expire every two years. Committee members may succeed themselves once.~~ twice.

(c) The committee shall report to the Conference of Presidents through the synod president.

Recommendation #12

Background: The change also brings the terms of service into consistency with other elected and appointed positions and clarifies that the committee reports to the Conference of Presidents through the synod president.

Section 4.70 Committee on Constitutional Matters

1. The committee shall be composed of three members appointed by the Conference of Presidents for a term of ~~six~~ four years. Committee members may succeed themselves ~~once~~ twice.

2. The committee shall report to the Conference of Presidents through the synod president.

Recommendation #13

Background: Change in length of terms makes terms consistent with other elected and appointed positions. Listing teachers as eligible to serve on the district mission board makes the synod bylaw consistent with the district bylaw, which lists teachers as eligible.

Section 6.04 Mission Districts and District Mission Boards

(d) The board for each mission district shall be elected by the mission district and composed of as many pastors, teachers, and laymen elected by the mission district for the administration of home missions in the mission district. as the mission district may from time to time determine. The number of board members shall be determined by each district. The members shall be elected for a term of ~~six~~ four years and may succeed themselves ~~once.~~ twice.

Recommendation #14

Background: Terms are changed to four years, with members able to succeed themselves twice. Provides consistency with other elected and appointed positions.

Section 6.16 Board for World Missions

(d) The remaining four men shall consist of one pastor, two laymen, and one teacher and be elected for terms of

~~six~~ four years from a slate of candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee of the synod and may succeed themselves ~~once~~. twice.

(j) Members of the administrative committees shall be appointed by the board with input from the administrator for a term of ~~three~~ four years. A member may succeed himself ~~any number of terms~~. twice. Insofar as is practicable, the membership shall represent diverse geographic areas.

Recommendation #15

Background: Terms of board members at ministerial education schools are changed to four years with members able to succeed themselves twice, consistent with most other elected and appointed positions. Another change involves a vacancy that would be created if a board member moves to another district. This amendment would allow the district president to allow the man to finish his term, even though he has moved to another district.

Section 6.32

Board for Ministerial Education

(b) The board shall be composed of a chairman who shall be a parish pastor, one parish pastor, two teachers, one representative from the area Lutheran high schools, four laymen, and the chairmen of the governing boards of the synod's ministerial schools. The members shall be elected by the synod for a term of ~~six~~ four years from a slate of candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee. They may succeed themselves ~~once~~ twice.

Section 6.34

Governing Board of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

(b) The terms for all members of the governing board shall be ~~six~~ four years. They may succeed themselves twice. The president of the synod shall appoint a man to fill a vacancy that occurs in the office of the governing board chairman between elections. The appropriate district president shall appoint men to fill vacancies that occur among the governing board members between elections. If a man moves to another district, the district president may allow the man to complete his term.

(d) The districts shall elect the seven remaining members of the governing board from a slate of candidates prepared by the district Nominating Committees in accord with the pastor/teacher/lay distribution as determined by the synod's Nominating Committee. ~~Board members may succeed themselves once.~~

Section 6.36

Governing Board of Martin Luther College

(b) The terms for all members of the governing board shall be ~~six~~ four years. They may succeed themselves twice. The president of the synod shall appoint a man to fill a vacancy that occurs in the office of the governing board chairman between elections. The appropriate district president shall appoint men to fill vacancies that occur among the governing board members between elections. If a man moves to another district, the district president may allow the man to complete his term.

(d) Nine members of the governing board shall be elected by the upper Midwest districts (two each from the Minnesota, Northern Wisconsin, Southeastern Wisconsin, and Western Wisconsin Districts and one from the Michigan District). The three remaining members of the governing board shall be elected from three of the seven non-upper Midwest districts in accord with the pastor/teacher/lay distribution as determined by the Nominating Committee. ~~Board members may succeed themselves once.~~

Section 6.38

Governing Board of Preparatory Schools

(b) The terms for all members of the governing board shall be ~~six~~ four years. They may succeed themselves twice. The president of the synod shall appoint a man to fill a vacancy that occurs in the office of the governing board chairman between elections. The appropriate district president shall appoint men to fill vacancies that occur among the governing board members between elections. If a man moves to another district, the district president may allow the man to complete his term.

(d) The districts shall elect the seven remaining members of the governing boards from a slate of candidates prepared by the district nominating committees in accord with the pastor/teacher/lay distribution as determined by the synod's Nominating Committee. ~~Board members may succeed themselves once.~~

Recommendation #16

Background: Clarifies the process for publishing names of nominees for professor positions at synodical schools.

Section 6.48 Calling Procedure

- (a) The calling of professors to the ministerial schools shall be conducted by the governing board.
- (b) The governing board of the school in which a vacancy may have occurred shall publish such vacancy on the official Internet site of WELS and/or to congregations by mail and shall request the nomination of qualified candidates.
- (c) All pastors, male professors, male teachers, congregations, and voting members of congregations shall be entitled to nominate a candidate or candidates within 20 days from the date of publication of the vacancy. The submitted names shall be published on the official Internet site of WELS and/or to congregations by mail or e-mail the first business day after nominations close. The calling board may issue a request for additional candidates at any time. Additional names may be submitted to or by the president of the district in which the school is located at any time.

Recommendation #17

Background: Requirement of semiannual reports to the Synodical Council is changed to at least annual reports.

WELS CHRISTIAN AID AND RELIEF

Section 6.92

WELS Christian Aid and Relief

- g) The commission shall report to the president or his designee and shall provide to the Synodical Council ~~a semiannual~~ at least annually a report of all expenditures for disaster relief, special assistance to those in need, and humanitarian aid.

