

Proceedings

October 2019

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD
Waukesha, Wisconsin

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
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Note:

Many references to the *Book of Reports and Memorials* (BORAM) are included within the convention resolutions. Unless otherwise noted, these are referencing the 2019 BORAM, which can be found at wels.net/2019synodconvention.

Convention overview

Delegates to the 65th biennial synod convention, held at Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minn., from July 29–Aug. 1, have much to remember and to share with others as they return to their home congregations.

Illustrating how our worldwide fellowship of confessional Lutherans continues to grow, our synod had the privilege of declaring fellowship with two overseas Lutheran church bodies. The Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ—Kenya is a relatively new Lutheran church body that is united with WELS in doctrine and practice. The Christian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Taiwan had its origin as a WELS mission in 1968 and has since become an independent church body. The convention formally declared fellowship with both Lutheran churches; delegates cast their unanimous votes with a standing ovation.

The convention approved the synod’s two-year ministry financial plan recommended by the Synodical Council (see pp. 61-72). No changes were made to the plan that was proposed. This plan outlines the financial support that will be provided to all areas of ministry for the next two years.

Numerous changes to the synod’s bylaws were approved (see pp. 55-60). Most of these changes involved bringing more consistency to the length of terms on various boards and committees. Nearly all positions are now four-year terms, with a person able to succeed himself twice.

Twenty memorials (requests for convention action) were acted upon by the convention via floor committee reports and resolutions (see pp. 21-54).

Rev. Jonathan Hein’s keynote presentation provided an honest evaluation of membership trends and the challenges posed by a changing culture (see p. 86). He outlined the synod’s plans to address these challenges making use of the means of grace and committing all results to the hands of the Holy Spirit.

After hearing reports from all areas of the synod’s missions and ministries, many delegates commented that for the first time they had a real picture of the scope and nature of the many things we are doing together as a synod. They expressed an eagerness to return home to share what they had learned with their congregations.

Rev. Joel Voss was re-elected as the synod second vice president, and I was blessed and honored to be elected to serve another term as synod president (see pp. 53 and 54 for all election results).

The convention was another opportunity for WELS to acknowledge the amazing grace of God as he works through us to proclaim the gospel now and, as the convention theme stated, “for the generations to come.”

For more information on the 2019 convention, including photos and video reports, visit wels.net/2019synodconvention.

Serving in Christ,
President Mark Schroeder

Voting delegates

Arizona-California District

Pastors

James Connell
John Ehlers
Steven Gabb
Timothy Otto
Paul Rutschow
Michael Schroeder

Teachers and staff ministers

Kevin Bode
Benjamin Pagel
Michael Peek
Mark Steiner
Timothy Vogel

Laymen

Clyde Brumfield
Noble Chandler
Norbert Clarkson
Peter de Ruyter
Bill Demory
Dave Dzurick
Gary Eisenga
Zeke Jarcik
John Kissinger

Charles Kitchen
Noel Ledermann
Dan Myers
Tom Nunley
Bob Steffensen
Russell Vink
Doug Wardlaw
Gary Warskow
Marston Zaye

Dakota-Montana District

Pastors

Jay Bickelhaupt
John Carter
Gerhardt Juergens
Michael Vogel

Teachers and staff ministers

Gene Jaeger
Christopher Pluger

Laymen

Spencer Beach
Joe Becker
Kirby Chapman
Andrew Green
Seth Hansen
Tom Hansen

Leland Harding
Larry Lutz
Dean Schumacher
Rod Sieg
Jon Swenumson

Michigan District

Pastors

Jason Baldwin
Marc Frey
Gregory Gibbons
Randall Johnson
John Kenyon
Michael Krentz
Mark Lindloff
Paul Lindloff
William Natsis
James Plocher
Mark Rosenberg
Donald Seelhoff

Teachers and staff ministers

Justin Danell
Matthew Herbst
Christopher Holman
Richard Owen III
Ryan Roth
Steven Towne

Laymen

Dennis Cook
Daniel Darling
Ronald Evans
Philip Frey
Matthew Garrow
Rick Haase
Benjamin Kieta
William Kiser
Charles Kling
Mitchell LaBair
Louis Luedtke

Richard Miller
David Otto
William Palmer
Thomas Rief
Thomas Ritchie
Joe Ruthig
Joshua Semrow
Paul Stevenson
Steven Westphal
Richard White

Minnesota District

Pastors

William Brassow
Chris Cordes
Philip Gieschen
Jeremy Glowicki
Dean Gunn
Brian Hennig
Alan Horn
Allen Lonnquist
Benjy Pederson
Mathew Pfeifer
David Rau
Allen Schleusener
Donald Sutton
Jason Thiel

Teachers and staff ministers

Thomas Benzing
James Buboltz
Joel Burmeister
James Carlovsky
Jared Christensen
Gregory Diersen
Daniel Fenske
Paul Grubbs
Justin Ohm
Timothy Plath
Ryan Randall
Jonathan Schaefer

Laymen

Daniel Bitzer
Mark Bitzer
Karl Breitzkreutz
Stan Britton
Brian Dickey
Larry Enter
Bob Gross
Alfred Holtzn
Jake Hoverman
David Hukle
David Kaiser

Jerry Knickel
Bryl Koester
Robin Kramer
Ross Malkuch
Tom Oswald
Gerald Roles
Jon Scmugge
David Schulz
Terry Stremcha
Stanley Stelter
Ryan Timm

Nebraska District

Pastors

Daniel Heiderich
Wayne Oblender
Jared Oldenburg
Joshua Sternhagen
Donald Windsperger

Teachers and staff ministers

Daniel Douglas
Joel Lauber

Laymen

Greg Boggs
Alan Desroches
Kenneth Guillaume
John Harpold
Kenneth Mayer
Chad Moyer
Jim Oberlander

Aaron Punke
Gary Schmidt
Rich Smith
Doug Stigge
Steve Teter
Mark Wietrefe

North Atlantic District

Pastors

Harland Goetzinger
Frederick Guldberg
David Meyer

Teachers and staff ministers

Robert Rebers

Laymen

Jonathan Cox
Lucas Hendricks
Jim Kolva

David Neumann
Samson Paquiz
Tom Parshley

Northern Wisconsin District

Pastors

Patrick Brown
Jason Enderle
James Fleming
Thomas Fricke
James Heffner
Jason Jobs
Peter Kesting
Norval Kock
Stephen Lehmann
William Monday
Jason Oakland
Joshua Odell
John Ruege
Michael Sheppard
Michael Weigand

Teachers and staff ministers

David Backus
Kaleb Buch
Kevin Buch
Luther Curia
Paul Durkee
Timothy Fischer
Nathan Gartner
Paul Schulz
Gary Thoma

Laymen

Leonard Arnold
Randy Baxter
Mike Brinkman
Eric Dahle
John Deshane
Daniel Duchow
Robert Edwards
Dennis Fenske
John Gomoll
Todd Hermann
Nate Heyn

Dwayne Klein
Paul Kluenker
Louis Langhoff
Randy Rebers
Lyle Schmidt
Timothy Schumann
Jeffrey Schwede
William Steinbrenner
Richard Stueber
Paul Van Treeck
Craig VerKuilen

Pacific Northwest District

Pastors

Kevin Schultz
Andrew Schwartz
Matthew Zimpelmann

Teachers and staff ministers

Christopher Hintz

Laymen

Paul Luetke
John Martin
Brent Masters

Eric Penland
Dick Watson

South Atlantic District

Pastors

John Backus
John Beck
Benjamin Kratz
Steven Olson
Duane Rodewald
David Rosenbaum

Teachers and staff ministers

Timothy Biesterfeld
Jared Rathje
Joshua Rimpel
Jonathan Ross

Laymen

Nathan Block
Wayne Bynoe
Larry Gordhamer
Peter Johnston
Peter Koenig

James Larson
Mark Larson
Dave Mathiak
Rob Miller
Jude Peck

South Central District

Pastors

David Bivens
Aaron Glaeske
John Vieths
Steven Wagenknecht

Teachers and staff ministers

James Henrickson

Laymen

Richard Bush
David Ferguson
Tom Hall
Travis Pamerter

Byron Shoumaker
Paul Weis
Robert Widmer

Southeastern Wisconsin District

Pastors

Kurt Ebert
Michael Gorte
Jonathan Kehren
Thomas Kock
Richard Krause
David Kuehl
Bruce Marggraf
Peter Panitzke
Joel Pless
Peter Prange
Greg Pufahl
Kevin Raddatz
Don Scheuerlein
Peter Schmidt
Thomas Schultz
Randall Siegel
Chad Walta
Christian Winkel
Joshua Yu

Teachers and staff ministers

Michael Albrecht
Daniel Aswege
Christopher Avery
Paul Beck
Alan Bitter
Keith Bowe
Joel Buege
Paul Burmeister
Jeffrey Dorn
Todd Gorsline
James Groth
Jason Hagedorn
Thomas Hering
Daniel Johnson
Joshua Kramer
Peter Langebartels
Kurt Maciejczak
Bradley Nommensen
James Nowack
Casey Pufahl
Jeffrey Roloff
Jacob Schable
Nathan Schultz
Paul Scriver
Bradley Wetzell
Jeffrey Wetzell
Jon Woldt

Laymen

John Boggs
Joel Bradtke
Paul Demcak
Donald Groth
Joe Gruszka
Mark Huntoon
Daniel Juffernbruch
Jon Kassen
Ronald Kelly
John Lucht
Rick Martinez
Gary Peterson
Tyler Peterson
Gerald Rosenthal
Michael Schwark
Jay Shambeau
Rob Smith
Paul Soucy
Dan Stege
Gene Szaj
Denis Taylor

Western Wisconsin District

Pastors

Timothy Dolan
David Ernest
Paul Jansen
Peter Kiecker
James Krueger
Andrew Lindke
Joshua Martin
Bruce McKenney
Joel Neumann
David Nottling
Roger Quandt
Timothy Schwartz
James Strang
John Werner
Joel Willitz

Teachers and staff ministers

Benjamin Bain
David Hochmuth
Robert Huebner
Ethan Hutchinson
Mark Loersch
James Mahnke
Matthew Nottling
Randy Peck
Greg Schibbelhut
John Schlavensky
Timothy Torgerson
Eric Ziel

Laymen

Jim Bublitz
Daniel Cook
Robert DuVall
Dan Enderle
Gary Evans
David Frigo
Brill Grummitt
Tim Hahn
Donald Hahnke
Marc Helmer
Gene Johnson
Paul Kapanke
Mark Larson

James Mendell
Philip Meinel
Dale Naatz
David Nielsen
Brian Panzer
Richard Parkhurst
Josh Schuch
Rodney Seefeld
Keith Sundy
Ronald Tolkinen
Richard Wilkosz
Roy Zimmerman

World missionaries

Michael Duncan
Joel Sutton
Glen Thompson

Advisory delegates

Officers

Rev. Mark Schroeder, president
Rev. James Huebner, first vice president
Rev. Joel Voss, second vice president
Rev. Robert Pasbrig, recording secretary
Mr. Todd Poppe, chief financial officer and treasurer

District presidents

Rev. Jon Buchholz, Arizona-California
Rev. Douglas Free, Dakota-Montana
Rev. Snowden Sims, Michigan
Rev. Dennis Klatt, Minnesota
Rev. Philip Hirsch, Nebraska
Rev. Donald Tollefson, North Atlantic

Rev. Joel Zank, Northern Wisconsin
Rev. John Steinbrenner, Pacific Northwest
Rev. Charles Westra, South Atlantic
Rev. Donald Patterson, South Central
Rev. David Kolander, Southeastern Wisconsin
Rev. Michael Jensen, Western Wisconsin

Synodical Council

Mr. Steven Hansen, Arizona-California
Mr. Kenneth Gosch, Dakota-Montana
Dr. Timothy Kriewall, Michigan
Mr. Dale Pohlman, Nebraska
Mr. Ryan Olson, North Atlantic
Mr. Thomas Schermerhorn, Northern Wisconsin
Mr. Brent Masters*, Pacific Northwest
Mr. John Fowler, South Atlantic

Mr. Bradley Johnston, South Central
Mr. Timothy Snyder, Southeastern Wisconsin
Rev. Wayne Uhlhorn, BHM chairman
Rev. Paul Janke, BWM chairman
Rev. Duane Rodewald*, BME chairman
Teacher James Moeller, teacher-at-large
Rev. Joel Jenswold, pastor-at-large
Rev. Jonathan Schroeder, pastor-at-large

Board for Ministerial Education

Rev. Paul Prange, administrator, Board for Ministerial Education
Rev. Earle Treptow, president, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
Rev. Mark Zaring, president, Martin Luther College
Rev. Matthew Crass, president, Luther Preparatory School
Rev. Mark Luetzow, president, Michigan Lutheran Seminary

Home and World Missions

Rev. Keith Free, administrator, Board for Home Missions
Rev. Larry M. Schlomer, administrator, Board for World Missions
Mr. Sean Young, director, Missions Operations

* Also served as a voting delegate

Congregation and Ministry Support Group

Rev. James Behringer, director, Commission on Special Ministries
Rev. Donn Dobberstein, director, Commission on Discipleship
Rev. Bryan Gerlach, director, Commission on Worship
Rev. Jonathan Hein, director, Commission on Congregational Counseling
Teacher James Rademan, director, Commission on Lutheran Schools
Rev. Eric Roecker, director, Commission on Evangelism

Other

Rev. John Braun, executive editor, *Forward in Christ*
Prof. James Danell, Commission on Inter-Church Relations
Mr. Lee Hitter, director, Communication Services
Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, director, Ministry of Christian Giving
Mr. Dennis Maurer, director, Human Resources
Mr. Joshua Peterman, director, Benefit Plans
Mr. Martin Spriggs, chief technology officer
Rev. Eric Steinbrenner, chairman, Committee on Constitutional Matters
Mr. Bill Ziche, president, Northwestern Publishing House

Floor committees

Committee #1: President's Report

Pastor Duane Rodewald, chairman
Teacher Kevin Bode, secretary
Pastor Patrick Brown
Pastor James Connell
Pastor Jeremy Glowicki
Pastor Benjamin Kratz
Pastor Thomas Schultz
Pastor Chad Walta
Teacher Todd Gorsline
Teacher Robert Huebner
Teacher Jonathan Schaefer

Layman Greg Boggs
Layman Brian Dickey
Layman Andrew Green
Layman Kenneth Guillaume
Layman Paul Kapanke
Layman Charles Kitchen
Layman John Lucht
Layman Tom Parshley
Layman William Steinbrenner
Layman Steven Westphal

Committee #2: Conference of Presidents

Pastor Jay Bickelhaupt, chairman
Teacher Matthew Herbst, secretary
Pastor Jason Enderle
Pastor Philip Gieschen
Pastor Andrew Schwartz
Pastor Roger Quandt
Pastor Joshua Yu
Teacher Jared Christensen
Teacher Daniel Douglas
Teacher Casey Pufahl
Layman Randy Baxter

Layman Clyde Brumfield
Layman Alan Desroches
Layman Larry Enter
Layman Seth Hansen
Layman William Kiser
Layman Philip Meinel
Layman Timothy Schumann
Layman Stanley Stelter
Layman Dick Watson
Layman Robert Widmer

Committee #3: Commission on Inter-Church Relations

Pastor Michael Schroeder, chairman
Teacher Steven Towne, secretary
Pastor James Fleming
Pastor Michael Krentz
Pastor Kevin Raddatz
Teacher Luther Curia
Teacher James Nowack
Teacher Ryan Randall
Layman Spencer Beach

Layman Mike Brinkman
Layman Richard Bush
Layman Noble Chandler
Layman Kirby Chapman
Layman Bob Gross
Layman John Harpold
Layman Benjamin Kieta
Layman Jim Kolva
Layman James Mendell

Committee #4: Ministry of Christian Giving and Communication Services

Pastor Timothy Dolan, chairman
Teacher Joel Burmeister, secretary
Pastor John Ehlers
Pastor James Heffner
Pastor Allen Lonquist
Pastor Steven Olson
Pastor Don Scheuerlein
Teacher Kevin Buch
Teacher Christopher Holman
Teacher Joel Lauber

Teacher Jeffrey Roloff
Layman Norbert Clarkson
Layman Paul Demcak
Layman Leland Harding
Layman Charles Kling
Layman Chad Moyer
Layman Dale Naatz
Layman David Neumann
Layman Lyle Schmidt
Layman Richard Stueber

Committee #5: Synodical Council

Pastor David Bivens, chairman
Teacher Alan Bitter, secretary
Pastor John Backus
Pastor Alan Horn
Pastor Mark Lindloff
Pastor Greg Pufahl
Staff Minister David Hochmuth
Teacher Kaleb Buch
Teacher Benjamin Pagel
Teacher Greg Schibbelhut
Layman Bill Demory

Layman Donald Groth
Layman Tom Hansen
Layman Lucas Hendricks
Layman David Kaiser
Layman Jim Oberlander
Layman David Otto
Layman Brian Panzer
Layman Rob Smith
Layman Paul Van Treek
Layman Paul Weis

Committee #6: Finance and ministry financial plan

Pastor Steven Gabb, chairman
Staff Minister Jon Woldt, secretary
Pastor Jason Baldwin
Pastor Kurt Ebert
Pastor Daniel Heiderich
Pastor Brian Hennig
Pastor Steven Wagenknecht
Teacher Timothy Fischer
Teacher Nathan Gartner
Teacher Joshua Kramer
Teacher Paul Schulz

Layman John Boggs
Layman Daniel Cook
Layman Eric Dahle
Layman Dave Dzurik
Layman David Ferguson
Layman Ross Malkuch
Layman Richard Miller
Layman Thomas Ritchie
Layman Dean Schumacher
Layman Doug Stigge

Committee #7: Home Missions

Pastor Peter Prange, chairman
Teacher Matthew Nottling, secretary
Pastor John Beck
Pastor Gregory Gibbons
Pastor Thomas Kock
Pastor Randal Siegel
Pastor Joel Willitz
Teacher Paul Durkee
Teacher Daniel Johnson
Teacher Peter Langebartels

Teacher Robert Rebers
Layman John Deshane
Layman Alfred Holtan
Layman Mark Huntoon
Layman Louis Luedtke
Layman Brent Masters
Layman Samson Paquiz
Layman Aaron Punke
Layman Rodney Seefeld

Committee #8: World Missions and Joint Mission Council

Pastor William Brassow, chairman
Teacher Christopher Hintz, secretary
Pastor David Ernest
Pastor Paul Lindloff
Pastor Benjy Pederson
Pastor Peter Schmidt
Pastor Michael Weigand
Teacher Gene Jaeger
Teacher Joshua Rimpel
Teacher Gary Thoma

Layman Daniel Duchow
Layman Gary Eisenga
Layman Dan Enderle
Layman Jake Hoverman
Layman Daniel Juffernbruch
Layman Larry Lutz
Layman Ken Mayer
Layman William Palmer
Layman Gary Schmidt
Layman Keith Sundby

Committee #9: Ministerial Education

Pastor John Vieths, chairman
Teacher Jared Rathje, secretary
Pastor Michael Gorte
Pastor Dean Gunn
Pastor Joel Neumann
Pastor David Nottling
Pastor James Plocher
Pastor Michael Sheppard
Pastor Joel Sutton
Teacher James Buboltz
Teacher James Mahnke

Layman Dennis Fenske
Layman David Frigo
Layman Tom Hall
Layman David Hulke
Layman Zeke Jarcik
Layman John Kassen
Layman Paul Luetke
Layman David Nielsen
Layman Richard Parkhurst
Layman Joe Ruthig
Layman Rod Sieg

Committee #10: Congregational Services Group A (Congregational Counseling, Evangelism, Discipleship)

Pastor Timothy Otto, chairman
Teacher Bradley Wetzol, secretary
Pastor Michael Duncan
Pastor Aaron Glaeske
Pastor Norval Kock
Pastor Bruce Marggraf
Pastor William Natsis
Pastor Matthew Pfeiffer
Pastor Christian Winkel
Staff Minister Thomas Hering
Teacher Ethan Hutchinson

Teacher Timothy Vogel
Layman Nate Heyn
Layman Ronald Kelly
Layman John Kissinger
Layman Jerry Knickel
Layman John Martin
Layman Travis Pamentor
Layman Thomas Reif
Layman Jon Swenumson
Layman Richard Wilkosz

Committee #11: Congregational Services B (Worship, Special Ministries)

Pastor Peter Kiecker, chairman
Teacher Benjamin Bain, secretary
Pastor Chris Cordes
Pastor Marc Frey
Pastor Richard Krause
Pastor Joshua Odell
Pastor Glen Thompson
Teacher Jason Hagedorn
Teacher Christopher Pluger
Teacher Jacob Schable
Layman Dennis Cook

Layman John Gomoll
Layman Larry Gordhamer
Layman Joe Gruszka
Layman Mark Larson
Layman Noel Ledermann
Layman Eric Penland
Layman Jon Schmugge
Layman Joshua Semrow
Layman Byron Shoumaker
Layman Densil Taylor

Committee #12: Congregational Services C (Lutheran Schools)

Teacher James Henrickson, chairman
Teacher Randy Peck, secretary
Pastor Paul Jansen
Pastor Randall Johnson
Pastor David Kuehl
Pastor David Meyer
Pastor Mark Rosenberg
Pastor John Ruege
Teacher James Groth
Teacher Richard Owen
Layman Daniel Darling
Layman Peter de Ruyter

Layman Bill Grummit
Layman Dwayne Klein
Layman Byrl Koster
Layman Mitch LaBair
Layman Rick Martinez
Layman Lee McElvaine
Layman Tom Nunley
Layman Rich Smith
Layman Paul Stevenson
Layman Mark Wietgreffe
Layman Roy Zimmerman

Committee #13: Support Services

Teacher Keith Bowe, chairman
Teacher Timothy Biesterfeld, secretary
Pastor Harland Goetzinger
Pastor James Krueger
Pastor Jason Oakland
Pastor Paul Rutschow
Pastor Donald Seelhoff
Teacher Bradley Nommensen
Teacher Mark Steiner

Layman Jim Bublitz
Layman Marc Helmer
Layman Paul Kluenker
Layman Robin Kramer
Layman Jude Peck
Layman Gary Peterson
Layman Bob Steffensen
Layman Steve Teter

Committee #14: Subsidiaries and Benefit Plans

Pastor Jonathan Kehren, chairman
Teacher Michael Peek, secretary
Pastor John Carter
Pastor Andrew Lindke
Pastor William Monday
Pastor Jared Oldenburg
Pastor Joel Pless
Teacher Joel Buege
Teacher Jeffrey Dorn
Teacher Timothy Plath

Teacher Jeffrey Wetzel
Layman Ronald Evans
Layman Tim Hahn
Layman Todd Hermann
Layman Eugene Johnson
Layman Peter Johnston
Layman Tom Oswald
Layman Gerald Rosenthal
Layman Russell Vink
Layman Richard White

Committee #15: Northwestern Publishing House and Publication Coordinating Commission

Pastor Matthew Zimpelmann, chairman
Teacher Eric Ziel, secretary
Pastor Thomas Fricke
Pastor Gerhardt Juergens
Pastor Joshua Martin
Pastor Bruce McKenney
Pastor Jason Thiel
Staff Minister Thomas Benzing
Teacher Justin Ohm
Layman Daniel Bitzer

Layman Robert DuVall
Layman Philip Frey
Layman Louis Langhoff
Layman James Larson
Layman Dan Myers
Layman Michael Schwark
Layman Jeffrey Schwede
Layman Terry Stremcha
Layman Doug Wardlaw

Committee #16: WELS Christian Aid and Relief

Pastor Frederick Guldburg, chairman
Teacher Timothy Torgerson, secretary
Teacher Paul Beck
Pastor Stephen Lehmann
Pastor David Rosenbaum
Pastor Timothy Schwartz
Pastor James Strand
Pastor Donald Sutton
Pastor Michael Vogel
Layman Leonard Arnold

Layman Mark Bitzer
Layman Joel Bradtke
Layman Wayne Bynoe
Layman Matthew Garrow
Layman Dave Mathiak
Layman Tyler Peterson
Layman Gerald Roles
Layman Dan Stege
Layman Ronald Tolkinen
Layman Gary Warskow

Committee #17: Constitutional Matters

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary
Pastor Peter Kesting
Pastor Wayne Oblender
Pastor Kevin Schultz
Pastor John Werner
Pastor Donald Windsperger
Teacher Christopher Avery
Teacher Daniel Fenske
Teacher Nathan Schultz
Layman Cal Breitreutz

Layman Robert Edwards
Layman Gary Evans
Layman Rick Haase
Layman Donald Hahnke
Layman Peter Koenig
Layman Rob Miller
Layman David Schulz
Layman Jay Shambeau
Layman Gene Szaj
Layman Marston Zaye

Committee #18: Elections

Teacher Greg Diersen, chairman
Teacher Justin Danell, secretary
Pastor Jason Jobs
Pastor John Kenyon
Pastor Peter Panitzke
Pastor Davie Rau
Pastor Allen Schleusener
Pastor Joshua Sternhagen
Teacher Michael Albrecht
Teacher Daniel Aswege

Teacher Mark Loersch
Teacher Jonathan Ross
Layman Joe Becker
Layman Nathan Block
Layman Stan Britton
Layman Jonathan Cox
Layman Randy Rebers
Layman Josh Schuch
Layman Paul Soucy
Layman Ryan Timm

Committee #19: Resolutions

Professor Brian Dose*, chairman
Teacher Paul Grubbs, secretary
Teacher James Carlovsky

Teacher Kurt Maciejczak
Teacher Ryan Roth
Teacher John Schlavensky

Committee #20: Steering

Pastor Jon Buchholz, chairman, Arizona-California District President
Pastor Donald Tollefson, North Atlantic District President
Pastor Joel Zank, Northern Wisconsin District President

* Did not serve as a voting delegate

President's Report

July 30, 2019

Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

President Mark Schroeder

You are all familiar with apparent contradictions—with an emphasis on the word “apparent.” Apparent contradictions happen when two things at first glance and on the surface seem to be in complete contradiction to each other but are, in fact, both true.

In the opening paragraph of his classic novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens describes the apparent contradictions at the time of the French Revolution: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.” Seeming opposites and contradictory statements and descriptions, but, in fact, all were true.

You can find apparent contradictions in the Scriptures as well—again with the emphasis on apparent—seemingly contradictory statements that are not contradictions at all: God is one God, but God is at the same time three persons. Jesus is fully divine and true God; Jesus is fully human and true man. God is perfectly and absolutely righteous, a God who by his very nature must punish sin; God is perfectly and absolutely gracious, a God who forgives the sinner and remembers his sin no more. These are apparent contradictions that human reason has trouble reconciling, but they are only apparent contradictions. All statements are true.

We find those apparent contradictions in our own lives. A loved one dies in Christ. We are filled with grief at our loss. But at the very same time we Christians also experience a deep and lasting joy, since we know that God has given the final victory to another of his faithful saints. We face problems in our families, struggle with issues of health and aging, experience financial hardships that seem insurmountable, and we remember the words of Jesus when he reminded us, “Little children, in this world you will have trouble.” But then he also reminds us of the truth on the other side of that coin: “But don’t be afraid, because I have overcome the world.”

Last spring, I had the opportunity to speak to the young men who were graduating from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in the days before they would receive their first calls into the pastoral ministry. I pointed out to them that they were experiencing firsthand one of those apparent contradictions in their own lives. On the one hand, as they waited for their assignments and wondered where God would have them serve, it was agonizingly clear to them that they had absolutely no clue exactly what God had in store for them. Would they serve in a large congregation with several pastors, or would they be assigned as the sole pastor of a dual parish? Would they be sent thousands of miles away to start a new mission or serve an established congregation one hour from their childhood home in the Midwest? Would they serve in a congregation that was facing multiple challenges and dealing with all kinds of different problems? Or would they begin their ministry in a congregation where nearly everything was running smoothly and efficiently? They did not have the answers to those questions. As the day of their assignments approached and as they thought about what kind of ministries they would have, they had absolutely no clue what God had in store for them.

On the other hand, as they looked forward to their time as pastors and shepherds of God’s people, they knew exactly what God had in store for them. They knew that God would give them the message to proclaim—his message—the message of law and gospel as revealed in the Scriptures. They knew that the Word of God that they would preach and teach would be a powerful message—a message that, if they proclaimed it faithfully, would always accomplish his purpose and would never return to him empty. They knew that Jesus was promising that he would never leave them or forsake them and that he would be with them always. They knew that even in the face of the most vicious

attacks by Satan and a hostile, unbelieving world, that the gates of hell would never prevail against God's church. They knew that even in the face of frustrations and failure, mistakes and misjudgments, trouble or even tragedies, God had promised that he would use everything in their ministries to work out in some way for the good of those who love him. They knew that God would bless their ministries. They could take comfort in knowing exactly what God had in store for them.

Due to the limits of their human knowledge and understanding, what seemed like a contradiction for those graduates was absolutely no contradiction at all. Ours is a God of whom we marvel with the apostle Paul: "Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord?" (Romans 11:33,34). This is the God of whom we declare with Paul, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him!" The details of our future may be unknown to us on the one hand, but on the other hand we know exactly what God has in store for us, since he himself has promised that all things—all things—will work together for our good and will be used by him to carry out his good and gracious will.

It is that beautiful apparent contradiction—which is no contradiction at all—that we will want to keep in mind at this convention as we consider the work and mission of our beloved synod in terms of both the opportunities and the challenges that we face now and will face in the days and months and years to come.

The Lord Jesus has entrusted his saving gospel, as well as all the truths of Scripture, to us believers and disciples. Our stewardship of those gifts involves two important and compelling responsibilities. First, we need to hold on to those truths for ourselves. That involves committing ourselves to remain faithful to the doctrines that we have learned. It involves defending God's truth against all attacks from within and without the church. It means recognizing our Lutheran heritage, based solely on the truths of God's Word, as a treasure to be embraced and retained no matter what the cost. But the second responsibility is one that flows from the faith and joy that the gospel has worked in us. That is the responsibility to share that good news with our children, with our friends and neighbors, with our communities and country, and ultimately with the world. And that message is not just for us and our families and for people today. It's a message that we will want to preserve and proclaim for the generations to come.

Both of those responsibilities are equally important. If we do not hold on to the truth of God's Word that he has spoken to us, if we let that message wither and fade away through neglect or through our own unfaithfulness, if we because of fear or intimidation choose to remain silent in the face of overt attacks on God's truth, we not only will not retain its blessings for ourselves, but we will have no message to share with the world or with the generations to come. And if we hold that message only for ourselves without carrying out our God-given mission to go with it into all the world, we will prove ourselves to be unfaithful witnesses and ambassadors.

Whether standing on and defending the truth of God's Word on the one hand or proclaiming and sharing his saving message with the world on the other, our synod has both opportunities and challenges. And in both cases, that same apparent contradiction applies: We have absolutely no clue what God has in store for us. But, at the same time, we know exactly what God has in store for our beloved synod.

Twenty years ago, we could not have imagined or thought possible the mission opportunities that God would now be placing before us. In East Asia, WELS' work began only a few years ago with students volunteering to teach English as a second language and to using the contacts they made to introduce people to the Savior. God blessed their efforts. Now, WELS missionaries are working in that country to serve those who have been brought to faith and who have gathered in small house churches. Even more amazing, six young men from that country were fully trained as pastors at our seminary in Hong Kong and have returned to establish a confessional Lutheran synod. In a place where we might have least expected it, the Word of the Lord is growing, and God is keeping his promises.

At this convention, you will hear about the amazing opportunity in, of all places, Vietnam. There a church body of more than 100,000 members has asked WELS to train its pastors, because it wants its church body to be a confessional Lutheran church body. Even more amazing is that the government of Vietnam has welcomed and encouraged us to establish a theological training school there to do this work. Only a few years ago, such an opportunity would not have occurred to us. But God knew. The power of his Word made it happen. And we know that he will bless the effort. As an aside, it should be noted, as he did with the Macedonians who heard about the needs of their brothers and sisters in Jerusalem, God has moved the people of our synod to respond generously with gifts approaching \$1.4 million, more than 70 percent of the \$2 million goal that will cover the cost of land, a building, and two years of operations.

In Africa, an increasing number of small Lutheran groups have approached our synod to provide theological education for their pastors. God has blessed that work. Some of those groups have formed new confessional Lutheran synods. We will be declaring fellowship with one of those church bodies at this convention; we did the same with another at our last convention. Beyond that, former missions of WELS, now independent sister church bodies in Zambia and Malawi, are themselves planting missions in neighboring countries. The seed of the gospel is sprouting and producing fruit in new and unexpected places. Seventy years ago, when we began mission work in Africa, we could not have known these things would happen. But God did.

In places like Pakistan and Nepal—neither of which we might describe as places where the gospel would take root and flourish—the message is being spread, congregations are being formed, and the Word of the Lord continues to grow.

Here in the United States many opportunities abound to plant the seed of the gospel in new places. God has enabled us to establish dozens of new mission congregations over the past decade and has blessed those efforts with new and growing congregations. Many more places have been identified by district mission boards as potentially fertile mission fields. Added opportunities for outreach can be found in a population that is increasingly diverse, both ethnically and culturally. Home Missions has dedicated about one-third of its resources to cross-cultural outreach in the United States and Canada, and individual WELS congregations are becoming more aware of mission opportunities in their own backyard to people of other cultures and languages. We don't know the specifics of how God will bless these efforts, but as we strive to be faithful stewards of his Word and the resources he provides, we know that bless them he will.

The online theological training provided by our Academia Cristo is a means that God is using to gather groups of Christians in every country in Latin America and to provide ongoing theological education to national leaders. Hundreds of thousands have been touched by this new approach to carrying out mission work. Congregations are being gathered. Spiritual leaders are being trained. The Word of the Lord is growing.

What does God have in store for us as we ponder these new and exciting opportunities? We really can't predict. We have no clue exactly how God will bless these efforts. But we do know that just as he has already blessed these efforts until now, he will continue to bless them—in his own way and in his own time, in keeping with his gracious promises.

Our synod has always considered the training of called workers to be an important part of our work. Our three-tiered system, with two prep schools, a college, and a seminary, supplemented and fed by a network of area Lutheran high schools and Lutheran elementary schools, has served us well for more than a century and a half. Other church bodies marvel at our ministerial training program and have encouraged us not to lose it. As it has done in the past, our ministerial education system continues to provide workers who are well trained in the skills they will need for their ministry. More important, it provides workers who are thoroughly trained in the truths of Scripture by faculties who are committed to those same truths.

It is true that in recent years smaller enrollments, as well as greatly expanded efforts in early childhood education and home missions, have resulted in a shortage of called workers. Especially noteworthy is the need for elementary school principals, early childhood education (ECE) directors, and pastors. Working with Martin Luther College and the Commission on Lutheran Schools, the Conference of Presidents has been implementing several strategies to provide in-the-field training for teachers who have expressed an interest in serving as principals and ECE directors. Recruitment efforts for pastors, teachers, and staff ministers have been expanded. Increased financial aid has been the goal of several different programs at Martin Luther College (MLC). Those efforts appear to be bearing fruit. MLC's enrollment is growing, and we pray that the "Equipping Christian Witnesses" effort will result in even higher enrollment. Classes at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, recently in the low-thirties, are estimated to grow to the low forties only a few years from now, easing the pastoral shortage and providing pastors to serve in our expanding mission fields.

We do not know how and when God will bless these efforts to recruit more workers for his harvest field. In the meantime, we will continue to encourage our synod's sons and daughters to consider prayerfully whether they might serve as pastors, teachers, or staff ministers. We will pray that God provide workers to carry out this work. And we know—and of this we can be sure—that our gracious God who places ministry opportunities before us will also provide the workers to carry out that work in the time and manner that he has determined to best serve the needs of his kingdom.

As we review the state of the synod and its work, we will notice that changing demographics and other factors have created very real challenges. Synodical membership has showed relatively small (compared to other Christian

denominations) but steady declines over the past three decades. During that period the most striking statistic is the decline in infant baptisms—from 8,500 in 1989 to 5,100 in 2018. The smaller number of infant baptisms mirrors the societal trend of fewer births and smaller families, and that alone accounts for most of the membership decline. The decline in membership has had a particularly large impact on small rural congregations. In addition, many of our congregations operating Lutheran elementary schools are facing the challenge of declining school enrollments.

Rather than taking comfort in the fact that WELS' membership decline is not as large as other denominations', or in the fact that fewer births and infant baptisms are circumstances beyond our control, we have begun to look closely at what we can do to reverse these trends and to capitalize on the opportunities that lie before us. It goes without saying that when it comes to growing and maintaining healthy congregations and schools, the results lie completely in the hands of the Holy Spirit as he works through his means of grace. Our goal is not numerical growth per se but to be as faithful as we can be in our stewardship of the means of grace. We fully trust that only God himself is the one that blesses the seed of his Word, and it is he alone who works faith in peoples' hearts.