Recommendation #18

Background: New heading describes more accurately the entities described in Section 7. In addition, the method of choosing members of the Northwestern Publishing House Board of Directors is changed from election by the synod convention to appointment by the Synodical Council. This change is intended to ensure that board members will have the necessary skills and experience to carry out their responsibilities. It also makes the method of selection of NPH board members consistent with the way board members are selected for all other subsidiaries that report to the Synodical Council. The composition of the board as described in Section 7.00 (b) is unchanged.

SUBSIDIARIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Support Services includes the entities contained in Section 7.00-7.99 of the bylaws, as well as, but is not limited to accounting, archives/history, benefit plans, finance, human resources, legal, lending, planning, real estate, revenue forecasting, and technology. These areas are responsible and accountable to the Synodical Council through the president or his designee.

Section 7.00

Northwestern Publishing House

- (b) Northwestern Publishing House will be governed by a board of directors ~~elected by the synod from a slate of candidates proposed by the synod Nominating Committee.~~ appointed by the Synodical Council. The board of directors will consist of two parish pastors, one professor from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, one professor from Martin Luther College, one elementary or secondary teacher, and four laymen with retail, marketing, finance, legal, technology, and/or other appropriate professional backgrounds. Directors will serve for a term of four years and may succeed themselves twice. Insofar as practical, the directors' terms shall be staggered. The president's designee, if one is appointed per 7.00(g), shall be an ex-officio member of the board of directors.

Recommendation #19

Background: Terms are changed to four years, with members able to succeed themselves twice. This is consistent with other elected and appointed positions.

Section 7.40

WELS Retirement Program Commission

- (b) The commission shall consist of one pastor, one teacher, and four laymen appointed by the Synodical Council. Appointments shall be for a term of ~~three~~ four years. ~~The terms of two members shall expire each year.~~ Members may

succeed themselves ~~three times~~ twice. The president's designee, if one is appointed per 7.40(d), shall be an ex-officio member of the board of directors.

Recommendation #20

Background: Terms are changed to four years, with members able to succeed themselves twice. This is consistent with other elected and appointed positions.

Section 7.50

WELS VEBA Commission

(b) The commission shall consist of one pastor, one teacher, and four laymen appointed by the Synodical Council. Appointments shall be for a term of ~~three~~ four years. ~~The terms of two members shall expire each year.~~ Members may succeed themselves ~~three times~~ twice. The president's designee, if one is appointed per 7.50(d), shall be an ex-officio member of the board of directors.

From the Constitution for the Districts

Recommendation #21

Background: This change reflects current practice in which membership in a district is automatically granted upon acceptance of a call.

ARTICLE V

Application for membership

Section 1. Pastors and male teachers are ~~members of a district upon acceptance of a call into that district~~ desiring membership in this district shall submit a written application to the district president with the necessary credentials.

Recommendation #22

Background: Reflects the approved change to combine adult discipleship and youth and family ministry into a single Commission on Discipleship.

ARTICLE XV

Section 1. There shall be a district Congregational Services group to assist congregations in the following areas of ministry: evangelism, worship, ~~youth and family ministry,~~ Lutheran schools, ~~adult~~ discipleship, special ministries, and congregational counseling. The group shall consist of as many coordinators as the district deems appropriate to cover these areas of ministry. Coordinators shall be elected for a term of ~~six~~ four years and may succeed themselves ~~once~~ twice. The terms shall be staggered within the group.

Memorials

Memorial (2019-01)

Subject: *Loving concern for brothers and sisters with student debt*
Floor Committee #2

- WHEREAS 1) the Lord of the Church has said “Love one another” (1 John 3:11) and encourages “Dear children, let us not love only with word or with our tongue, but also in action and truth” (1 John 3:18); and
- WHEREAS 2) the total cumulative indebtedness of 2,408 graduates from Martin Luther College since 1996 is \$39,164,179, any amount of which may remain; and
- WHEREAS 3) the synod in convention in 2015 resolved to address the issue of student indebtedness; and
- WHEREAS 4) the Scriptures say, “Whoever has worldly wealth and sees his brother in need but closes his heart against him—how can God’s love remain in him?” (1 John 3:17); therefore be it

Resolved. that the synod in convention empower and encourage the Board of Support together with the circuit pastors to make an energetic and brotherly effort, based on their best judgment, to identify and financially assist those called workers serving in the synod who have a student indebtedness that is unduly burdensome.

Central Conference of the Western Wisconsin District

Memorial (2019-02)

Subject: *Doctrinal statement on divorce*
Floor Committee #2

- WHEREAS 1) divorce is prevalent in society and is occurring within our own congregations; and
- WHEREAS 2) there is no guidance provided within present WELS’ doctrinal statements or enumerated upon in any statement of beliefs (such as *This We Believe*); and
- WHEREAS 3) there may be some disparity among us on understanding what justifies the breaking of the marriage bond as stated by the Lord through the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 and as presented in the Conference of Presidents’ paper, *A study of marriage, divorce, malicious desertion, and remarriage in the light of God’s Word* (December 1989; reviewed and updated by the Conference of Presidents in May 2015); and
- WHEREAS 4) any disparity of teaching among us is unacceptable and could ultimately lead to false teaching and division within the synod; therefore be it

Resolved. a) that the WELS Conference of Presidents prepare a doctrinal statement; and be it further

Resolved. b) the doctrinal statement be presented to the 12 districts for review; and be it finally

Resolved. c) the doctrinal statement be approved at a synod biennial convention.

Mr. Glenn M. Brunner, Kewaskum, Wis.

Memorial (2019-03)

Subject: *Encouragement for Congregation Mission Offerings*
Floor Committee #2

- WHEREAS 1) WELS Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) have not kept up with the rate of inflation in recent years; and

- WHEREAS 2) CMO is the backbone of funding the operational expenses for the mission and ministry of WELS; and
- WHEREAS 3) our WELS ministerial schools cannot be expected to maintain their current budgets without adequate support from the synod budget; and
- WHEREAS 4) we do not desire our WELS ministerial schools to lay the burden of increased expenses on our ministerial students; therefore be it

Resolved. that the synod in convention direct the circuit pastors of the synod to meet with every congregation in their circuit to encourage an increase in their CMO, if at all possible.

Central Conference of the Western Wisconsin District

Memorial (2019-04)

Subject: *Encouraging education about the staff ministry program*

Floor Committee #2

- WHEREAS 1) the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few; and
- WHEREAS 2) the church is to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the field; and
- WHEREAS 3) the Wisconsin Synod has been uniquely blessed in the development and implementation of the staff ministry program; and
- WHEREAS 4) there remain unassigned staff ministry graduates at Martin Luther College and throughout WELS; and
- WHEREAS 5) staff ministry is extremely flexible in meeting the ministry needs of a congregation, allowing pastors and teachers to carry on more fully their work as well as expanding gospel work in other areas of the congregation; therefore be it

Resolved. a) that the synod encourage the staff ministry program be more widely publicized among local congregations and schools; and be it finally

Resolved. b) that congregations looking to fill vacancies or seeking to expand ministry be informed about the benefits and availability of staff ministers.

Arizona-California District

Memorial (2019-05)

Subject: *Publicity of student debt*

Floor Committee #4

- WHEREAS 1) WELS is a group of more than 360,000 men, women, and children in nearly 1,300 congregations united by a common faith in Christ's saving love; and
- WHEREAS 2) Galatians 6:2 tells us to "carry each other's burdens"; and
- WHEREAS 3) according to official reports provided to WELS Financial Services and to the federal government by the financial office at Martin Luther College, average student debt of graduates at Martin Luther College is a burden that has increased from \$8,782 in 2003 to \$27,926 in 2018; and
- WHEREAS 4) according to official reports provided to WELS Financial Services and to the federal government by the financial office at Martin Luther College, the burden of total cumulative indebtedness of all the graduates of Martin Luther College from 1996–2018 is \$39,164,179; and
- WHEREAS 5) the Board for Ministerial Education is responsible for oversight of Luther Preparatory School, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Martin Luther College, and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary; and
- WHEREAS 6) the Conference of Presidents is responsible for encouraging and equipping WELS to carry out its mission and ministry; and
- WHEREAS 7) the Synodical Council is responsible for managing the activities of the synod that are determined by the synod in convention; and

- WHEREAS 8) Communication Services is responsible for clear and consistent communication of the synod's mission and ministry to its members through vehicles such as *Forward in Christ* magazine, *WELS Connection* videos, and *Together* e-news; therefore be it
- Resolved, a) that the synod in convention direct Communication Services to provide a minimum of once a year updates through vehicles such as *Forward in Christ* magazine, *WELS Connection* videos, and *Together* e-news concerning the student debt at Martin Luther College and the synod's efforts to reduce it; and be it finally
- Resolved, b) that Martin Luther College, the Board for Ministerial Education, the Conference of Presidents, and the Synodical Council oversee and direct this communication.

Central Conference of the Western Wisconsin District

Memorial (2019-06)

Subject: *Compensation Review Committee*
Floor Committee #5

- WHEREAS 1) the 2015 synod convention directed the Compensation Review Committee to conduct a comprehensive examination of the synod's compensation guidelines; and
- WHEREAS 2) the Synodical Council (SC) clarified how the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) feature of the guidelines will be applied to synodical workers; and
- WHEREAS 3) the SC defined four points of clarification regarding COLA; therefore be it
- Resolved, a) that we encourage the SC to clarify the fair market rental value pertaining to the salary matrix; and be it finally
- Resolved, b) that we encourage the SC to clarify the process of implementing COLAs after the first year of service in the ministry.

Arizona-California District

Memorial (2019-07)

Subject: *Directing synod budget to relieve Martin Luther College students of financial burden*
Floor Committee #5

- WHEREAS 1) one of the stated purposes of our fellowship as a synod, according to our constitution, is "to extend and conserve the true doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: by establishing and maintaining theological seminaries, colleges, academies, schools, and other institutions of learning"; and
- WHEREAS 2) WELS Financial Services reports that Martin Luther College (MLC) plans to raise its tuition seven percent over the next two years; and
- WHEREAS 3) the current typical tuition and room and board at MLC for one year totals approximately \$22,000; and
- WHEREAS 4) while MLC tuition costs may be comparable to national averages, it necessarily creates a burden on our future pastors and teachers, especially if a future pastor marries a future teacher; and
- WHEREAS 5) in view of the current shortage of called workers, one way of recruiting for and supporting the gospel ministry is to help ensure that future gospel ministers graduate with little debt from tuition and room and board; and
- WHEREAS 6) Congregation Mission Offering (CMO) receipts have unfortunately remained mostly static in spite of the rate of inflation; and
- WHEREAS 7) in working to set a sound and responsible annual budget, our synodical financial planners incorporate the use of the Financial Stabilization Fund; therefore be it
- Resolved, a) that even with flat CMO the synod in convention direct our ministry financial planners to increase systematically the dollars to ministerial education above the rate of inflation; and be it finally

Resolved. b) that even with flat CMO the synod in convention direct our ministry financial planners to use any increases in the Financial Stabilization Fund to benefit ministerial education so that tuition increases can be lower.