As part of a renewed effort to preserve God's truth now and for generations to come, we have begun to focus our attention and efforts on how we can be more faithful in that stewardship of God's blessings. The commissions of Congregational Services are leading the effort to focus our attention on encouraging faithful and zealous efforts to reach the lost, nurture the saved, regain the straying, enrich and preserve our worship, and grow in our practice of faithful Christian stewardship. At this convention, you will hear much about innovative new resources that will be made available to congregations as they strive to enhance their efforts in gaining and retaining members and in the area of faithful Christian stewardship. It is my prayer that you will take what you learn back to your congregations, circuits, and districts. We don't know what God has in store for us if these efforts are carried out faithfully across the synod. But we know with certainty that he will bless those efforts in his own way and in his own time. His Word—and we depend only on his Word—will not return to him empty.

All around us are reminders that we are in the last days. Satan's attacks on God's church seem to be intensifying. Values that have stood for centuries even in non-Christian cultures are being overturned at breakneck speed. Voices advocating for abortion on demand—up to and even after the time of birth—are getting louder. Sexual immorality abounds and crosses one once-firm line after another. A growing number of Christian churches are changing or abandoning the truths of the Scriptures and in their place embracing doctrines of demons. Many young people in our country are abandoning the church and the blessing of worship and fellowship of believers. The love of many is growing cold as racial and political conflicts continue and as violence in our streets grows. In our country, freedoms that Christians have enjoyed for centuries are under assault. The time is coming soon, I fear, when we may need to stand up and say with the apostles, "We must obey God rather than men," and with that statement be willing to suffer what we must at the hands of a hostile and godless world.

These seem to be the worst of times, don't they? But can we also see that these are the best of times? Think of the opportunities that God is giving us to be his faithful witnesses to a world that is clearly dying in sin! Think of the motivation that should be ours as we are reminded every day that the night is coming when no one can work any longer! Think of how, as doors close on us here in the United States, God is opening other doors around the world to people who are hungering and thirsting and pleading for the truth of his Word!

Into this dark and unbelieving world God sends us. But he does not send us unequipped or alone. In fact, he has placed into our hands the very things that will enable us to be his faithful witnesses. He sends us equipped with the very things that this world desperately needs. Into this dark world God sends us with the light of the gospel, the saving message of a Savior from sin. To carry out this task, God has preserved for us our confessional Lutheran heritage—a heritage that is valuable and powerful not because it is Lutheran, but because it is a heritage built on grace alone and Christ alone and Scripture alone. He has given our synod an appreciation for the freedom that we have in Christ and with that a clear understanding of law and gospel and the need for both. He has enabled us to offer teachings from God's Word that provide hope for the future and the guidance people need for the present. He has provided us with an appreciation for worship that centers not on me but on Christ and the proclamation of his saving work. He has given us a commitment to preaching that focuses not on Christ in me but on Christ for me. He has worked in us a commitment to defend human life, to uphold God-given values, and to show genuine Christian compassion to those in need. He has provided us with faithful pastors, teachers, and staff ministers who know God's truth and who are bold to proclaim that truth.

Equipped by God in those ways, we face the opportunities and the challenges before us with joy and confidence. Joy in the privilege God has given us to play a part in his saving work, and confidence in the fact that the results do not depend on us but are in the hands of our powerful and gracious God. No matter what the future may look like to us and to our limited human understanding, we have no fear of the future, because God is already there.

And so, since we do not know exactly what God has in store for us, today is a day for recommitment. A recommitment to standing firm on his unchanging and powerful Word. A recommitment to sharing that message with the world and passing it along to the generations to come. A recommitment to live in the joy and freedom of the gospel. A recommitment to support the work with generous and joyful giving. A recommitment to defend God's truth when it is attacked and to witness to God's truth when given the opportunity. A recommitment to support and encourage one another in Christian love and fellowship.

So, we come back to that apparent contradiction. We really have no clue exactly what God has in store for us. At the same time, we know exactly what God has in store for us. He will be with us. He will work in us. He will work through us. He will continue to bless and defend his church, and the gates of hell itself will have no power over it. No contradiction there at all. Just the joy and peace of knowing that God will keep us in his gracious and protecting hands and that he will bless our labors in his own way and in his own time.

Soli Deo Gloria! To God alone be the glory!

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Mark Schroeder
WELS President

Reports and resolutions

Committee #1: President's Report

Subject: Appointments and installations 2017-2019

Reference: Report from the President's Office

Report No. 01

Installations

Rev. Donn Dobberstein to Commission on Discipleship

Rev. Eric Roecker to Commission on Evangelism

Appointments

To Accounting Oversight Committee

Mr. William A Schultz

To Christian Aid and Relief

Mr. Steve Wright

To Church Extension Fund

Mr. Joel Kock

To Commission on Congregational Counseling

Rev. Adam Mueller

To Commission on Discipleship

Rev. John Boggs

Rev. Aaron Bublitz

Rev. Gary Pufahl

Rev. Jonathan Bergemann

Rev. Andrew Schwartz

Rev. Paul Schupmann

To Commission on Evangelism

Rev. Douglas Tomhave

Prof. Samuel Degner

To Commission on Inter-Church Relations

Rev. Bart Brauer

Rev. Joel Otto

Rev. Bill Tackmier

Rev. Benjamin Tomczak

To Commission on Lutheran Schools

Rev. Darin Aden

Mr. Ryan Wiechmann

To Commission on Special Ministries

Rev. Darren Green
Mr. Bill Bremel
Mr. William Truebenbach
Rev. Edward Ungemach

To Commission on Worship

Rev. Aaron Christie

To Committee on Constitutional Matters

Rev. Richard Waldschmidt

To Publication Coordinating Commission

Rev. John Braun
Rev. Bryan Gerlach
Rev. Curtis Jahn
Prof. Thomas Kock
Rev. Bruce McKenney
Mr. Thomas Plitzuweit
Rev. Nathan Seiltz
Rev. Jonathan Werre (4 years)

To Retirement Program Commission

Mr. Robert Fischer

To Retirement Program Strategy Committee

Mr. Paul Holzhueter
Mr. James Bren
Mr. Douglas Free
Mr. Scott Heins
Mr. David Kolander
Mr. Joshua Peterman
Mr. Todd Poppe
Mr. Warren Ehlke

To Support Committee

Rev. Joel Nitz
Rev. Brett Brauer
Rev. Dennis Klatt
Rev. Joel Leyrer
Rev. Glenn Schwanke

To Synodical Council

Rev. Donald Tollefson

To VEBA Commission

Mr. Robert Bullens
Mr. Douglas Dast
Rev. Joel Sauer

To WELS Foundation Board of Directors

Mr. Tim Boerneke
Rev. Jonathan Kolander
Mr. Michael Krueger
Mr. Scott Neitzel

Pastor Duane Rodewald, chairman

Teacher Kevin Bode, secretary

Subject: *President's Report*

Reference: *President's Report*

Report No. 02

We appreciate President Schroeder's thoughts on apparent contradictions as presented in his report. These may be the worst of times and the best of times in this world and for gospel ministry. Despite the challenges and many unknowns that we experience in our ministry efforts, we do know that God is with us and will richly bless our efforts according to his infinite wisdom and perfect will.

We join with President Schroeder in thanking God for the many ministry opportunities being identified in the States, the ministry doors opening around the world, and the individuals faithfully administering the means of grace to these mission fields.

We take President Schroeder's encouragement to heart—to continue holding on to the truths of God's Word as passed down through our Lutheran heritage so that we can faithfully and zealously share the gospel of Jesus Christ in a sin-filled world. May God continue to fill all our uncertainties with the comfort and peace his gospel alone provides, which gives us certainty for today and for the generations to come.

Pastor Duane Rodewald, chairman

Teacher Kevin Bode, secretary

Subject: Membership—called workers

Reference: Report from the President's Office

Resolution No. 01

WHEREAS the following pastors, professors, graduate tutors, male teachers, and male staff ministers are recommended by their respective district presidents for voting membership in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod; therefore be it

Resolved, that the following be graciously welcomed into the voting membership of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod:

ARIZONA-CALIFORNIA DISTRICT

Rev. Michael H. Cherney, Trinity Lutheran Church, El Paso, Texas, from WLS

Rev. Daniel L. Rodewald, Paradise Valley Lutheran Church, Phoenix, Ariz., from WLS

Mr. Joshua C. Robertson, King of Kings Lutheran School, Garden Grove, Calif., from MLC

Mr. Martin Santos, California Lutheran High School, Wildomar, Calif., from MLC

Mr. James A. Schlieper, East Fork Lutheran High School, Whiteriver, Ariz., from MLC

Mr. Joshua M. Severeid, Arizona Lutheran Academy, Phoenix, Ariz., from MLC

Mr. Timothy J. Weddle, California Lutheran High School, Wildomar, Calif., from MLC

DAKOTA-MONTANA DISTRICT

Rev. Nathan R. Laska, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Elgin/Trinity Lutheran Church, Carson/St. John Lutheran Church, Paradise, N.D., from WLS

Rev. Craig T. Wilke, mission start, Brandon, S.D., from WLS

Mr. Seth W. Arps, St. Martin's Lutheran School, Watertown, S.D., from MLC

Mr. Tyler J. Wahl, Great Plains Lutheran High School, Watertown, S.D., from MLC

MICHIGAN DISTRICT

Rev. Nathanael J. Jensen, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich., from WLS

Rev. Jesse L. Knox, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Stevensville, Mich., from WLS

Rev. Jacob M. Reich, St. John Lutheran Church, Bay City, Mich., from WLS

Rev. Zachary S. Steinke, Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Bay City, Mich., from WLS

Mr. Garrett M. Buch, St. Paul Lutheran School, Stevensville, Mich., from MLC

Mr. Christian M. Kuether, Michigan Lutheran High School, Saint Joseph, Mich., from MLC

Mr. Adam M. Stevens, Beautiful Savior Lutheran School, Grove City, Mich., from MLC

MINNESOTA DISTRICT

Rev. Isaiah W. Horn, Zion Lutheran Church, Olivia, Minn., from WLS

Rev. Steven J. Saatkamp, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hudson, Wis., from WLS
Rev. David N. Spaude, Faith Lutheran Church, River Falls, Wis., from WLS
Rev. Hans J. Thomford, Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., from WLS
Mr. Joel W. Westenberg, St. John Lutheran School, Redwood Falls, Minn., from MLC

NEBRASKA DISTRICT

Rev. Jordan P. Bence, mission start, Joplin, Mo., from WLS
Rev. Samuel R. Crass, St. Paul, Naper, Neb./Zion, Bonesteel, S.D., from WLS
Rev. Adam D. Lambrecht, Living Shepherd Lutheran Church, Laramie, Wyo., from WLS
Mr. Christopher R. Beagle, Nebraska Evangelical Lutheran High School, Waco, Neb., from MLC
Mr. Nathan L. Guhl, Nebraska Evangelical Lutheran High School, Waco, Neb., from MLC
Mr. Bryan J. Walkley, Nebraska Evangelical Lutheran High School, Waco, Neb., from MLC

NORTH ATLANTIC DISTRICT

Rev. Benjamin J. Berger, mission restart, Harrisburg, Penn., from WLS
Rev. Benjamin J. Birner, Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Liverpool, N.Y., from WLS

NORTHERN WISCONSIN DISTRICT

Rev. Joshua J. Jensen, Grace Lutheran Church, Oshkosh, Wis., from WLS
Rev. Tristan D. Paustian, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Hortonville, Wis., from WLS
Rev. Timothy T. Priewe, graduate associate to the district president of the Northern Wisconsin District, Appleton, Wis., from WLS
Mr. Joshua R. Arndt, Martin Luther Lutheran School, Oshkosh, Wis., from MLC
Mr. Travis J. Kretsch, Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis., from MLC
Mr. Hayden W. Miller, Emanuel Lutheran School, New London, Wis., from MLC
Mr. Alexander M. Enter, Zion Lutheran Church, Peshtigo, Wis., from MLC

PACIFIC NORTHWEST DISTRICT

Rev. Matthew A. Proeber, Peace Lutheran Church, Eagle River, Alaska, from WLS
Mr. Joshua L. Enstad, Evergreen Lutheran High School, Tacoma, Wash., from MLC
Mr. Elijah D. Kroll, Grace Lutheran School, Kenai, Alaska, from MLC

SOUTH ATLANTIC DISTRICT

Rev. Jared W. Natsis, Rock of Ages Lutheran Church, Madison, Tenn., from WLS
Mr. Jacob P. Biebert, St. Paul Lutheran School, Waco, Neb., from MLC
Mr. Daniel S. Granberg, Abiding Peace Academy, Simpsonville, S.C., from MLC
Mr. Joseph W. Keller, Grace Lutheran School, Grand Anse, Grenada, from MLC
Mr. Josiah S. Nommensen, Grace Lutheran School, Grand Anse, Grenada, from MLC
Mr. Zachary A. Scharlemann, Divine Savior Academy, Doral, Fla., from MLC
Mr. Jason A. Zweifel, Christ the King School, Palm Coast, Fla., from MLC

SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT

Rev. Andrew M. Nemmers, mission start, Houston, Texas, from WLS

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN DISTRICT

Rev. Samuel M. Jeske, Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Crown Point, Ind., from WLS
Rev. Paul L. Spaude, Grace Lutheran Church, Oshkosh, Wis., from WLS
Mr. Timothy J. Babinec, St. Philip Lutheran School, Milwaukee, Wis., from MLC
Mr. Spencer C. Jensen, Christ Lutheran School, Big Bend, Wis., from MLC
Mr. John P. Marquardt, St. Philip Lutheran School, Milwaukee, Wis., from MLC
Mr. Michael K. Sievert, Atonement Lutheran School, Milwaukee, Wis., from MLC

WESTERN WISCONSIN DISTRICT

Rev. Michael D. Hollmann, St. Mark Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wis., from WLS
Rev. Luke A. Miller, Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., from WLS
Rev. Aaron J. Platzer, Peace Lutheran Church, Loves Park, Ill., from WLS
Rev. Andrew P. Westra, Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., from WLS
Mr. Allan L. Caldwell-Boeder, St. John Lutheran School, Waterloo, Wis., from MLC
Mr. Mitchell A. Giovannettone, St. Paul Lutheran School, Lake Mills, Wis., from MLC

Mr. Joshua J. Mose, St. John Lutheran School, Jefferson, Wis., from MLC
Mr. Joseph J. Rodewald, Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., from MLC

Pastor Duane Rodewald, chairman
Teacher Kevin Bode, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Membership—congregations

Reference: Report from the President's Office
Resolution No. 02

WHEREAS 1) the following congregation is recommended by the district president for voting membership in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod; and

WHEREAS 2) the constitution of the congregation has been examined and approved by the district constitution committee; therefore be it

Resolved, that this congregation be graciously welcomed into the voting membership of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod:

NORTH ATLANTIC DISTRICT

Redemption Lutheran Church, Watertown, N.Y.

Pastor Duane Rodewald, chairman
Teacher Kevin Bode, secretary

ADOPTED

Committee #2: Conference of Presidents

Subject: Convention attendance report

Report No. 01

The 65th biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod was attended by 371 voting delegates comprised of 106 pastors, 3 world missionaries, 77 teachers, 4 staff ministers, and 181 lay delegates. An additional 53 advisory delegates and 7 special guests attended. Nine delegates were excused for the full convention and 3 were absent and unexcused.

Pastor Jay Bickelhaupt, chairman
Teacher Matthew Herbst, secretary

Subject: Memorial 2019-01

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 156
Report No. 02

The Floor Committee does not support this memorial but feels that it is very beneficial to keep in mind the support of called workers with unduly burdensome student indebtedness. However, we know there is not a Board of Support that has the funding to assist in this matter. Also, the actual indebtedness which may remain since 1996 is not specifically known and determining "burdensome debt" is subjective by nature.

Pastor Jay Bickelhaupt, chairman
Teacher Matthew Herbst, secretary

Subject: Memorial 2019-02

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 156
Report No. 03

The floor committee does not support directing the WELS Conference of Presidents to produce the specified doctrinal statement regarding divorce because an application of Scripture cannot be written as law. WELS Doctrinal Statements based on Scripture must be applied to every individual situation.

Pastor Jay Bickelhaupt, chairman
Teacher Matthew Herbst, secretary

Subject: Memorial 2019-03

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 156,157
Report No. 04

The floor committee does not support this memorial because the Conference of Presidents is already encouraging circuit pastors to promote CMO at every congregation for which they are responsible. The COP will also be encouraging congregations to prayerfully consider an increase to CMO in future WELS communications.

Pastor Jay Bickelhaupt, chairman
Teacher Matthew Herbst, secretary

Subject: Expressions of gratitude

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*
Resolution No. 01

WHEREAS 1) the accomplishment of the convention's work requires the effort of many people; and

WHEREAS 2) the work of the synod depends on the concentrated labor of many people within its membership; therefore be it

Resolved, that the synod in convention express its gratitude to:

1. The faculty and staff of Martin Luther College for hosting this convention, especially Michelle Gartner.
2. The support staff and officers of the synod for arranging and conducting the business of this convention.
3. Those who delivered the sermons, devotions, and essays; conducted the services; served as organists and instrumentalists; sang in the choirs; and in other ways led us in worship.
4. Mr. Timothy Snyder, who served as the convention videographer, and Mr. Bill Pekrul as the convention photographer.
5. The Lutheran Women's Missionary Society for the presentation of the flags.
6. The delegates and floor committees of the convention for their concentrated efforts; all who served on boards, commissions, and committees of the synod.
7. The school staff, kitchen staff, Pioneer College Caterers, audio/visual services, technology services, and volunteers who contributed their time and talent to make the convention flow smoothly to a successful completion.
8. Northwestern Publishing House, The Wartburg Project, WELS Foundation, WELS Investment Funds, Church Extension Fund, Lutheran Military Support Group, Christian Family Solutions, The Lutheran Home Association and Jesus Cares Ministries, and others who provided materials for the convention.
9. All other WELS agencies who provided time, materials, and representatives to inform delegates about synod work.

Pastor Jay Bickelhaupt, chairman
Teacher Matthew Herbst, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Expressions of gratitude

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*

Resolution No. 02

WHEREAS 1) Rev. Charles Degner served faithfully as district president of the Minnesota District; and
WHEREAS 2) Rev. John Seifert served faithfully as district president of the Michigan District; therefore be it
Resolved, that our synod in convention thank the Lord for Rev. Degner and Rev. Seifert for their years of faithful service.

Pastor Jay Bickelhaupt, chairman
Teacher Matthew Herbst, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Location of the synod convention

Resolution No. 03

WHEREAS Michigan Lutheran Seminary has extended an invitation to host the 2021 synod convention in Saginaw, Mich.; therefore be it

Resolved, that we accept the invitation of Michigan Lutheran Seminary with thanks.

Pastor Jay Bickelhaupt, chairman
Teacher Matthew Herbst, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Encouraging education about the staff ministry program

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 157

Resolution No. 04

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 by their district president about the benefits and availability of staff ministers.