Central Conference of the Western Wisconsin District

Memorial (2019-08)

Subject: *Encouraging synodical support for multi-site ministry*

Floor Committee #7

- WHEREAS 1) our Savior Jesus Christ gave us the great commission to “go and make disciples of all nations”; and
- WHEREAS 2) one of the stated purposes of our fellowship as a synod, according to our constitution, is “to extend and conserve the true doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: by establishing and maintaining home and world missions and such charitable institutions as it may deem appropriate to its calling”; and
- WHEREAS 3) the multi-site strategy, where one congregation carries out mission work in more than one location, has been a blessing to many congregations; and
- WHEREAS 4) the multi-site strategy in many situations has assisted congregations in reaching lost souls in a way that is cost-effective, provides a broader base of local support for mission work, and is often done with little or no synodical budgetary funds; and
- WHEREAS 5) many congregations in our synod are facing declining attendance and could continue preaching the gospel and reaching lost souls by merging with other congregations in a multi-site strategy; and
- WHEREAS 6) the gifts of pastors and laypeople can often be better utilized in a multi-site setting, with each serving according to the gifts God has given; and
- WHEREAS 7) attendance of more than 100 individuals at two different WELS national multi-site conferences shows interest and support for this strategy; therefore be it

Resolved. a) that our synod continue to aggressively promote the multi-site strategy where appropriate to reach lost souls and serve believers; and be it finally

Resolved. b) that the Board for Home Missions and district mission boards continue to support multi-site ministries as a strategy to reach lost souls with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*Nathan Strutz, Verona, Wis.
Jeff Mahnke, Weston, Wis.
Matthew Vogt, Las Vegas, Nev.*

Memorial (2019-09)

Subject: *Encouraging synodical support for Home and World Missions*

Floor Committees #7 and #8

- WHEREAS 1) our Savior Jesus Christ gave us the great commission to “go and make disciples of all nations”; and
- WHEREAS 2) one of the stated purposes of our fellowship as a synod, according to our constitution, is “to extend and conserve the true doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: by establishing and maintaining home and world missions and such charitable institutions as it may deem appropriate to its calling”; and
- WHEREAS 3) every opening of a new home and world mission gives our synod a new location and opportunity to go and make disciples; and
- WHEREAS 4) the costs of not opening new home and world missions is an eternal cost carried by unbelievers who are under Satan’s rule and are not being reached with the gospel; and
- WHEREAS 5) the costs of rising tuition at worker training schools is carried largely by believers who are under God’s providential care and are blessed with the gospel; and

- WHEREAS 6) one way of recruiting for and supporting the gospel ministry is to help ensure that future gospel ministers graduate with places to serve; and
- WHEREAS 7) young men are encouraged to enter Martin Luther College to study for the ministry when there are vacancies, as seen by the large freshman class in the pastor track at Martin Luther College for the 2018–19 school year; therefore be it
- Resolved. a) that our synod continue to aggressively pursue more opportunities to start new home and world missions; and be it finally
- Resolved. b) that even with flat CMO the synod in convention direct our ministry financial planners to make every effort to increase systematically the dollars to Home and World Missions.

*Nathan Strutz, Verona, Wis.
Jeff Mahnke, Weston, Wis.*

Memorial (2019-10)

Subject: *Use of surplus gifts from “Equipping Christian Witnesses”*

Floor Committee #9

- WHEREAS 1) the net cost of education at MLC is comparable to other colleges but institutional grants toward students are on average 70 percent less at MLC than other colleges; and
- WHEREAS 2) WELS Ministry of Christian Giving has been charged to help carry out the “Equipping Christian Witnesses” synodwide campaign for the biennium beginning in July 2019 toward several projects on behalf Martin Luther College; and
- WHEREAS 3) a branch of the “Equipping Christian Witnesses” campaign is to encourage gifts toward the Congregational Partner Grant Program for tuition assistance; and
- WHEREAS 4) it is possible that God’s people, in their willingness to give to God their best, may surpass this stated goal of the “Equipping Christian Witnesses” campaign; therefore be it
- Resolved. a) that the synod in convention direct the Martin Luther College Governing Board to apply any surplus above the established goal designated for the Congregational Partner Grant Program from the “Equipping Christian Witnesses” campaign toward reducing actual tuition costs for all MLC students; and be it finally
- Resolved. b) that the synod in convention direct the WELS Ministry of Christian Giving and Martin Luther College to inform/encourage potential donors of this intended use for surplus gifts.

Central Conference of the Western Wisconsin District

Memorial (2019-11)

Subject: *The application of WELS Endowment Funds toward the ministry of Martin Luther College*

Floor Committee #9

- WHEREAS 1) WELS endowment funds serve to stabilize and supplement financial backing to the various components of our mission and ministry; and
- WHEREAS 2) one component of the WELS endowment funds is to support the work of Martin Luther College; and
- WHEREAS 3) one of the stated purposes of our fellowship as a synod, according to our constitution, is “to extend and conserve the true doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: by establishing and maintaining theological seminaries, colleges, academies, schools, and other institutions of learning”; and
- WHEREAS 4) in 2018, 120 of 161 graduates of Martin Luther College graduated with a total debt of \$3,351,084; and
- WHEREAS 5) Individual Mission Offerings (IMOs) are tending toward a greater growth rate than Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO); therefore be it

- Resolved. a) that the synod in convention direct the Ministry of Christian Giving to highlight and encourage more gifts be given to the Martin Luther College component of WELS endowment funds; and be it further
- Resolved. b) that the synod in convention encourage all congregations of WELS to invite WELS Ministry of Christian Giving representatives to present, educate, and inform our membership about WELS endowment funds; and be it further
- Resolved. c) that a percentage of WELS endowment funds' disbursements to Martin Luther College be applied to reducing the rate of increase in tuition in the next biennium; and be it finally
- Resolved. d) that the synod in convention encourage our synod ministry financial planners to explore and implement how the total percentage of disbursements toward Martin Luther College from the WELS endowment funds could be increased in the next biennium.

Central Conference of the Western Wisconsin District

Memorial (2019-12)

Subject: *Martin Luther College mission addition*
Floor Committee #9

- WHEREAS 1) the mission of Martin Luther College (MLC) is to train a corps of Christian witnesses who are qualified to meet the ministry needs of WELS; and
- WHEREAS 2) President Mark Zarling of MLC has stated in writing that the synod Sunday schools are not part of the synod's assigned mission of the college; therefore be it
- Resolved. a) that the synod in convention add the synod's Sunday schools to the mission of MLC; and be it finally
- Resolved. b) that all future MLC graduates be filled with the Spirit to serve the Savior's lambs in our synod's Sunday schools.

Carl Toepel, Howards Grove, Wis.

Memorial (2019-13)

Subject: *Encouraging support of Michigan Lutheran Seminary*
Floor Committee #9

- WHEREAS 1) the number of pastoral vacancies remains high; and
- WHEREAS 2) the current number of graduating students from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary has been insufficient to meet the demand in our synod; and
- WHEREAS 3) Michigan Lutheran Seminary has been a key source of ministerial candidates, especially pastoral candidates; and
- WHEREAS 4) Michigan Lutheran Seminary has had lower than expected enrollment; and
- WHEREAS 5) the gifts promised to support Michigan Lutheran Seminary have not materialized as expected, placing Michigan Lutheran Seminary in a serious financial situation; therefore be it
- Resolved. a) that prayerful support be given to the faculty, staff, and student body of Michigan Lutheran Seminary at this time; and be it further
- Resolved. b) that gifts of financial support for Michigan Lutheran Seminary be encouraged synodwide to place it on firmer financial footing; and be it finally
- Resolved. c) that synodwide encouragement be given to young people of our synod to consider attending Michigan Lutheran Seminary for the preparation of the ministry, especially the pastoral ministry.

Arizona-California District

Memorial (2019-14)

Subject: *Encouraging students and congregations to make use of all sources of financial aid*

Floor Committee #9

- WHEREAS 1) one of the stated purposes of our fellowship as a synod, according to our constitution, is “to extend and conserve the true doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: by establishing and maintaining theological seminaries, colleges, academies, schools, and other institutions of learning; and
- WHEREAS 2) our worker training schools are seeing rising costs, much of which is necessarily passed along in the form of higher tuition, room, and board; and
- WHEREAS 3) there are many sources of financial aid our schools have made available, which include, but are not limited to financial aid directly from the school, the Congregational Partner program at Martin Luther College, merit scholarships, and others; and
- WHEREAS 4) there are other sources of financial aid such as Pell grants, Salem Foundation, and Siebert Foundation; and
- WHEREAS 5) congregations with students at worker training schools see the blessings and benefits of our worker training schools firsthand; and
- WHEREAS 6) Congregation Mission Offering receipts have unfortunately remained mostly static for several years in spite of the rate of inflation; and
- WHEREAS 7) students at Martin Luther College forfeited more than \$32,000 in financial aid for the 2018–19 school year simply by failing to apply for financial aid in a timely manner; and
- WHEREAS 8) increases in tuition costs and increases in synodical funds directed to worker training may likely result in less funding support for other important synodical ministries, including Home and World Missions, with the result of fewer openings of new missions; therefore be it
- Resolved. a) that our worker training schools be encouraged to continue to promote the sources of financial aid that are available; and be it further
- Resolved. b) that our congregations, especially those with students at worker training schools, make full use of the Congregational Partner Grant Program as well as consider additional support to students when possible; and be it further
- Resolved. c) that families and students be encouraged to make use of all sources of financial aid that are available from our worker training schools and other sources; and be it finally
- Resolved. d) that increases in budgetary spending for worker training schools be carefully weighed so that new Home and World Missions can continue to be opened at an aggressive rate.

Nathan Strutz, Verona, Wis.

Jeff Mahnke, Weston, Wis.

Memorial (2019-15)

Subject: *Encouraging recruitment for the pastoral ministry*

Floor Committee #9

- WHEREAS 1) WELS has a historic dedication to the training and recruitment of pastors; and
- WHEREAS 2) the current number of pastoral vacancies has been identified as a cause of concern; and
- WHEREAS 3) the synod desires to keep the vacancy rate under 10 percent; and
- WHEREAS 4) the current graduating classes of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary are too small to meet the needs and stated outreach goals of our synod; and
- WHEREAS 5) the number of vacancies will only increase in the foreseeable future; therefore be it

- Resolved. a) that a synodwide effort, starting with the local congregation, parochial school, congregational teachers, staff ministers, and parish pastors, be made to identify and encourage young men for the pastoral ministry; and be it further
- Resolved. b) that the parents of young men suitable for the ministry be educated about the blessings and opportunities that come with the pastoral ministry; and be it further
- Resolved. c) that congregations, in conjunction with Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, make an effort to bring young men to visit these campuses during their grade school and high school years; and be it further
- Resolved. d) that area Lutheran high schools identify, encourage, and shepherd young men for the ministry through personal encouragement; and be it finally
- Resolved. e) that the synodical prep schools continue their important work of encouraging for the pastoral ministry.