Pastor Jay Bickelhaupt, chairman
Teacher Matthew Herbst, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Convention offerings

Resolution No. 05

WHEREAS a thank offering of \$5,038.00 was gathered at the opening service; therefore be it

Resolved, that the 2019 WELS convention designate the offering to the Hmong outreach in Vietnam.

Pastor Jay Bickelhaupt, chairman
Teacher Matthew Herbst, secretary

ADOPTED

Committee #3: Commission on Inter-Church Relations

Subject: The work of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 20-22

Report No. 01

The Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR) is 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.”

In an effort to better coordinate efforts between the CICR, the Board for World Missions (BWM), and the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, all of which receive inquiries and requests for declarations of fellowship or assistance in educating pastors in their countries, Rev. Paul Prange was appointed to the position of administrator of CICR. May God bless Pastor Prange as he takes up the task before him.

The work of the CICR is evidenced by the work being done in cooperation with numerous church bodies throughout the world. We rejoice that 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. We encourage the CICR to continue their work to recognize or establish unity of doctrine and practice with faithful church bodies throughout the world.

In North America, WELS continues to enjoy a strong fellowship with our sister synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The CICR continues to monitor developments with the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) through informal meetings between leaders of WELS, the ELS, and the LCMS. While these meetings have been beneficial, the representatives of all three church bodies agree that fellowship between the ELS and WELS, on the one hand, and the LCMS, on the other, is not imminent. We commend the informal meetings and encourage such meetings to continue.

The CICR continues talks with the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). Representatives of WELS, the ELS and the CLC worked together on a document entitled “Joint Statement Regarding Termination of Fellowship.” The CLC has resolved to make a final decision on the statement at its 2020 convention. We commend the CICR in its work to establish fellowship with the CLC and encourage them to continue that effort.

Our synod thanks Professor John Brenner who completed his term on July 1 as chairman of the CICR. His work has been a blessing to WELS and to our brothers and sisters in faith scattered throughout the world. We wish God's blessings to Prof. James Danell who was elected as the next chairman of the CICR.

Fruit of the CICR efforts can also be seen in the two resolutions we have to present to the convention regarding the Christian Lutheran Evangelical Church (CLEC) in Taiwan and the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ–Kenya (LCMC–Kenya).

We have two resolutions for welcoming the two church bodies.

Pastor Michael A. Schroeder, chairman
Teacher Steven R. Towne, secretary

Subject: To declare formal fellowship with the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ–Kenya

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 20,21

Resolution No. 01

- WHEREAS 1) the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ–Kenya (LCMC–Kenya) has been formed and exists as an independent confessional church; and
- WHEREAS 2) unity in faith between the LCMC–Kenya and WELS has been evidenced by a common commitment to the Holy Scriptures, to the Lutheran Confessions, and to the doctrinal position of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC); and
- WHEREAS 3) the Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR) unanimously recommends a formal declaration of fellowship with the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ–Kenya; therefore be it
- Resolved. a) that we thank God for allowing the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ–Kenya to be formed as a confessional Lutheran church with whom we enjoy unity in faith and doctrine; and be it further
- Resolved. b) that WELS officially declare fellowship with the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ–Kenya; and be it finally
- Resolved. c) that we ask God to give joy and blessing to both of our church bodies through this fellowship.

Pastor Michael A. Schroeder, chairman
Teacher Steven R. Towne, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: To declare formal fellowship with the Christian Lutheran Evangelical Church of Taiwan

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 20,21

Resolution No. 02

- WHEREAS 1) the Christian Lutheran Evangelical Church (CLEC) of Taiwan has been formed and exists as an independent confessional church; and
- WHEREAS 2) unity in faith between the CLEC and WELS has been evidenced by a common commitment to the Holy Scriptures, to the Lutheran Confessions, and to the doctrinal position of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC); and
- WHEREAS 3) the Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR) unanimously recommends a formal declaration of fellowship with the Christian Lutheran Evangelical Church of Taiwan; therefore be it
- Resolved. a) that we thank God for allowing the Christian Lutheran Evangelical Church of Taiwan to be formed as a confessional Lutheran church with whom we enjoy unity in faith and doctrine; and be it further
- Resolved. b) that WELS officially declare fellowship with the Christian Lutheran Evangelical Church of Taiwan;

and be it finally

Resolved, c) that we ask God to give joy and blessing to both of our church bodies through this fellowship.

Pastor Michael A. Schroeder, chairman
Teacher Steven R. Towne, secretary

ADOPTED

Committee #4: Ministry of Christian Giving and Communication Services

Subject: Overview

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 22-27
Report No. 01

We commend the Ministry of Christian Giving (MCG) for their faithful service in encouraging every member to “excel in the grace of giving” through Christ. We give thanks to God for blessing these efforts. We encourage every congregation to utilize MCG resources and invite the Christian giving counselors to meet with their membership. We strongly encourage every congregation to participate in the “Equipping Christian Witnesses” campaign in support of the mission and ministry of Martin Luther College.

We also commend Communication Services for their continued efforts to communicate the WELS mission to the synod and the world. We encourage every congregation to share these materials and resources with God’s people.

Pastor Timothy Dolan, chairman
Teacher Joel Burmeister, secretary

Committee #5: Synodical Council

Subject: Synodical Council

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 57-84
Report No. 01

Our committee notes with gratitude the faithful work of the Synodical Council and highlights the following items:

Synodical Archives: We are thankful for the time and resources dedicated to relocating archival materials from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry. We appreciate the work of the archivist to process, catalogue, and make available for research the large amount of valuable contributions that preserve the history of our church body.

Accounting Oversight: We rejoice with the Accounting Oversight Committee that all audits were completed within four months of year-end and all entities received an unmodified opinion from the auditors.

CMO trends and ministerial education costs: We share the Synodical Council's concern over the flat and even decreasing levels of Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO). We also share the concern of the synod about the financial burden on students at Martin Luther College. Published Memorial 2019-07 (BORAM, p. 158) proposes the synod direct our ministry financial planners to systematically increase ministerial education funding above the rate of inflation. Memorial 2019-07 also proposes that any increase in the Financial Stabilization Fund be used to benefit ministerial education so that tuition increases can be lower. We believe that the desire to relieve MLC students of financial burden is sufficiently on the mind of the Synodical Council and will continue to be actively addressed by the Synodical Council without a resolution that binds them to this specific course of action.

Northwestern Publishing House: We commend Northwestern Publishing House for implementing plans to address financial challenges in order to sustain its ministry in the future. While this unfortunately involved the closing of the Milwaukee retail store, we are thankful for the ongoing online retail presence and for the additional benefits that relocating office operations to the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry provides.

Pastor David Bivens, chairman
Pastor John Backus, secretary

Subject: Unfunded Priority List

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 61,62
Resolution No. 01

- WHEREAS 1) the Synodical Council is tasked with setting a financial plan to distribute expected funds and gifts in a responsible manner; and
- WHEREAS 2) the Lord can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20); and
- WHEREAS 3) the Lord may bless us with resources beyond what is expected in the current financial plan; and
- WHEREAS 4) the Synodical Council has proposed an Unfunded Priority List of ministry objectives (BORAM, pp. 61,62); and
- WHEREAS 5) we appreciate the inclusion of Special Ministries on the list; therefore be it
- Resolved. a) that the synod adopt the Unfunded Priority List recommended by the Synodical Council as printed in BORAM; and be it finally
- Resolved. b) that the congregations of WELS actively consider increasing their Congregation Mission Offering so that these additional ministry objectives can be funded.

Pastor David Bivens, chairman
Pastor John Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Memorial 2019-06 Compensation Review Committee

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 158
Resolution No. 02

- WHEREAS 1) the Compensation Review Committee has provided a great service to WELS in establishing guidelines and an online calculator for called worker compensation; and
- WHEREAS 2) our brothers in the Arizona-California District request additional clarification on how Fair Market Value pertains to the salary matrix; and
- WHEREAS 3) our brothers in the Arizona-California District request clarification on how to implement Cost of Living Adjustments [COLAs] after the first year of ministry; therefore be it

- Resolved, a) that the Synodical Council clarify the Fair Market Value pertaining to the salary matrix; and be it further
- Resolved, b) that the Synodical Council clarify how to implement Cost of Living Adjustments [COLAs] after the first year of ministry; and be it finally
- Resolved, c) that we thank the Synodical Council's Compensation Review Committee for its ongoing work assisting congregations in this matter.

Pastor David Bivens, chairman
 Pastor John Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Committee #6: Finance and ministry financial plan (budget)

Subject: Blessings and thanks

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 85-108
 Report No. 01

What would you do if you had \$90 million? In the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), we send workers into mission fields ripe for a harvest of souls not only in the United States but throughout the world. In the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, we train and nurture future called workers in order to maintain a steady stream of men and women who are equipped and enthused to be sent out as servants in the public ministry. In the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, we provide services that facilitate and support ministry excellence in congregations and their schools and administration.

Thank you, members of WELS, for your nearly \$90 million of financial resources annually (including approximately \$21 million in Congregation Mission Offerings) to carry out this privileged and crucial work! Thank you, areas of ministry leaders, for your collaborative, kingdom-minded approach, as you engage in healthy dialogue about synodwide opportunities and priorities! Thank you, synodical leaders, for your faithfulness, diligence, and transparency over the past 20 months in developing a financial plan that will serve us for the next two years. Finally, thanks and praise to our gracious Lord and Savior for these many human and financial resources and for the honor of carrying out this privileged work.

Pastor Steven Gabb, chairman
 Teacher Jon Woldt, secretary

Subject: Ministry financial plan (2019–21)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 85-108
 Resolution No. 01

- WHEREAS 1) the Lord has blessed our synod through the generous financial offerings of its congregations and individuals; and
- WHEREAS 2) the Synodical Council (SC) has studied the opportunities and needs of each area of ministry, as well as the expected financial resources available to us through Congregation Mission Offerings, the Financial Stabilization Fund, individual gifts, and revenue sources; and

- WHEREAS 3) the SC has proposed a balanced ministry financial plan for the next biennium that faithfully reflects the synod's financial needs and expected support for the Lord's work; therefore be it
- Resolved. a) that we adopt the Synodical Council's ministry financial plan for the 2019–21 biennium; and be it further
- Resolved. b) that we encourage every congregation and individual of WELS to walk together and wholeheartedly support the gospel ministry entrusted to us; and be it finally
- Resolved. c) that we ask the Lord of the Church to enable and inspire his people, both as congregations and individuals, to generously support the ministry financial plan as we unite to do the gospel work entrusted to us *For the Generations to Come*.

Pastor Steven Gabb, chairman
Teacher Jon Woldt, secretary

ADOPTED

Committee #7: Home Missions

Subject: General report

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 109-115,159,160
Report No. 01

The Board for Home Missions continued its faithful work of planting and nurturing mission opportunities to share the good news of salvation in North America, trusting that we always do so “under the canopy of a perfect plan—the plan of the Triune God already in place from eternity.”

We thank God for the 14 mission starts and 10 mission enhancements that were funded in the past biennium. We pray for expanded efforts in the future, as God grants the necessary gifts.

We offer special thanks to God for the 18 years of faithful ministry that Pastor Ed Schuppe was given strength to provide as mission counselor to several districts. His passion for the lost and his compassion for those who serve in the trenches of gospel ministry are a model to be followed. With Jesus, we say, “Well done, good and faithful servant!”

We also thank God for compelling our synod to see the importance of cross-cultural ministry in recent years and to understand how essential it will be for the generations to come. To that end, we also ask him to provide the necessary ministry gifts to serve with compassion the many people groups who are now coming to our nation. What an opportunity he is giving us to share the love of Jesus with people from around the world within our own borders.

We thank God for the efforts currently being made in our WELS campus ministries, which are celebrating their 100-year anniversary in 2019–20. What started as a joint effort of WELS and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod in 1920 at the University of Wisconsin–Madison has now grown into a nationwide network of gospel ministry. With the growth of secularism in our culture, spawned especially on our college campuses, how important it will be to redouble our efforts to help our collegiate members to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus and to reach out with hospitality to college students who do not yet know him.

We commend the Board for Home Missions and the district mission boards for their use of the Vision Traction Organizer (VTO) to produce a six-year strategic plan. While entrusting the results of our efforts to Jesus alone, we must also recognize how important it is to have a solid ministry vision and plan for the sake of efficiency and accountability in ministry.

We are in agreement with the spirit of the memorials presented on pages 159 and 160, which encourage the continued efforts in exploring multi-site ministry opportunities and ramping up financial support for home and world missions, as God allows. While circumstances will dictate the best course of action, we have no reason to object to the sentiments expressed in both memorials.

“The direction WELS has given Home Missions is simple—keep planting churches so more souls can be reached with the gospel of Christ” (BORAM, p. 112). We ask God to continue to bless the efforts of all involved to further his kingdom. We encourage our congregations to continue support of Home Missions with their time, prayers, and offerings for the generations to come.

Pastor Peter Prange, chairman
Teacher Matthew Nottling, secretary

Committee #8: World Missions and Joint Mission Council

Subject: Board for World Missions and Joint Mission Council Resolution

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 116-123

Resolution No. 01

- WHEREAS 1) WELS World Missions conducts and encourages gospel outreach in 40 foreign countries and is exploring outreach opportunities in 14 prospective new mission fields; and
- WHEREAS 2) God’s grace has opened doors to an unprecedented mission opportunity in communist Vietnam, and a training center is being built in Vietnam; and
- WHEREAS 3) WELS is making efforts to plant churches 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; and
- WHEREAS 4) the number of people who need to hear about the love of the Savior God who came into this world to save them is growing; and
- WHEREAS 5) without the gospel message, they will be lost for eternity; therefore be it
- Resolved, a) that WELS congregations are encouraged to contact WELS Missions Promotions to schedule a mission festival Sunday to bring attention to the important gospel mission work God is carrying out around the world through our synod; and be it further
- Resolved, b) that WELS congregations are encouraged to make use of the Mission Journeys program to send a mission team from their congregation to assist missionaries in a mission field in the United States or in a foreign country; and be it finally
- Resolved, c) that WELS congregations are encouraged to increase Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) to assist with World Missions.

Pastor William Brassow, chairman
Teacher Chris Hintz, secretary

ADOPTED

Committee #9: Ministerial Education

Subject: MLC student debt

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 157, 160-163 (Memorials 2019-05, 2019-10, 2019-11, 2019-14, 2019-16)
Report No. 01

We acknowledge the issue of tuition cost and student debt.

We trust Communication Services to use the various means of communication available to update the synod on the state of student debt at reasonable intervals.

Since gifts for *Equipping Christian Witnesses* are designated gifts, we trust MLC to use gifts according to donor wishes.

We trust the Ministry of Christian Giving to know the various needs of the synod and to communicate as appropriate those needs to individuals who intend to give.

We appreciate the work of MLC's administration to educate students about various sources of student aid. We agree that it is a good idea for students to find summer employment. We recognize that all students have different opportunities for employment. We do not believe that it is advisable to award scholarships based on employer-verified hours worked during the summer months.

We thank the responsible boards for continued efforts to make an education at Martin Luther College affordable.

Pastor John Vieths, chairman
Teacher Jared Rathje, secretary

Subject: Sunday school training

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 161
Report No. 02

We recognize the blessings of Sunday schools for our synod. Promotion of Sunday schools is currently the responsibility of the Commission on Discipleship. The training that Martin Luther College (MLC) gives to future teachers does equip them to serve in our synod's Sunday schools. Therefore, it is not necessary to add it to the mission of MLC.

Pastor John Vieths, chairman
Teacher Jared Rathje, secretary

Subject: Support of Michigan Lutheran Seminary

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 161
Report No. 03

We are pleased that the financial situation at Michigan Lutheran Seminary has stabilized as reported by BME administrator Paul Prange and CFO Todd Poppe. We pray that the Lord will move his people to continue to support the school with their gifts and encourage their children to attend.

Pastor John Vieths, chairman
Teacher Jared Rathje, secretary

Subject: Encouraging recruitment for the pastoral ministry

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 162

Report No. 04

We acknowledge the truth of our Savior's Word, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." We support the conviction that all WELS members encourage those with the appropriate gifts to prepare for the pastoral ministry.

Pastor John Vieths, chairman

Teacher Jared Rathje, secretary

Subject: *Equipping Christian Witnesses*

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 127,128

Resolution No. 01

WHEREAS 1) the Conference of Presidents has granted permission to MLC to conduct a synodwide capital campaign for its silver anniversary titled *Equipping Christian Witnesses*; and

WHEREAS 2) this campaign addresses critical needs for recruitment, financial aid, and facilities at MLC; therefore be it

Resolved, that we encourage our members to joyfully support it and pray God's blessings on it.

Pastor John Vieths, chairman

Teacher Jared Rathje, secretary

ADOPTED

Committee #10: Congregational Services A (Congregational Counseling, Discipleship, Evangelism)

Subject: Commission on Congregational Counseling, Commission on Discipleship, Commission on Evangelism

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 33-40

Report No. 01

We are thankful for WELS Congregational Services (CS), which exists to encourage and equip congregations for faithful and fruitful gospel ministry. CS consists of six commissions that give focused attention to specific areas of congregational life. The three commissions assigned to our committee were Commission on Congregational Counseling, Commission on Discipleship, and Commission on Evangelism.

As we live in an increasingly pagan society and our synod is facing a variety of challenges and threats, we commend these commissions for (1) recognizing that the strength of our congregations is the backbone of our synod, and (2) working hard at producing resources, offering guidance, and providing encouragement, all aimed at strengthening these congregations in sharing the gospel.

The CS offers a wealth of FREE resources at welscongregationalservices.net, and we encourage our congregations to make use of these excellent materials and subscribe to the frequent updates that are made available.

We encourage Pastor Donn Dobberstein, Pastor Jonathan Hein, and Pastor Eric Roecker to continue with their faithful work and would advise them to promote their resources through as many platforms as possible.

Memorials 2019-17, 2019-18, and 2019-19:

All three of these memorials were taken into consideration, and it was decided, after consulting with the three leaders of these commissions, that the objectives of these memorials are already included in the future plans of these commissions and no additional action is needed at this time.

We ask for the Lord's blessings on the work of these commissions as we continue to share the gospel as a treasure for the generations to come.

Pastor Timothy Otto, chairman
Teacher Bradley Wetzell, secretary

Committee #11: Congregational Services Group B (Special Ministries, Worship)

Subject: Congregational Services—Commissions on Special Ministries and Worship

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 28-32, 41-48

Report No. 01

Floor Committee 11 commends Congregational Services for their work in identifying and addressing the needs of our synod. We thank them for their united efforts to help close the back door and open the front doors of our congregations. We encourage all our congregations to become involved in the upcoming *Welcome Home, 10 for 10*, C19, and E20 efforts.