Arizona-California District

Memorial (2019-16)

Subject: *Encouraging MLC students to earn money for tuition*

Floor Committee #9

- WHEREAS 1) the current trend is to encourage gospel ministers-in-training to gain valuable early field experience including during the summer months; and
- WHEREAS 2) working to pay for school expenses helps students take ownership of their education and appreciate its value; and
- WHEREAS 3) worthy traits can be gained by summer employment, such as humility, perseverance, diligence, responsibility, and real-life experience; and
- WHEREAS 4) elective mission trips and other early field experiences can take students away from summer employment opportunities; and
- WHEREAS 5) WELS has a vested interest in seeing that our future gospel ministers graduate without a burdensome debt; and
- WHEREAS 6) it would be helpful to create incentive for our students to earn money for college via summer employment; therefore be it
- Resolved. that the synod in convention direct the Board for Ministerial Education together with the Governing Board for Martin Luther College to formulate a supplemental scholarship from WELS endowment funds disbursements by which students are awarded an additional scholarship based on the employer-verified number of hours worked in the summer months.

Central Conference of the Western Wisconsin District

Memorial (2019-17)

Subject: *Declare 2020 the year of the Sunday schools in WELS*

Floor Committee #10

- WHEREAS 1) WELS has been blessed with the Holy Scriptures and God's plan of salvation and that Christian education is a top priority in WELS; and
- WHEREAS 2) WELS elementary schools and early childhood schools are supported by three full-time called workers; and
- WHEREAS 3) at the end of 2017 WELS had 1,281 congregations, and 1,064 congregations had Sunday schools with 18,186 students and 3,857 teachers, and student enrollment in Sunday schools has taken a steep decline; and

- WHEREAS 4) God willing, more time, talent, and attention should be given to WELS Sunday schools during 2020; and
- WHEREAS 5) in the WELS booklet “For Generations to Come” the plan for future direction does not even mention Sunday schools; therefore be it
- Resolved, a) that the WELS Commission on Discipleship encourage a Sunday school institute in the fall of 2019; and be it further
- Resolved, b) that Pastor Donn Dobberstein be asked to plan a 2020 national Sunday school convention with proper synod funding; and be it further
- Resolved, c) that Pastor Dobberstein consult with Spirit-filled Pastors Karl Gurgel and Wayne Mueller, who were the dynamic leaders of the first and only WELS national Sunday school convention; and be it further
- Resolved, d) that the Commission on Discipleship also seek input from the presidents of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Wisconsin Lutheran College, and Bethany Lutheran College for planning purposes; and be it further
- Resolved, e) that Rev. John Braun be asked to publish Sunday school articles in *Forward in Christ*; and be it further
- Resolved, f) that President Mark Schroeder, the Conference of Presidents, and the Synodical Council declare 2020 the year of WELS Sunday schools; and be it finally
- Resolved, g) that WELS call a full-time Sunday school coordinator.

Carl W. Toepel, Howards Grove, Wis.

Memorial (2019-18)

Subject: *Growing our spiritual maturity*

Floor Committee #10

- WHEREAS 1) communicant membership of WELS is declining; and
- WHEREAS 2) statistics indicate our failure to retain many younger people (“millennial”) and those now leaving high school; and
- WHEREAS 3) unchristian worldly influence on the church as a whole, and especially on the young, is increasing in many ways such as: acceptance of being “good” as a way to heaven, acceptance of homosexuality, declining sexual moral values, challenges to the sanctity of the marriage bond, greater focus on self-centered life values, and the ever-increasing greed for more, etc.; and
- WHEREAS 4) the greatest influence on the young is normally parents, the peers of parents (congregations), teachers, and pastors; and
- WHEREAS 5) failure of congregations and parents to grow the faith of fellow members and children toward ever greater spiritual maturity will result in members and/or their children to stray, which may result in their ultimate loss from God’s kingdom; and
- WHEREAS 6) there appears to be a need to equip each other for the application of our faith in our daily lives and to grow in spiritual maturity, a maturity that should be demonstrated well beyond regular Sunday church service attendance; and
- WHEREAS 7) in 2017 the Commission on Congregational Counseling had encouraged congregations to: engage in regular planning and ongoing self-assessment of ministry efforts, and to implement a curriculum of ongoing evangelism training [2017 *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 49]; and
- WHEREAS 8) in the 2018 *Report to the Twelve Districts*, Congregational Services reports (pp. 12,13) that if the trend continues approximately 73,000 members will be lost over the next two decades; therefore be it

- Resolved. a) that over this biennium the Conference of Presidents direct all pastors and teachers to specifically incorporate teaching adult discipleship and lifestyle witnessing in Bible classes and from the pulpit; and be it further
- Resolved. b) that congregations specifically focus on inactive or straying membership as part of their ministry plans over the next biennium and report results and issues to the director of Discipleship via their districts; and be it finally
- Resolved. c) that additional emphasis be placed on training and equipping future pastors and teachers at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Martin Luther College to be able to teach principles of adult discipleship and lifestyle witnessing.

Glenn M. Brunner, Kewaskum, Wis.

Memorial (2019-19)

Subject: *The spiritual family*

Floor Committee #10

- WHEREAS 1) over the last half century the declining spiritual health and well-being of WELS families has been consistently viewed as a high-priority concern, as expressed by a blue-ribbon taskforce,¹ synodical publications,² strategic plans,³ research studies,⁴ and educational programs⁵ that directly or indirectly addressed the critical role parents have in the spiritual training of their children; and
- WHEREAS 2) WELS leaders have again recently observed a demonstrable need to strengthen the spiritual profile of member families;⁶ and
- WHEREAS 3) our synodical leaders recognize the significant correlation between the spiritual leadership of godly parents in the home and member retention;⁷ and
- WHEREAS 4) discipleship among WELS members is largely limited to age-segregated forums, which can create generational barriers that hinder, undermine, or obstruct the biblical role of godly parents; and
- WHEREAS 5) God has spoken clearly and forcefully in numerous passages of his inspired Word about the critical role that he has mandated for godly parents to play in the spiritual nurture of their children;⁸ and
- WHEREAS 6) the church and her ministry should not impede the right, privilege, and responsibility of godly parents to serve as their family's spiritual leader, but rather enable and assist parents in their roles; therefore be it
- Resolved. a) that the Conference of Presidents appoint a task force, chaired by the administrator of the Commission on Discipleship, to develop strategies, initiate plans, and seek ongoing funding that will instruct and equip parents to carry out their God-given roles as the spiritual leaders of their families, especially as it relates to family Bible reading, prayer, and the proper application of law and gospel in the home (Deuteronomy 32:47, Romans 15:14); and be it further
- Resolved. b) that the task force encourage WELS congregations to adopt and implement ministries designed to assist parents in carrying out their mandate as the spiritual leaders of their own families (Exodus 19:6, 1 Peter 2:5, Proverbs 22:6); and be it further
- Resolved. c) that the task force encourage WELS congregations to find ways and means to gather God's people in intergenerational assemblies that integrate the idealism of youth, the realism of middle age, and the wisdom of old age for faith-sharing and mutual encouragement (2 Timothy 1:5); and be it further
- Resolved. d) that the task force encourage all WELS families to faithfully study and apply God's will for their lives, which stands in stark contrast to the human moral norms and standards that dominate contemporary secular forums and public educational models (Deuteronomy 6:1-9, Malachi 3:14-18, and Malachi 4:1-6); and be it further

- Resolved, e) that the task force encourage all WELS parents to keep Jesus at the center of their family's faith-life by daily observing God's special blessings, seeking God's intervention during times of crises, observing religious festivals, and marking important spiritual events in their own homes (Joel 1:3,15,16,19 and 2:17-27); and be it finally
- Resolved, f) that the task force encourage WELS institutions, especially WELS schools and their educational programs, to stress a generational worldview that emphasizes the responsibility parents have for preparing future generations of godly parents who will steadfastly maintain an active faith-life in their own homes (Psalm 78:1-8).

The Northern Wisconsin District Commission on Discipleship

¹ Family Ministry Task Force: *Report to the Twelve Districts*, 1989, Alan Zahn/Donald Sutton, task force chairmen.

² *Wellspring*, NPH, 1993-1995. *Lutheran Parent*, NPH, 1996-2005. *Parents' Crosslink*, NPH, 2005-Present.

³ *The Family of God*, Wisconsin Lutheran High School Federation, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1996.

--, Fox Valley Federation of WELS Churches, Kenneth Kremer, 2015.

--, Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Services, 2012.

⁴ "Why Young People Leave WELS: A Summary of Findings from the Commission on Youth Discipleship," Joel Nelson, 2007.

"Survey of WELS Teens," March 2007, WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship, Joel Nelson.

"A Survey for Parents of School-Age Children," Kenneth Kremer, Appleton, Wisconsin, (unpublished), 2015.

"A Demographic Study of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod," Jonathan R. Hein, 2016.

⁵ *God Bless Our Families: A Manual for Christian Family Living*, Area WELS Churches of the Greater Fox River Valley.

Parents Touched by the Word, 1985, by Kenneth Kremer, Kremer Publications, Inc.

⁶ "A Demographic Study of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod," Jonathan R. Hein, 2016, p. 25. "Studies have shown that the greatest factor in retaining young church members is the spiritual growth activity that takes place within the family."

⁷ Hein, p. 12. "Approximately 20 years ago, it was estimated that WELS lost about 40% to 45% of its youth confirmands by the time they finished college. Today it (the loss of young confirmands) appears to be closer to 50%."

⁸ Bible texts directly related to God's mandate to parents include: Ge 9:15-16; Ge 17:9; Ex 3:4-8, 14-15; Ex 20:1-17; Nu 15:37-41; Dt 4:1, 9-10; Dt 6:1-9; Dt 11:2-21; Dt 32:45-47; Jos 22:5; Jos 24:15; 1 Sa 3:2-10; Ps 78:4-7; Pr 22:6; Is 6:9-12; Mal 4:1-6; Mt 5:1-12; Mt 7:26 ff; Mk 10:13-16; Lk 2:40, 46-52; Lk 11:27-28; Ac 1:8; Ep 6:1-4; 2 Ti 1:5; He 2:1-4; He 3:3-19; Re 1:3; Re 3:3.