We thank the Commission on Special Ministries for the variety of resources they provide congregations to help them reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We recommend that the Mission for the Visually Impaired convert audio recordings and text files to downloadable audio books. We recommend that the Mission for the Visually Impaired consider working with Northwestern Publishing House to explore using Audible.com as a delivery method for these resources.

We commend the Commission on Special Ministries for the development of support groups for individuals to help them in their vocation. Convention delegates are encouraged to share resources with their members who serve as nurses, in the military, and as therapists.

The website www.christiantherapistnetwork.com provides a searchable database for WELS members to help them find a Christian therapist.

We thank the Commission on Worship for their work and many resources they are providing. We encourage the Commission on Worship to develop resources and give guidance to those seeking additional orthodox contemporary worship options.

Pastor Peter Kiecker, chairman
Teacher Benjamin Bain, secretary

Subject: Contemporary Lord's Prayer—a simple change to make it "more contemporary" and flow together more freely

Reference: Unpublished Memorial 2019-21

Resolution No. 01

WHEREAS 1) the Hymnal Committee did consider the idea of replacing the word "hallowed" from the contemporary version of the Lord's Prayer in the new hymnal; and

WHEREAS 2) the Hymnal Committee rejected the idea due to the widespread usage of the current contemporary version; therefore be it

Resolved, that we respect the decision of the Hymnal Committee and use the current contemporary wording.

Pastor Peter Kiecker, chairman

Teacher Benjamin Bain, secretary

ADOPTED

Committee #12: Congregational Services C (Lutheran Schools)

Subject: Commission on Lutheran Schools

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 49-55

Report No. 01

We give thanks for the blessings of Christian education and the work of the Commission for Lutheran Schools (CLS) as it faithfully works to fulfill its mission to guide and assist congregations in advancing the gospel of Jesus by providing resources, training, and personal assistance for starting and strengthening Lutheran schools. The CLS daily provides services to our synod's early childhood ministries (387), Lutheran elementary schools (294), area Lutheran high schools (27), and preparatory schools (2), which share the gospel message with nearly 42,000 children in 33 states and 3 Caribbean island nations.

We recognize our God's gracious blessings in the continued growth of early childhood and high school enrollments as well as the stable enrollments in our elementary schools and preparatory schools since 2017.

CLS is to be commended for strengthening ministries through the following initiatives:

1. *Telling the next generation*—These six-hour seminars given in conjunction with the Commission on Evangelism better enable our schools and early childhood ministries to build purposeful harvest strategies in working with community families. We encourage all our schools to make use of these seminars.
2. *The 21st-Century Principal Initiative, Principal Training Program, Early Childhood Emerging Leader Cohort, Principal and Director Apprentice Program*—These initiatives are effectively addressing both the need for well-trained school leaders and the shortage of school leaders. We pray that the Lord will continue to strengthen and bless these initiatives.
3. *WELS school accreditation and consulting services*—The Lord has richly blessed these initiatives and the schools that have utilized them with an increased focus on mission and vision, the strengthening of student instruction, and school improvement. Currently 138 schools with an overall enrollment of more than 16,000 students in 14 states are accredited by WELS School Accreditation (WELSSA), and more than 50 school consultants have been

trained to assist congregations and schools. We commend the schools who have completed school accreditation and the site visiting teams who lead accreditation visits, and we encourage congregations and schools to make use of CLS consulting services.

4. WELS Ministerial Growth and Evaluation Process (MGEP)—After years of planning, research, and work, a series of four modules and online follow-up support are in the process of being shared with leaders and teachers throughout our districts. The process will assist schools in fostering continuous teacher growth for student learning and creating ministry development plans for all teachers. In addition, the process will provide the CLS with better data to assist in building call lists and meeting congregational ministry needs. We encourage the leaders and teachers of all schools to participate in the MGEP Modules and begin implementation in their schools by the end of the 2020–21 school year.

The committee carefully reviewed the memorial by the district school coordinators requesting to change voluntary supplemental contributions to the CLS to annual school support fees based on school enrollment (BORAM, pp. 166,167). This committee, as well as the synod in convention in 2017, supports the goal of the memorial, which is to have all our schools—ECM, LES, and HS—participate in giving voluntary supplemental contributions for the important work of the CLS and strengthening ministry in our districts. However, the committee does not believe that implementing a mandatory fee will be an effective means of increasing the percent of schools providing supplemental contributions.

School contributions were originally approved as voluntary with support from the Board for Parish Services, the Conference of Presidents, the Synodical Council, and district conventions. Most of the non-contributing schools are smaller schools and often struggling schools that represent just 33 percent of student enrollment. A percentage of WELS schools, especially early childhood ministries, do not make a voluntary school contribution due to a lack of knowledge about the benefits of the process or the means to contribute, and a smaller percentage of WELS schools do not make a voluntary school contribution due to a philosophical belief that all CLS functions should be supported through the synodical budget.

It is the committee's belief that a resolution making supplementary contributions mandatory could burden financially strapped schools or alienate those with philosophical concerns. Additionally, the CLS has no means of enforcing such a mandatory fee.

It is the goal of the CLS and WELS schools to walk together in love to ensure that voluntary supplemental support contributions benefit all our WELS schools, students, and families; therefore, the committee makes the following recommendation to the CLS:

1. Refer to contributions as “annual school support” to better reflect the support model.
2. Extend the benefits of contributing schools to all schools to encourage active participation of all schools in annual school support contributions.
3. Review and revise the contribution process to increase the ease of completing contributions
4. Renew efforts to communicate the purpose and benefits of annual school support contributions through the communication of school district coordinators, early childhood district coordinators, and the Commission on Lutheran Schools.

At a time when we face a shortage of educational leaders, teachers, and pastors, we encourage our congregations to actively promote the teaching ministry and the need for educational leaders, including principal and early childhood ministry directors, among their congregational youth. We also encourage MLC to consider ways to strengthen outreach to our elementary schools and high schools to better help young Christians understand and consider ministry.

May the Lord continue to bless the efforts of the CLS to guide and assist congregations in advancing the gospel of Jesus by providing resources, training, and personal assistance for starting and strengthening Lutheran schools.

Teacher Jim Henrickson, chairman
Teacher Randy Peck, secretary

Subject: Request for increased financial support for the 21st-Century Lutheran Principal Initiative

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 51

Resolution No. 01

- WHEREAS 1) the Conference of Presidents (COP) has recognized the need to eliminate assigning Martin Luther College (MLC) graduates to the principal apprentice role; and
- WHEREAS 2) there are currently more than 20 schools with principal vacancies or interim principals; and
- WHEREAS 3) the principal vacancy rate is projected to grow as current principals retire; and
- WHEREAS 4) the Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS) and MLC have developed a process to recruit and prepare experienced teachers to serve as principals through the 21st-Century Lutheran Principal Initiative; and
- WHEREAS 5) the 21st-Century Lutheran Principal Initiative will graduate its first class of principal candidates in 2020 and has two more principal cohorts in place with scheduled graduations in 2021 and 2022; and
- WHEREAS 6) recent research reveals that common levels of administrative release time, training, and compensation hinder the abilities of principals to lead their schools, contribute to principal attrition, and hinder the recruitment of new principals; and
- WHEREAS 7) full principal training involves Leadership Candidate Training through the Commission on Lutheran Schools and study for a Master's degree in Educational Administration through Martin Luther College; and
- WHEREAS 8) principal training involves a significant amount of time and money on the part of candidates; and
- WHEREAS 9) the cost for training should represent a shared investment by candidates and the synod; and
- WHEREAS 10) a lack of funding of scholarships for cohort candidates has negatively impacted MLC's budget by \$21,000; and
- WHEREAS 11) the 2017 Synod Convention resolved to ask the Synodical Council and the Board for Ministerial Education to prioritize the funding needed to encourage and support WELS teachers to join a 21st-Century Lutheran Principal cohort; therefore be it
- Resolved. a) that the Synodical Council and the Board for Ministerial Education give increased prioritization to the funding needed to encourage and enable WELS teachers to join a 21st Century Lutheran Principal cohort; and be it further
- Resolved. b) that congregations be encouraged to publicize the 21st-Century Lutheran Principal Initiative at Martin Luther College to encourage WELS teachers to join a 21st-Century Lutheran Principal cohort; and be it finally
- Resolved. c) that individuals and congregations be encouraged to give gifts to the 21st-Century Lutheran Principal Initiative at Martin Luther College in order to provide greater funding to this worthy program.

Teacher Jim Henrickson, chairman
Teacher Randy Peck, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Request for increased financial support for the Commission on Lutheran Schools

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 49-55

Resolution No. 02

- WHEREAS 1) the Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS) provides a variety of important resources and assistance to WELS Lutheran preschools, elementary schools, and high schools; and
- WHEREAS 2) the CLS continues to implement and expand available resources and assistance, including principal and administration training, the school ministry growth and evaluation process, school accreditation, counseling for the strengthening of existing schools and establishment of new schools, and assistance to early childhood education ministries; and

WHEREAS 3) all schools in our school system benefit from the work of the CLS; and
WHEREAS 4) increased funding would allow for greater work to be accomplished within the districts through the work of district school coordinators and early childhood district coordinators; therefore be it
Resolved, that that the Synodical Council give strong consideration to increased funding for the Commission on Lutheran Schools.

Teacher Jim Henrickson, chairman
Teacher Randy Peck, secretary

ADOPTED

Committee #13: Support Services

Subject: Overview

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 73-79
Report No. 01

Support Services encompasses Technology, Financial Services, Human Resources, and Facility Services.

Technology

The focus of WELS Technology over the past two years has been on the following:

Digital Security: A key priority of WELS Technology is to comply with increasingly more rigorous cyber security industry standards. Every synod data source (spreadsheets, databases, contact lists, etc.) in which personally identifiable information may be contained is assigned appropriate security measures. Additionally, a complete Mobile Device Management program ensures that any device that has access to synod resources can be monitored, and, if necessary, locked or erased if stolen.

Applications/forms development: WELSource, a web-based database application, has increased operational efficiency using secure digital tools. Forms which provide information about called workers for call lists, church/school statistics, mission activity reporting, CMO commitments, etc., are accessed through the main portal called My WELS Cloud. Making over 40 common forms available digitally has saved staff countless hours and has resulted in greater participation across the synod. Several key applications (apps) have been developed to save time. The Call System app serves the Conference of Presidents and Lutheran Schools by pulling together candidates for call lists. The synod's financial management and donor management systems are now cloud-based, an approach that is more cost-effective, accessible, and secure. The increase in digital forms has been accompanied by a parallel increase in the need for help desk support provided by WELS Technology.

Digital ministry resources: The WELS Mobile App has a new, more efficient format that allows more people to access content on a wide range of devices. We encourage all WELS members to have the WELS app appear on the home screen of their smart phone. Devotional content is also now available through smart speakers (Echo and Alexa). The WELS Yearbook is available online and has been combined with the WELS Locator. WELSTech, a weekly audio/video podcast featuring resources that congregations and schools can use to improve their ministries, celebrated its 600th show this spring. Furthermore, numerous workshops and presentations are available via WELS Technology.

As God allows new technologies to be used, the WELS Technology team remains steadfastly committed to sharing the gospel; improving efficiencies; and serving called workers, congregations, and schools of WELS. Soon, WELS technology will be retiring the old database (Progress), continuing digitization of paper forms, and integrating infrastructure improvements to enhance security and reliability. These efforts will save thousands of hours of labor

each year, which will benefit called workers, churches, and schools. Call lists will be more accurate, reports timelier, and access to the correct forms and individuals more likely accomplished without assistance.

Financial Services

Financial Services facilitates WELS ministries by providing 23 God-pleasing, efficient, and effective financial services consistent with industry-standard accounting practices. These services include: financial planning and forecasts; accounting, audit, and financial statement preparation; gift processing; accounts payable and 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. The services are provided to a variety of WELS entities (WELS, WELS Church Extension Fund, WELS Foundation, WELS Investment Fund, WELS Retirement Plan, WELS Voluntary Employees' Beneficiary Association, Northwestern Publishing House, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Martin Luther College, Luther Preparatory School, and Michigan Lutheran Seminary).

The 11 staff members of Financial Services are well-trained with appropriate education and work experience. They are to be commended for: 1) financial statements receiving the best possible opinion (unmodified) from external auditors, 2) reviewing and revising WELS policies prior to submission to the Synodical Council, 3) implementing new accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, 4) guiding the development of the 2019–21 ministry financial plan, 5) working with WELS Technology to implement software that will increase efficiency and effectiveness, 6) working with the Capital Projects Committee and Synodical Council to clarify requirements for capital projects, and 7) collaborating with WELS Foundation for the selection of a gift administration provider (RenPSG).

Even though there are significantly fewer staff than several years ago, the staff remains confident that the work can be done as they strive to improve effectiveness and reduce costs within their area and across WELS. They are to be commended for their dedication to ensuring that the services will not deteriorate because of the recent staff reduction. Future plans include: 1) implementing new cloud-based donor relationship management and accounting software, 2) collaborating with ministerial education schools on investigation of paperless accounts payable alternatives, 3) implementation of new accounting standards related to leases, revenue recognition, and contributions, 4) review and revision of corporate WELS policies, and 5) cross-training of Financial Services employees to ensure continuity during vacancies and extended absences.

Human Resources

Human Resources (HR) oversees the personnel functions for WELS entities. It also serves as a resource to WELS congregations and to affiliated groups and entities regarding risk management and federal and state legal requirements related to personnel matters. Noteworthy is that the strong relationship with the Benefit Plans Office (BPO) allows for an efficient and productive HR office.

Adequately staffed by two very experienced full-time employees, HR provides a high level of support to WELS entities by managing day-to-day activities along with a few key initiatives: 1) staffing key lay worker positions, 2) working with the Synodical Council to review the WELS Called Worker Compensation Guidelines, 3) making available a resource for calling bodies known as The Called Worker Compensation Calculator, 4) reporting Affordable Care Act compliance requirements, 5) vetting synod board/committee nominees, 6) facilitating the process of securing Religious Worker Visas, and 7) working with congregations and the Conference of Presidents on matters related to risk and personnel as well as general compensation, benefits, and policy issues. Of note is the necessity of WELS congregations and affiliated groups to report any charge, report, or allegation of sexual misconduct or physical abuse involving pastors, teachers, vicars, full- or part-time employees, or volunteers in any capacity not only to authorities but also to the district president, director of Lutheran Schools, or director of Human Resources.

Looking ahead, HR will be evaluating where efficiencies could be implemented while maintaining effectiveness. This includes the following: 1) facilitating programs for the management and staff of WELS entities, 2) updating wels.net with practical HR information, 3) performing due diligence with HR vendors and systems, 4) coordinating timely information support for areas of ministry and WELS schools, 5) training WELS leaders to develop supervisory skills, 6) reviewing HR policies, procedures, and compensation programs at WELS operated organizations, and 7) provide support to WELS organizations in areas related to human resources.

Facility Services

Staffed primarily by the WELS Chief Financial Officer, Facility Services supports the ministries conducted at or

through WELS corporate headquarters by providing a God-pleasing physical workspace conducive to ministry operation and by creating a welcoming environment to all who enter the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry (CMM) in Waukesha, Wis. During 2018, the remaining synod archives from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary were moved to the synod archival space established in the CMM in 2016. In May 2019, the restructured operations of Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) were also moved into the building. The Building Fund policy ensures adequate funding to maintain and improve the CMM. It directs that a portion of the rent paid by WELS Church Extension Fund, WELS Foundation, WELS Investment Funds, NPH, and WELS Benefits Plan be directed to the Building Fund. The balance in the Building Fund is approximately \$350,000. In the next five to seven years it is anticipated that the parking lot and HVAC may need to be replaced.

Teacher Keith Bowe, chairman
Teacher Tim Biesterfeld, secretary

Committee #14: Subsidiaries and Benefit Plans

Subject: WELS Historical Institute

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 133-136
Report No. 01

The committee would like to thank the WELS Historical Institute for its faithful work of preserving the history of our synod dating back to her founding in 1850 through Salem Lutheran Landmark Church in Milwaukee, Wis., which serves as the official WELS museum. We would like to draw attention to the fact that the WELS Historical Institute had a membership of nearly 600 in its early years. That membership currently stands at 200. Because of this drop, we would like to raise awareness of this historical organization and encourage members of the synod to take an active role. There are several ways to do this including taking a tour, organizing a group tour of Salem Landmark Church and the museum, arranging for a speaker from the institute to present to your congregation or a group within your congregation, or becoming an active member of the institute. We thank the members of the synod for their generous donations supporting this organization and encourage all members of WELS to consider contributions in the future.

Pastor Jonathan Kehren, chairman
Teacher Michael Peek, secretary

Subject: Support Services

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 137-142
Report No. 02

We praise God for the work of the support services we have in our synod, including the WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF), the WELS Foundation, and the WELS Investment Funds. The CEF provided loans to 217 congregations totaling more than \$193 million, approved loans and grants of \$32.6 million and \$3.01 million respectively, and has additional borrowers at \$19.0 million in construction and \$1.5 million in grants. Synod members should be aware that they can invest in WELS CEF. Special savings certificates are currently being offered including one with a limited time rate of four percent. These investments will help to increase the funds that are able to give support to WELS mission projects. WELS Foundation was able to distribute \$5.7 million in donor-directed gifts to various ministries throughout the synod in fiscal year 2017–18. The floor committee would like to encourage more of the members of our synod to become aware of how they can contribute to the work of the synod in these unique ways of investing their money. We

encourage congregations to consider providing promotional materials to their members and inviting WELS Christian giving counselors to come and promote these giving options to WELS members.

Pastor Jonathan Kehren, chairman

Teacher Michael Peek, secretary

Subject: WELS VEBA

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 142-144

Report No. 03

We give thanks to the Lord of the church as he has continued to bless the WELS VEBA plan over the past several years. This plan remains in a strong position in the years following the implementation of the health care reform laws of our country. The plan rate increases for 2018 and 2019 were below the national averages for employer group health plans at 6 percent and 2 percent respectively. More than 80 percent of eligible workers and congregations participate in the VEBA plan. We are also thankful for the members in the plan who have been good stewards and consumers of the plan, which help to keep the costs down. We encourage the VEBA Commission to continue to seek to provide affordable health care plans with consistent and quality benefits.

Pastor Jonathan Kehren, chairman

Teacher Michael Peek, secretary

Subject: Retirement plans

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 142-144

Report No. 04

The WELS Retirement Program Commission oversees two plans, the Pension Plan and the Shepherd Plan, that support workers in retirement. We praise God for the success of these two plans. The Pension Plan is well funded at this time and is in a good position to meet its benefit obligations to participants. The Shepherd Plan has grown over the past two years, with more than 50 new calling bodies and 325 new workers participating. Currently more than 50 percent of WELS calling bodies participate in the Shepherd Plan. Congregations should be aware that they need to first join the plan for their called workers to participate. We thank the commission for its efforts at striking the best balance between acceptable costs to calling bodies and meaningful benefits to participants.

A retirement benefit strategy committee was appointed in late 2017 to study options in retirement benefit program design on behalf of workers and calling bodies. Their work is ongoing as they continue to research and analyze the data they have gathered. Our floor committee would like to thank them for their efforts. We also encourage them in their work of exploring various options for retirement plans in the future and for better engaging workers and calling bodies on the importance of planning for retirement, utilizing both the Pension and Shepherd Plans in this process.

Pastor Jonathan Kehren, chairman

Teacher Michael Peek, secretary

Committee #15: Northwestern Publishing House and Publication Coordinating Commission

Subject: Thank you and commendation to NPH

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 145-148

Report No. 01

We give thanks to our gracious God for the blessing that Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) has been, and continues to be, within our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. We commend NPH for its resilience as it navigates the changing consumer landscape in this digital age and for its unchanging commitment to its mission. We join NPH in encouraging pastors to continue emphasizing discernment among God's people in their use of Christian content and to consider taking advantage of the carefully-reviewed resources offered by NPH.

Pastor Matthew Zimpelmann, chairman

Teacher Mr. Eric Ziel, secretary

Committee #16: Christian Aid and Relief

Subject: Christian Aid and Relief

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 71,72

Report No. 01

The Apostle Paul reminds us in his letter to the Christians in Galatia, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

Christian Aid and Relief, the synod's "ministry of compassion," offers every WELS member an opportunity to do good. This commission is completely funded apart from the synod budget by WELS members and congregations. This commission enables local congregations to act as the hands of our Savior, reaching hurting families with badly needed relief. That partnership reaches around the globe as we work through our world missionaries and fellow members of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC).

Pastor Frederick Guldberg, chairman

Teacher Timothy Torgerson, secretary

Subject: Promotion and awareness

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 71,72

Resolution No. 01

- WHEREAS 1) the Scriptures encourage, "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); and
- WHEREAS 2) WELS Christian Aid and Relief exists to "do good" by providing disaster relief and humanitarian aid to people around the world in areas served by WELS ministries; and

- WHEREAS 3) Christian Aid and Relief has continued to show admirable creativity in partnering with other WELS agencies; and
- WHEREAS 4) ongoing needs from natural disasters around the world remind us that there will always be abundant opportunities for humanitarian work in Christ's name; and
- WHEREAS 5) the work of Christian Aid and Relief around the world, within our own country, and often in individual homes may be unknown to some WELS members; therefore be it
- Resolved, a) that we thank the Lord for the work he is doing through the ongoing work of Christian Aid and Relief; and be it further
- Resolved, b) that we encourage Christian Aid and Relief to continue their creative efforts to inform WELS members about the wonderful work being done (e.g., using social media, sending information concerning *Lifeline* videos to all pastors, and providing promotional kits to all schools); and be it further
- Resolved, c) that we encourage Christian Aid and Relief to continue to find creative ways for WELS members to express their love through giving (e.g., social media donation links, participation in an employer's annual charitable contribution drive, etc.); and be it further
- Resolved, d) that we encourage Christian Aid and Relief to continue to build a database of volunteers and to train and equip congregations in advance regarding how to respond when a disaster strikes; and be it further
- Resolved, e) that we encourage every WELS congregation to make use of the communication materials produced by Christian Aid and Relief (e.g. *Lifeline* video series, website, and promotional materials for WELS schools); and be it finally
- Resolved, f) that we encourage WELS congregations and individuals to consider ways they can use their talents and treasures to reflect Christ's love to people in need, to respond to people suffering from natural disasters and financial emergencies, and to use every opportunity to build bridges to proclaim the gospel.

Pastor Frederick Guldberg, chairman
Teacher Timothy Torgerson, secretary

ADOPTED

Committee #17: Constitutional Matters

Subject: Office of Communication Services (Recommendations #5 and #9)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 150-152

Resolution No. 01

- WHEREAS 1) Recommendation #5 suggests specifically listing the calling of the executive editor of *Forward in Christ* as a responsibility of the Conference of Presidents, as is current practice; and
- WHEREAS 2) Recommendation #9 suggests that "the calling and appointment of *Forward in Christ* editors and consultant be moved to section 4.00 from section 4.30," therefore be it

Resolved. a) that the delegates of the 2019 synod convention approve the proposed revisions, "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*," of the Bylaws; and be it finally

Resolved. b) that the delegates of the 2019 synod convention approve the proposed revisions to section 4.30 (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*.~~

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Election of the President, Vice Presidents, and Recording Secretary (Recommendation #3)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 150

Resolution No. 02

WHEREAS 1) the synod constitution committee recommends (Recommendation #3) that "in the event of a change in the office of synod president, the Synodical Council is given the ability to ask the departing president to assist the new president in a time of transition as determined by the Synodical Council;" and

WHEREAS 2) the term of any newly elected officer shall begin immediately after the close of the regular convention; and

WHEREAS 3) there are no transition guidelines for the changing of the synod president; and

WHEREAS 4) the Synodical Council is responsible for the continued administration of the synod; therefore be it

Resolved. that the wording, "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" be added to Section 2.80 (e) (BORAM, p. 150).

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Congregational Services (Recommendations #7 and #22)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 151,152,155

Resolution No. 03

WHEREAS 1) Recommendation #7, Section 4.15, reflects the approved change to combine adult discipleship and youth and family ministry into a single Commission on Discipleship; and

WHEREAS 2) Recommendation #22 reflects the approved change to combine adult discipleship and youth and family ministry into a single Commission on Discipleship; therefore be it

Resolved. a) that Section 4.15 a and b reflect the changes as printed; and be it finally

Resolved. b) that the coordinators shall be elected to a four-year term and may succeed themselves twice.

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Subsidiaries and Support Services (Recommendations #4 and #18)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 150,151,154

Resolution No. 04

WHEREAS 1) Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) is included in Section 7 “Support Services” (BORAM, p. 154) of the Bylaws of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod; and

WHEREAS 2) changing the method of choosing members of the Northwestern Publishing House Board of Directors is “intended to ensure that the board members will have the necessary skills and experience to carry out their responsibilities” (BORAM, p. 154); and

WHEREAS 3) the change “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;” therefore be it

Resolved, that the delegates of the 2019 synod convention approve the proposed revisions, “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,” of section 7.00 of the bylaws (Recommendations #4 and #18).

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Term limits: Board for World Missions and Inter-Church Relations (Recommendations #6 and #14)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 152,153

Resolution No. 05

WHEREAS the WELS Constitution Committee is recommending “consistency with other elected and appointed positions” in that terms be changed to “four years, with members able to succeed themselves twice;” therefore be it

Resolved, that the delegates of the 2019 synod convention approve the proposed revisions of Section 6.16 (d) and (j) and Section 4.10 of the Bylaws.

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Term limits for board members of ministerial schools (Recommendation #15)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 153

Resolution No. 06

WHEREAS a) the WELS Constitution Committee is recommending “consistency with other elected and appointed positions” in that terms be changed to “four years, with members able to succeed themselves twice;” and

WHEREAS b) the WELS Constitution Committee is recommending continuity so that, if a board member of one of our worker training schools (WLS, MLC, LPS, or MLS) moves to another district, the district president can “allow the man to finish his term, even though he has moved to another district;” therefore be it

Resolved. that the delegates of the 2019 synod convention approve the proposed revisions of Sections 6.32, 6:34, 6:36, 6:38 of the Bylaws.

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Term limits: WELS Retirement Program Commission (Recommendation #19)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 154,155
Resolution No. 07

WHEREAS the WELS Constitution Committee is recommending “consistency with other elected and appointed positions” in that terms be changed to “four years, with members able to succeed themselves twice;” therefore be it

Resolved. that the delegates of the 2019 synod convention approve the proposed revisions of Section 7.40 of the Bylaws.

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Term limits: WELS VEBA Commission (Recommendation #20)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 155
Resolution No. 08

WHEREAS the WELS Constitution Committee is recommending “consistency with other elected and appointed positions” in that terms be changed to “four years, with members able to succeed themselves twice;” therefore be it

Resolved. that the delegates of the 2019 synod convention approve the proposed revisions of Section 7.50 of the Bylaws.

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Support Committee (Recommendation #10)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 152
Resolution No. 09

WHEREAS 1) the WELS Committee on Constitutional Matters seeks consistency in the length and limits of appointed or elected terms of office; and

WHEREAS 2) the proposed clarifications make no changes to the established procedures; therefore be it

Resolved. that the delegates of the 2019 synod convention approve the proposed revisions of Section 4.40 of the Bylaws:

- “The president shall appoint committee members for a term of ~~two~~ four years.”
- “The committee members may succeed themselves ~~five times~~ twice.”

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Committee on Constitutional Matters (Recommendation #12)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 152

Resolution No. 10

- WHEREAS 1) the Committee on Constitutional Matters seeks consistency in the length and limits of appointed or elected terms of office; and
- WHEREAS 2) the Committee on Constitutional Matters clarified the reporting process of the Committee on Constitutional Matters; and
- WHEREAS 3) the proposed clarifications make no changes to the established procedures for the committee; therefore be it

Resolved, that the delegates of the 2019 synod convention approve the proposed revisions of Section 4.70 of the Bylaws: "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."

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Mission districts and district mission boards (Recommendation #13)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 152

Resolution No. 11

- WHEREAS 1) the Committee on Constitutional Matters seeks consistency in the length and limits of appointed or elected terms of office; and
- WHEREAS 2) the WELS Committee on Constitutional Matters seeks consistency between the synod bylaws and district bylaws regarding the structure of the district mission boards, most notably the recognition of teachers as eligible to serve; and
- WHEREAS 3) the proposed clarifications make no changes to the established procedures; therefore be it

Resolved, that the delegates of the 2019 synod convention approve the proposed revisions of Section 6.04 of the Bylaws: "(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."

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Ministry of Christian Giving (Recommendation #8)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 151

Resolution No. 12

- WHEREAS the WELS Committee on Constitutional Matters desires the addition of the words "ministry financial" in Section 4.20 to reflect the term normally used to refer to the synod's budget; therefore be it

Resolved, that the delegates of the 2019 convention approve the addition of the words "ministry financial" to the Bylaws Section 4.20 (Recommendation #8).

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Publication Review Committee (Recommendation #11)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 152

Resolution No. 13

- WHEREAS 1) many members of this committee are retired; and
- WHEREAS 2) there is a desire to bring terms of service into consistency with other elected and appointed positions; and
- WHEREAS 3) clarification is desired so that this committee reports to the Conference of Presidents through the synod president; therefore be it

Resolved. that Section 4.50 (Publication Review Committee) read as follows:
(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 four years. Committee members may succeed themselves twice.
(c) The committee shall report to the Conference of Presidents through the synod president."

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Calling procedure (Recommendation #16)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 154

Resolution No. 14

- WHEREAS there is a desire to clarify the process for publishing names of nominees for professor positions at synodical schools; therefore be it

Resolved. that section 6.48 (Calling Procedure) read as follows:
(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 provided 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."

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: WELS Christian Aid and Relief (Recommendation #17)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 154

Resolution No. 15

WHEREAS there is a desire to change the current practice of semiannual reports to the Synodical Council to at least annual reports; therefore be it

Resolved, that section 6.92 read as follows:
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."

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Officers (Recommendation #2)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 150

Resolution No. 16

WHEREAS the synod constitution committee recommends (Recommendation #2) "the removal of the requirement that the recording secretary publish the names of convention delegates in *Forward in Christ*, but retains the requirement that he publish the list of delegates on the synod website or through other suitable electronic means" (section 2.40); therefore be it

Resolved, that the delegates of the 2019 synod convention approve the proposed revisions of the Bylaws.

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Subject: Application for Membership (Recommendation #21)

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, p. 155

Resolution No. 17

WHEREAS the recommendation (Recommendation #21, Article V Section 1) "reflects current practice in which membership in a district is automatically granted upon acceptance of a call and waives a written application requirement;" therefore be it

Resolved, that the delegates of the 2019 synod convention approve the proposed revisions of Article V, Section 1.

Teacher Paul Scriver, chairman
Teacher David Backus, secretary

ADOPTED

Committee #18: Elections

Subject: Elections

Report No. 01

The following individuals were elected to the respective positions:

President of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Rev. Mark Schroeder

Second Vice President of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Rev. Joel Voss

Board for World Missions, Pastor

Rev. Glen Hieb

Board for World Missions, Teacher

Mr. Chris Plugger

Board for World Missions, Layman

Mr. Mark Schulz

Board for Ministerial Education, Teacher or Staff Minister

Mr. Daniel Markgraf

Board for Ministerial Education, Layman

Mr. Brian Scheele

Michigan Lutheran Seminary Governing Board, Chairman

Rev. Gregory Gibbons

Luther Preparatory School Governing Board, Chairman

Rev. Timothy Spaude

Commission on Congregational Counseling, Chairman

Rev. David Scharf

Commission on Worship, Chairman

Rev. Jon Zabell

Commission on Special Ministries, Chairman

Rev. Joel Gaertner

Commission on Discipleship, Chairman

Rev. John Boggs

Northwestern Publishing House Board of Directors, Parish Pastor

Rev. Nathaniel Biebert

Rev. Luke Werre

Northwestern Publishing House Board of Directors, MLC Professor

Rev. Brian Hennig

Northwestern Publishing House Board of Directors, Layman

Mr. Jeremy Korell

Mr. Dwight Luedtke

Board of Appeals, Chairman

Rev. Kenneth Cherney Jr.

Board of Appeals, Pastor

Rev. Thomas Jeske

Board of Appeals, Teacher or Staff Minister

Mr. Nathan Kieselhorst

Board of Appeals, Layman

Mr. Mark Werre

Teacher Greg Diersen, chairman

Teacher Justin Danell, secretary

Revisions to the WELS Bylaws

The 2019 synod in convention passed the following revisions to the WELS Bylaws (see the report of the Constitutional Matters Floor Committee, pp. 46-52 of this book). Additions are underlined. Deletions are indicated by a strikethrough. These bylaw changes were 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 and adopted by the 2019 synod convention delegates 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. Note: The Constitutional Matters Floor Committee did not present Recommendation #1 (BORAM, pp. 149,150) as a resolution for the convention delegates to consider.

For a complete, updated copy of the WELS Constitution and Bylaws, visit wels.net/about-wels/synod-reports or contact the President's Office at 414-256-3202 for a printed copy.

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.

Financials

The financial information listed on the following pages summarizes the ministry financial plan (budget) approved for the 2019–21 biennium by the 2019 convention delegates, outlined on pp. 32 and 33 in Resolution No. 1 from Committee #7: Finance and ministry financial plan (budget).

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

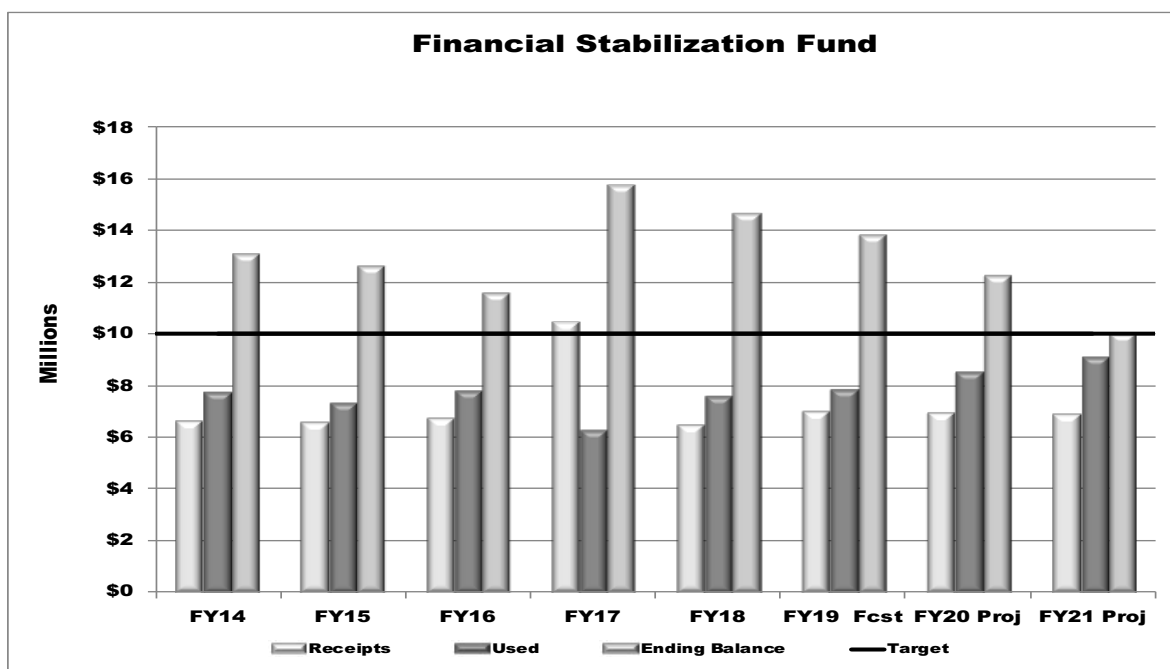
The support forecast for the biennium is based on the following trends and assumptions.

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.

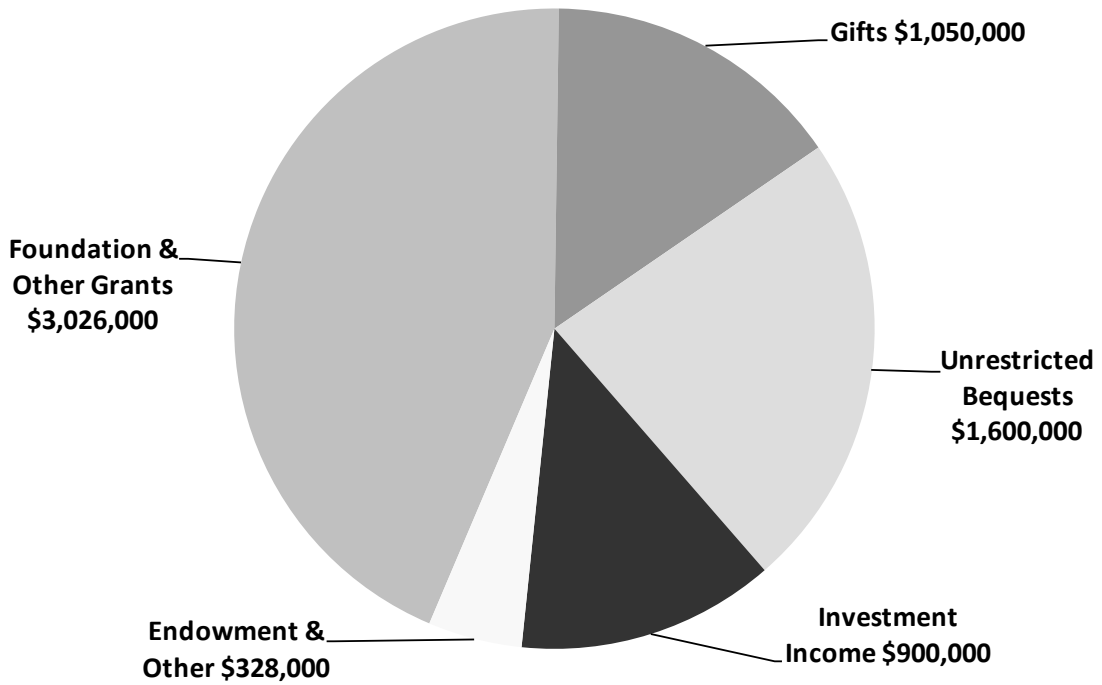
3. Financial Stabilization Fund ending balance

- 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.