Memorial (2019-20)

Subject: *Request to change Voluntary Supplemental Contributions to Commission on Lutheran Schools to Annual School Support Fee based on school enrollment*

Floor Committee #12

- WHEREAS 1) the Voluntary Supplemental Contribution for schools has been in effect since being adopted by the synod in convention in 2007; and
- WHEREAS 2) the Voluntary Supplemental Contribution has been a tremendous blessing to the Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS), currently supplying about \$160,000 annually, nearly one-third of the annual funding for normal CLS operating purposes; and
- WHEREAS 3) on average 75 percent of area Lutheran high schools (ALHS), 60 percent of Lutheran elementary schools (LES), and 6 percent of standalone early childhood ministries (ECM) voluntarily make an annual contribution benefiting all schools; and
- WHEREAS 4) since the inception of the Voluntary Supplemental Contribution, the Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS) office has expanded to include a national coordinator for early childhood ministries; and
- WHEREAS 5) the three called administrators of the CLS annually assist the district presidents in developing more than six hundred teacher call lists; and
- WHEREAS 6) providing training, resources, and support is a mission of the CLS, and the administrators are providing training to current and future school leaders, training district coordinators, counselors, and consultants to support schools; and
- WHEREAS 7) the CLS seeks to provide more training and resources during a time of declining grant options at affordable prices for all schools; and
- WHEREAS 8) all schools in our system (LES, ECM, and LHS) benefit from the work of the CLS; and

- WHEREAS 9) the schools that do contribute benefit greatly from the services of the CLS office by receiving resources such as *Parents Crosslink* and support at discounted prices; and
- WHEREAS 10) an annual school support fee would provide all our congregations with educational ministries an opportunity to walk together and mutually support one another; and
- WHEREAS 11) the CLS office seeks to be able to carry out its ministry in a way that meets the needs of schools in this generation (technology, manpower, and research); and
- WHEREAS 12) additional funds gained through participation by all schools could support increased activity in the districts through the district coordinator and also help fund the unfunded fourth director approved in 2013 by the synod in convention to help address leadership training and added support for schools; and
- WHEREAS 13) currently the contribution rates are \$7.50 per student annually for LES and ECM students and \$4.00 annually per student for ALHS, both of which cost less per student than many parents are asked to contribute for services such as field trips; and
- WHEREAS 14) the delegation from the 2017 synod in convention encouraged all early childhood ministries, Lutheran elementary schools, and area Lutheran high schools to participate in contributing annually; therefore be it
- Resolved. a) all schools in our synod will contribute \$7.50 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student annually for LES and ECM students and \$4.00 annually per student for ALHS students; and be it finally
- Resolved. b) any future increases to this contribution must be approved by the synod in convention.

WELS district schools coordinators



WELS Church Extension Fund
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod



Help build churches for future generations while managing your savings

For a limited time, WELS Church Extension Fund (WELS CEF) is offering special 4% loan and retirement/IRA certificates. These special 56 and 60 month term certificates are for new money only. The new investments will allow WELS CEF to provide more loans to the increasing number of mission and mission-minded congregations starting building projects.

Learn more at wels.net/cef.

The purchase of WELS CEF securities is subject to risks, which are described in our Offering Circular. This is not an offer to sell, nor the solicitation to buy our securities. We will offer and sell our securities only in states where authorized. The offering is made solely by the Offering Circular.

WELS Church Extension Fund
N16W23377 Stone Ridge Drive • Waukesha, WI 53188
wels.net/cef • cef@wels.net • 1-866-511-7793



WELCOME *Home*

**RESOURCES
COMING
SOON!**

Welcome Home resources will include:

- Video training for church elders
- Member attendance tracking tools
- Sermon outlines and Bible studies
- And more!

Who haven't you seen at a weekly worship service in awhile?

Whatever the reason for their absence, and no matter how long it has been, it is time to welcome them home.

On October 20 or 27, WELS churches are encouraged to host a *Welcome Home* Sunday with the goal of seeing every single one of their members in attendance. With our church families together again, we will remember the wonderful blessings of regularly connecting to the means of grace and actively participating in our Christian communities.

The resources to help you plan and execute your *Welcome Home* Sunday will be available in June 2019 at welscongregationalservices.net.

Open to **WELS members** of all ages and backgrounds
with a heart for mission work

*“It will definitely change
your life for the better.”*

—Jeff

*“It has given me a new zeal
to share the gospel.”*

—Matt

WELS Mission Journeys

The **new** WELS program for
short-term mission trips

WELS Mission Journeys provides an opportunity for all WELS members to walk together in the Great Commission. Through **church or school-based volunteer trips** to WELS mission fields at **home** and **abroad**, members have the opportunity to engage in Christian service, get involved in outreach, and experience work in the mission field firsthand. With the Lord's blessing, these trips will inspire a lifelong journey of service and outreach for all who volunteer.

Learn more about how you can get involved at
wels.net/missionjourneys



“Equipping Christian Witnesses”

A SILVER ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGN



With support from the WELS Conference of Presidents, this two-year capital campaign will celebrate the 2020 silver anniversary of MLC. The title, “Equipping Christian Witnesses,” reflects not only the mission of our institution—to train a corps of Christian witnesses to meet WELS ministry needs—but also the pillars of this campaign:



STUDENT RECRUITMENT

We will ask every WELS member and congregation to re-energize their recruitment for ministry—both traditional students and second-career students.



STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

The campaign goal of \$3 million to \$5 million will strengthen the Congregational Partner Grant Program to provide more financial assistance to every student who wants to train for ministry.



STUDENT FACILITIES

The campaign goal of \$10 million to \$13 million will fund two new student life facilities: a residence hall (\$10 million) and a turfed recreation facility (\$3 million).

Pray boldly that we use this celebration to recruit with rigor countless Christian witnesses . . . to increase our financial support of our students . . . and to provide the necessary facilities to equip our students for their future ministries.

Please watch for details in the coming months.

Please also consider becoming a liaison for MLC in your congregation.

For more information, visit mlc-wels.edu/mlc-campaign



MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE
1995 Luther Court · New Ulm MN 56073
mlc-wels.edu · 507.354.8221 · facebook.com/mlcwels