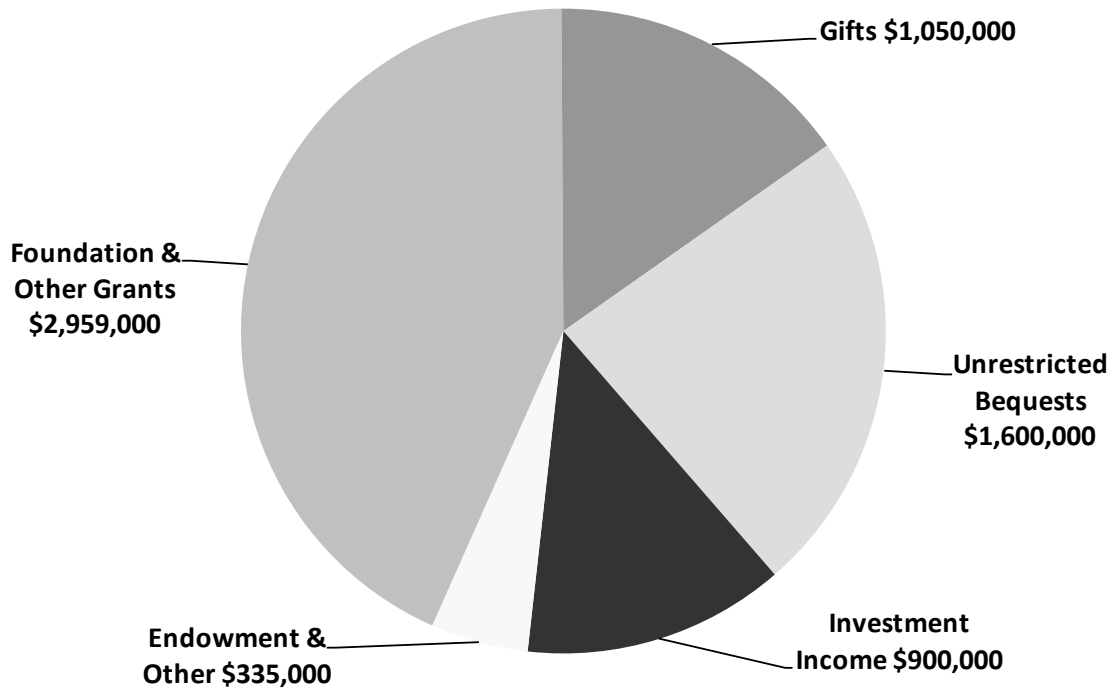


Operating Fund								
	Actual FY18	Plan FY18	Change Increase/(Decrease) Amount	Percent	Forecast FY19	Plan FY19	Change Increase/(Decrease) Amount	Percent
Support								
Gifts from Congregations - Actual/Forecast	\$ 21,165,348	\$ 21,267,000	\$ (101,652)	-0.5%	\$ 21,084,000	\$ 21,389,600	\$ (305,600)	-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								
	Actual FY18	Plan FY18	Change Increase (Decrease) Amount	Percent	Forecast FY19	Plan FY19	Change Increase (Decrease) Amount	Percent
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%

**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
SUMMARY												
Home Missions	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	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	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
Congregation & District Ministry	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
Ministry Support	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
TOTAL	28,280,815	41,724,895	70,005,710	464.90	29,308,100	46,883,020	76,191,120	473.90	29,509,500	46,618,800	76,128,300	469.10

	2017-18	% of total	2018-19	% of total	% change	2019-20	% of total	% change	2020-21	% of total	% change
Synod Support	28,280,815	19.6%	29,308,100	19.0%	0.0%	29,509,500	18.7%	-0.9%	30,044,800	18.9%	3.2%
Home Missions	5,556,000	19.6%	5,556,000	19.0%	0.0%	5,506,000	18.7%	-0.9%	5,680,500	18.9%	3.2%
World Missions	6,553,000	23.2%	6,553,000	22.4%	0.0%	6,602,000	22.4%	0.7%	6,826,000	22.7%	3.4%
Ministerial Education	8,122,123	28.7%	8,133,000	27.8%	0.1%	8,193,800	27.8%	0.7%	8,051,200	26.8%	-1.7%
Congregation & District Ministry	5,042,490	17.8%	5,704,600	19.5%	13.1%	5,921,200	20.1%	3.8%	6,080,200	20.2%	2.7%
Ministry Support	3,007,202	10.6%	3,361,500	11.5%	11.8%	3,286,500	11.1%	-2.2%	3,406,900	11.3%	3.7%
TOTAL	28,280,815		29,308,100		3.6%	29,509,500		0.7%	30,044,800		1.8%

	2017-18	% of total	2018-19	% of total	% change	2019-20	% of total	% change	2020-21	% of total	% change
Total Expenses	70,005,710	100.0%	76,191,120	108.3%	2.3%	76,128,300	108.1%	-0.1%	76,007,800	108.3%	-0.2%
Home Missions	9,814,424	14.0%	10,074,860	13.2%	2.7%	10,202,100	13.4%	1.3%	9,422,200	12.4%	-7.6%
World Missions	9,485,848	13.6%	10,732,571	14.1%	13.1%	10,867,500	14.3%	1.3%	10,759,800	14.2%	-1.0%
Ministerial Education	38,723,422	55.3%	41,848,839	54.9%	8.1%	41,144,300	54.0%	-1.7%	41,726,100	54.9%	1.4%
Congregation & District Ministry	6,904,574	9.9%	7,826,450	10.3%	13.4%	8,746,200	11.5%	11.8%	8,745,000	11.5%	0.0%
Ministry Support	5,077,442	7.3%	5,708,400	7.5%	12.4%	5,168,200	6.8%	-9.5%	5,354,700	7.0%	3.6%
TOTAL	70,005,710		76,191,120		8.8%	76,128,300		-0.1%	76,007,800		-0.2%

	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
Support Services Subsidiaries												
WELS Church Extension Fund	-	4,991,000	4,991,000	6.85	-	6,824,445	6,824,445	7.00	-	6,261,000	6,261,000	6.80
WELS Foundation	-	877,233	877,233	3.45	-	903,500	903,500	3.60	-	1,001,300	1,001,300	3.45
WELS Investment Funds	-	395,089	395,089	1.55	-	371,700	371,700	1.20	-	408,400	408,400	1.55
Northwestern Publishing House	-	6,503,795	6,503,795	49.00	-	6,189,300	6,189,300	30.00	-	4,685,100	4,685,100	27.00
TOTAL	-	12,767,117	12,767,117	60.85	-	14,288,945	14,288,945	41.80	-	12,355,800	12,355,800	38.80

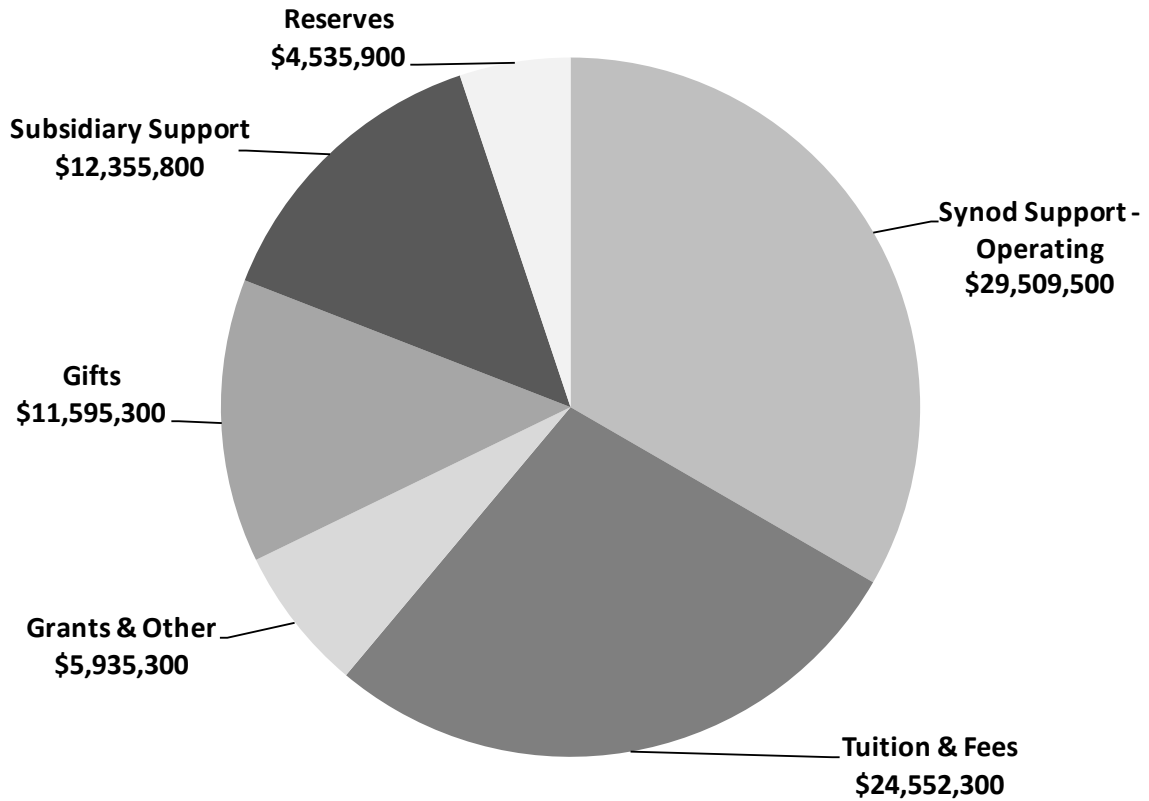
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
TOTAL WELS & SUBSIDIARIES	28,280,815	61,171,965	58,974,600	88,484,100
	54,492,012	82,772,827	88,484,100	509,900
	58,283,700	88,283,700	88,283,700	509,400

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	957,221	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
TOTAL	10,678,123	4,258,424	14,936,547	11.40	10,678,123	4,518,860	15,455,410	11.50	10,678,123	4,696,100	15,374,200	11.25

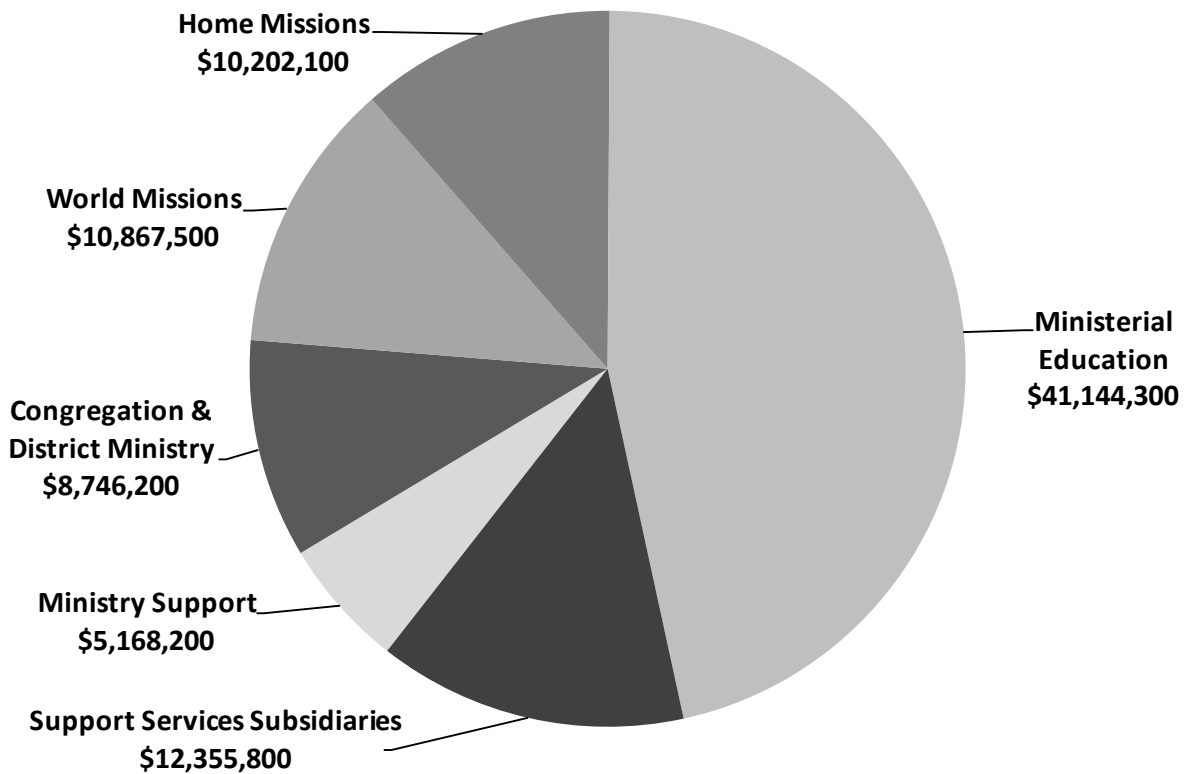
Plan Summary of Expenses												
Funded by Synod Support and Special Funds, Gifts, Tuition and Fees												
	2017-18 Actual			2018-19 Plan			2019-20 Plan			2020-21 Plan		
	Synod Support	Special, gifts, tuition, fees	Total Expense	FTE	Synod Support	Special, gifts, tuition, fees	Total Expense	FTE	Synod Support	Special, gifts, tuition, fees	Total Expense	FTE
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
Conference of Presidents	83,893	5,917	89,810		125,300	160,800	286,100		136,900	135,000	271,900	
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
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
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
Convention	65,963	103,603	169,566	0.00	-	-	-	0.00	90,000	110,000	200,000	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
Special Support	39,741	4,000	43,741	0.00	92,000	-	92,000	0.00	87,000	2,000	89,000	0.00
Support	170,530	-	170,530	0.00	250,000	-	250,000	0.00	245,000	-	245,000	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

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
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
Synod Presidium	339,213	-	339,213	2.00	327,400	130,000	457,400	2.00	330,200	-	330,200	2.00
Special Task Forces	254	-	254	0.00	6,200	-	6,200	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
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
Financial Services	820,618	49	820,667	7.00	1,034,325	-	1,034,325	8.20	876,600	-	876,600	7.00
Human Resources	238,269	238	238,507	2.00	252,800	-	252,800	2.00	260,000	400	260,400	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
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

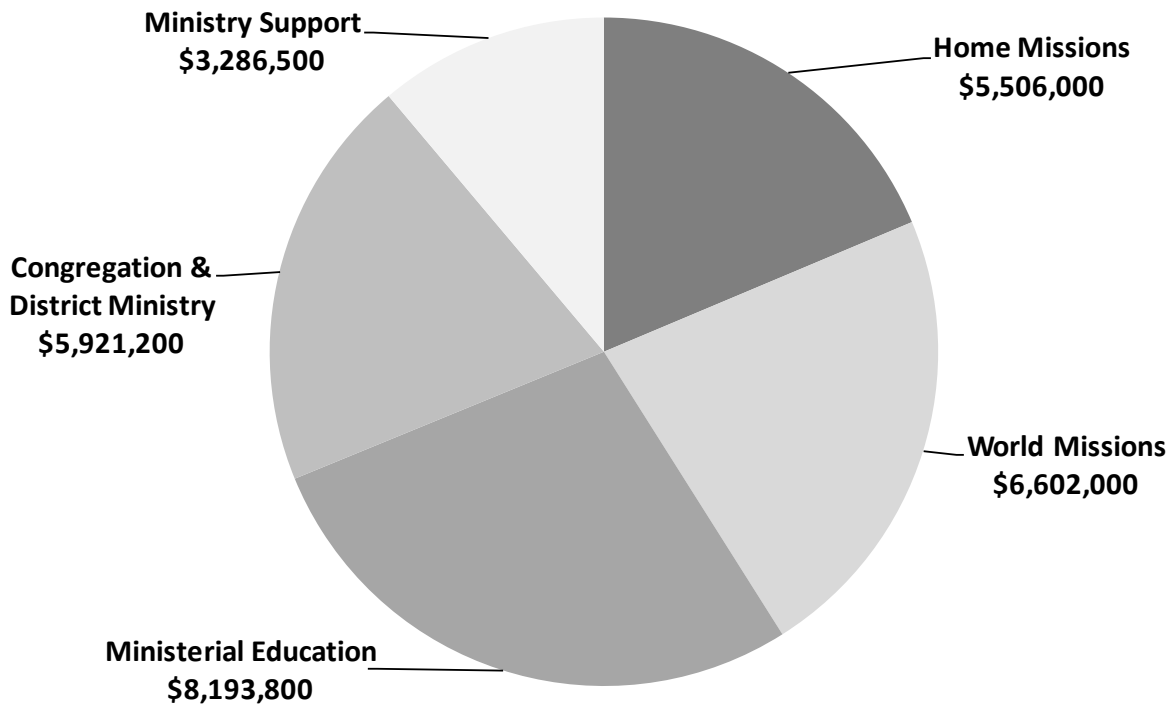
**FY 2019-20 Total Ministry Plan Support
\$88,484,100**



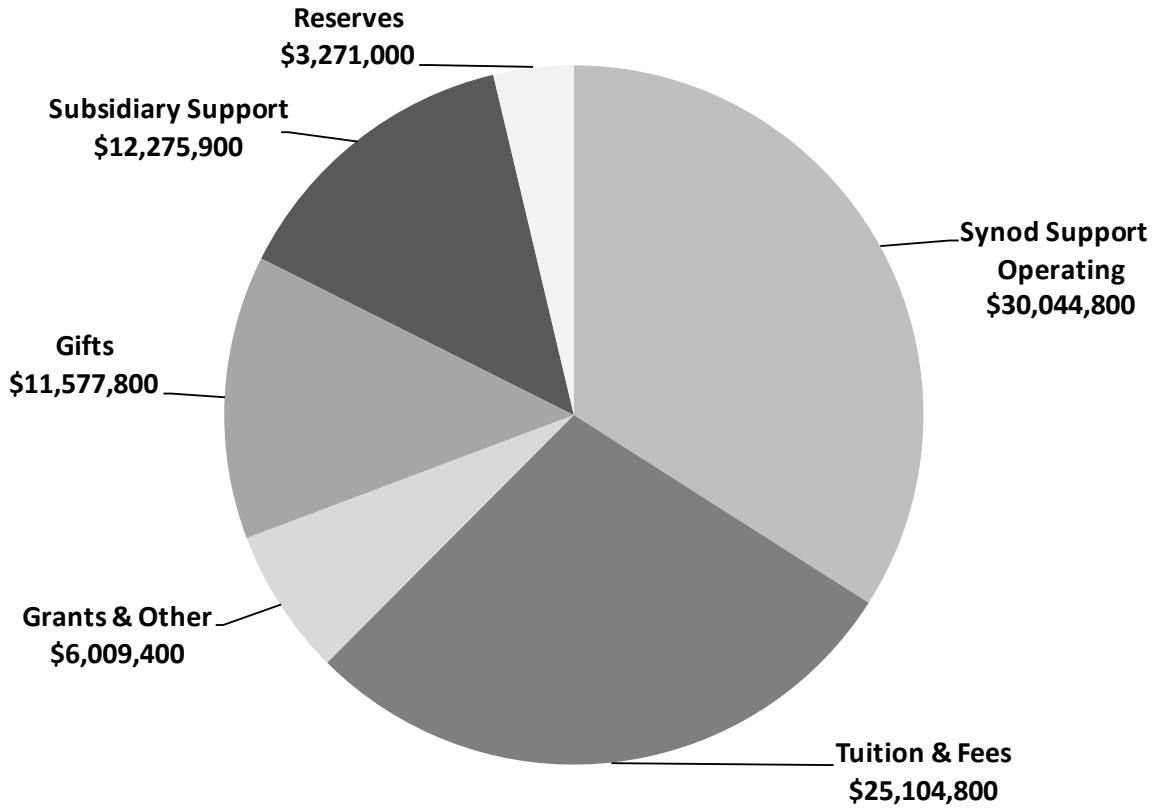
**FY 2019-20 Total Ministry Plan Expenses
\$88,484,100**



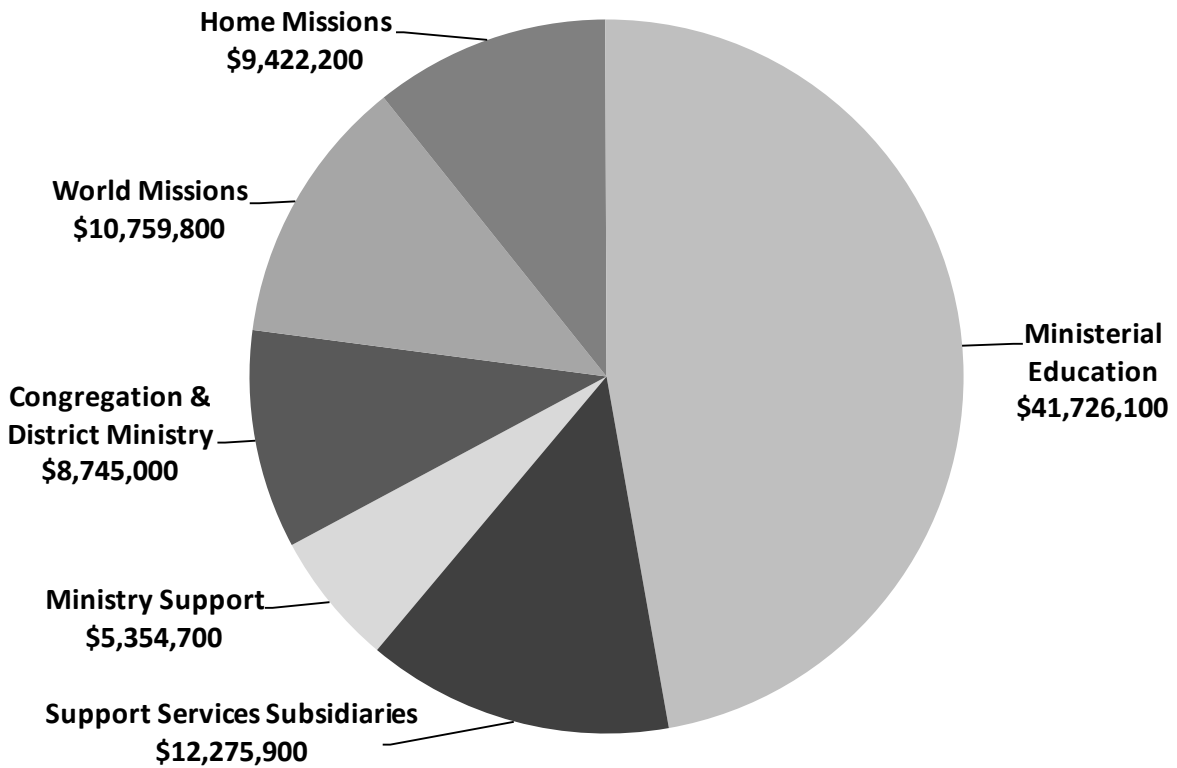
FY 2019-20 Synod Operating Support Allocation
\$29,509,500



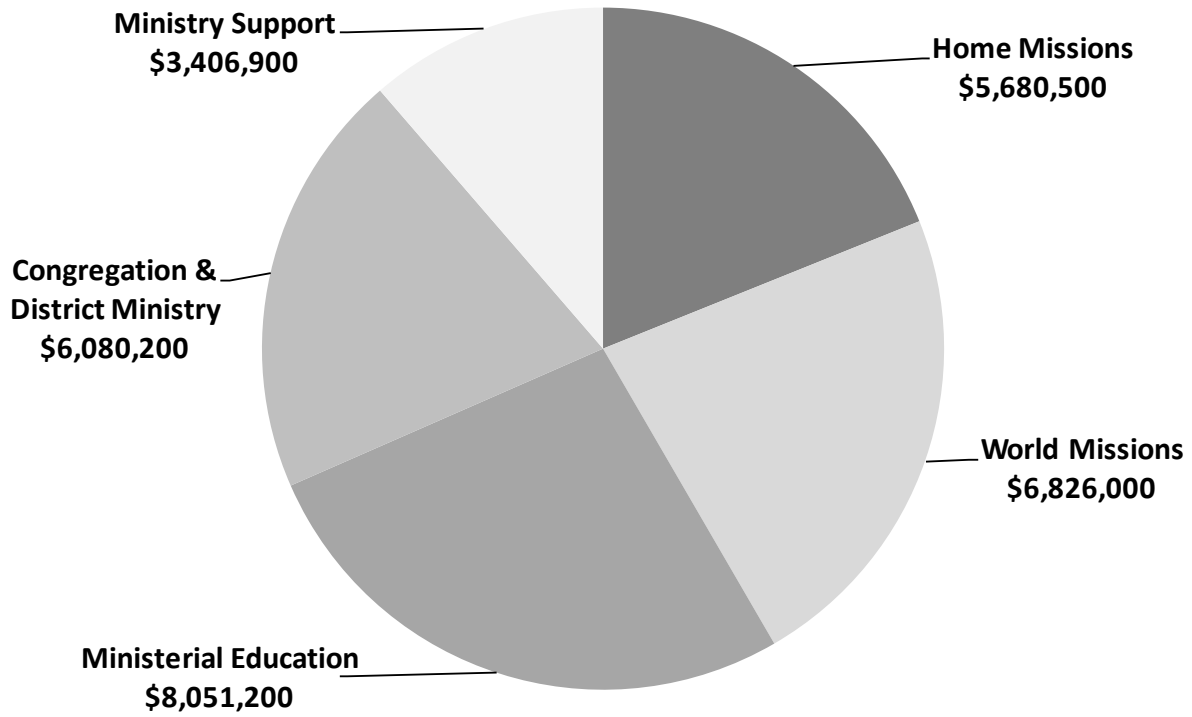
**FY 2020-21 Total Ministry Plan Support
\$88,283,700**



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



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



Minutes

Monday, July 29, 2019

In preparation for the 65th biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, a training meeting was held for committee chairmen and secretaries at 3 p.m.

At 4:00 p.m., Rev. Joel Voss, WELS second vice president, conducted a delegate orientation session with the assistance of Mr. Lee Hitter, WELS communications director, and Mr. Martin Spriggs, WELS chief technology officer. Instructions were provided for the delegates, especially electronic/internet guidance for this paperless convention.

At 6:05 p.m., Prof. Craig Hirschmann presented pre-service organ music. At 6:30 p.m., the opening service with holy communion was held in the Chapel of the Christ on the campus of Martin Luther College. WELS President Rev. Mark Schroeder served as the presiding minister. Rev. Jonathan Bauer, pastor of Good News Lutheran Church, Mt. Horeb, Wis., served as the preacher. The organist was Prof. Hirschmann; pianist was Prof. Grace Hennig; and the choir director was Prof. Adrian Smith, all from Martin Luther College. An orchestra and other instrumentalists also helped beautify the worship service.

Following the service, floor committees met to organize and plan. Fellowship followed in a tent erected on the college campus for that purpose.

Tuesday, July 30, 2019

President Schroeder wished a good morning to the assembled delegates at 8:01 a.m. Ms. Emily Kom, former president of the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society, was introduced. Kom narrated (the presentation was pre-recorded) the presentation of the flags of all countries in which WELS carries out mission work or countries in which reside a church body in fellowship with WELS or countries in which WELS has mission partners. The ladies were thanked for their presentation with a round of applause.

President Schroeder called the 65th Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod to order at 8:18 a.m. The opening devotion, hymn, and prayer were led by Pastor Andrew Schwartz, who serves at Christ the King, Bremerton, Wash. The devotion was based on Acts 8:1b-8, and the hymn was "Lord, You Call Us as Your People." Schwartz was thanked for the devotion.

President Schroeder introduced Rev. Mark Zarling, president of Martin Luther College. Zarling spoke of the love of Christ that brought the delegates to this convention. He spoke of that love as being the reason for the existence of Martin Luther College. For the faculty and staff of the college, he welcomed all to the campus. He asked that we pray for the college when we return home.

At 8:43 a.m., Prof. Gregory Diersen, chairman of the Elections Committee, announced the nominating ballot for the position of synod president. He read a summary of the duties of the synod president. The nominating ballot was cast, and after all ballots were collected, the nominating ballot was declared closed.

President Schroeder read letters of greeting from the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) and from the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Germany. He also introduced special guests and convention observers:

President John Moldstad, Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Rev. Larry Vogel, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Rev. Nathanael Mayhew and Rev. Douglas Liddy, Church of the Lutheran Confession

Rev. Mark Anariko Onunda, Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ—Kenya (host Prof. E. Allen Sorum)

Rev. Peter Chen and Mr. Michael Lin, Christian Lutheran Evangelical Church in Taiwan (host Rev. Robert Siirila)

All were welcomed with rounds of applause.

President Schroeder introduced Pastor Larry Schlomer, administrator of the Board for World Missions, and Pastor Kurt Lueneburg, director of the Ministry of Christian Giving. The men reported on the amazing mission opportunity in Vietnam and the funding already received for the effort.

At 9:10 a.m., President Schroeder introduced Mr. Todd Poppe, WELS' chief financial officer, who reviewed the synod's financial results from the last few years and then presented the ministry financial plan (budget) for the 2019–21 biennium. He was given a round of applause.

Prof. Gregory Diersen, Elections Committee chairman, led a prayer asking for God's blessing on the upcoming election. He reported the results of the nominating ballot for the position of synod president. The top five nominees were: Pastors James Huebner, David Kolander, Mark Schroeder, Charles Westra, and Mark Zarling. Votes were cast, and after all ballots were collected, the election was declared closed.

Pastor Paul Prange, administrator of the Board for Ministerial Education, was welcomed to the podium. He presented his report using PowerPoint. He was given a round of applause.

At 9:53 a.m., a break was declared. The morning session was called back to order at 10:20 a.m. Pastor Larry Schlomer returned to the podium and provided additional information about WELS World Missions, again using PowerPoint. Participation in the Mission Journeys program was encouraged. Also guest preachers are available to share information about World Missions with local congregations. He was given a round of applause.

Prof. Diersen reported the results of the ballot for synod president. Pastor Mark Schroeder was re-elected. It was moved and supported to make the vote (the call) for Mark Schroeder as synod president unanimous. The motion carried. The duties of the second vice president of the synod were read. The nominating ballot was cast, and after all votes were collected, the election was declared closed.

At 10:57 a.m., President Schroeder thanked the delegates for their confidence in him as he was re-elected. He thanked God and asked for the prayers of the delegates. He announced his acceptance of the four-year call. There was a round of applause.

President Schroeder presented his "President's Report" (see p. 15). Copies were distributed following the presentation of the report. There was a round of applause.

Prof. Gregory Diersen, Elections Committee chairman, offered a prayer for God's blessings on the election of the second vice president. He reported the results of the nominating ballot for second vice president. Nominated were Pastors David Kolander, Joel Voss, and Charles Westra. Votes were cast, and after the ballots were collected, the election was declared closed.

At 11:29 a.m., Pastor John Moldstad, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) for the past 17 years, brought greetings from the ELS. His greetings included news from the recent ELS convention, studies and conferences dealing with apologetics, the CELC convention next year (which may include new declarations of fellowship), ELS work in Kenya, a new home missionary in Texas, several prayer requests, ongoing discussions with the Church of the Lutheran Confession and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, and the prayer that God be with WELS' convention. There was a round of applause, and President Moldstad was thanked for his presentation.

District President Don Patterson was introduced. He encouraged visits to the Northwestern Publishing House display.

At 11:50 a.m., the group joined in the table prayers, and the morning session adjourned for the noon meal.

At 1:16 p.m., the afternoon session was called to order. Chairman Dierson announced the results of the election for second vice president. Pastor Joel Voss received the majority of votes. It was moved and supported to make the call to this position unanimous. The motion carried. The ballot for 19 board and other positions was conducted. After the ballots were collected, the election was declared closed.

Pastor Joel Voss announced his acceptance of his four-year call as the WELS second vice president. He asked for prayers as he carries out his duties.

President Schroeder introduced Pastor Jonathan Hein, who presented the keynote address, "For the generations to come" (see p. 86). There was a round of applause.

At 3:18 p.m., a five minute “standing” break was declared. After the break, the floor was opened for discussion and questions regarding the presentation. After the discussion, it was moved and supported to thank Hein for his presentation. The motion carried.

The chairman of the Elections Committee, Prof. Gregory Diersen, conducted a run-off election for several positions on synod boards and committees. After votes were cast and the ballots collected, the election was declared closed.

At 3:46 p.m., President Schroeder welcomed to the podium Dr. Dan Johnson, president of Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wis. Johnson presented a PowerPoint illustrating the college’s history and ministry to the many WELS young people who are not preparing to be called workers. Jesus is the core of the college with daily chapel and required theology courses taught by WELS-trained pastors. Bible-based college courses are critical as nonbiblical morals are being so actively promoted in our culture. Delegates were asked to pray, to share, and to refer students to support WLC. There was a round of applause following the presentation.

At 4:04 p.m., the afternoon session adjourned with a prayer led by Pastor Andrew Schwartz.

Floor committee meetings were held for the remainder of the afternoon.

After the evening meal, at 7 p.m., Pastor Keith Free, administrator of the Board for Home Missions, introduced Pastor Jared Oldenburg, who described home mission work in Castle Rock, Colo. Pastor Larry Schlomer, administrator of the Board for World Missions, introduced Pastor Joel Sutton, who described mission work in Latin America. *Academia Cristo* was also explained. Pastor Free introduced Pastor Kevin Schultz, who is serving a new home mission in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. Schultz shared more about the work being done there. Pastor Schlomer introduced Dr. Glen Thompson, who spoke about Asia Lutheran Seminary in Hong Kong. Pastor Schlomer introduced Pastor Michael Duncan, who shared about mission work in South Asia. There were rounds of applause after each missionary’s presentation. Pastor Schlomer closed the evenings presentations with prayer.

Additional floor committee meeting time followed. Fellowship and refreshments closed the evening.

Wednesday, July 31, 2019

At 8:00 a.m., President Schroeder called the morning session to order. He introduced Pastor Benjamin Kratz who serves Our Savior, Birmingham, Ala. Kratz led the opening devotion based on Revelation 3:1-6. The hymn, “O Christ, Who Called the Twelve,” was sung. He was thanked for his devotion.

Prof. Gregory Diersen was welcomed back to the podium for a second run-off election for two positions, Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) Board of Directors parish pastor and Board of Appeals layman. After votes were cast, the ballots were collected, and the election was declared closed.

Prof. James Danell, chairman of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations, came to the podium. He introduced Rev. Mark Onunda and his wife, Mrs. Grace Onunda, from the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ–Kenya, and Rev. Peter Chen and Mr. Michael Lin from the Christian Lutheran Evangelical Church of Taiwan.

Rev. Onunda and his wife addressed the group. The history of Lutheranism in Kenya and plans for mission work, especially among refugees from South Sudan, was described. Wishes for the Lord’s blessing on our fellowship were stated. A standing round of applause followed. A PowerPoint presented photographs of leaders and congregations in Kenya.

Rev. Peter Chen and Mr. Michael Lin addressed the convention. They introduced the Christian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Taiwan to the convention using PowerPoint. The representatives expressed great joy in the fellowship with WELS and requested prayers. A standing round of applause was given.

Pastor Michael Schroeder, chairman of Floor Committee #3: Commission on Inter-Church Relations, read the committee’s printed report.

Resolution 03-01, "To declare formal fellowship with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ–Kenya," was moved and supported. The motion carried with standing unanimous approval.

Resolution 03-02, "To declare formal fellowship with the Christian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Taiwan," was moved and supported. The motion carried with standing unanimous approval.

The floor committee was thanked for its work. President Schroeder presented gifts to the representatives. The group then joined in singing “Christ is Made the Sure Foundation.” The representatives were again thanked.

The Elections Committee presented one additional run-off election for NPH Board of Directors parish pastor. After the ballots were collected, the election was closed.

Mr. William Ziche, NPH president, and Rev. Curtis Jahn, vice president of publishing services at NPH, were introduced. The men referenced the NPH report in the 2019 *Book of Reports & Memorials*, pp. 145-149. NPH history was shared using PowerPoint. Also addressed was the importance of publishing to our synod and the new printed materials now available from NPH. There was a round of applause.

At 9:52 a.m., Rev. Keith Free, administrator of the Board for Home Missions, and Rev. Wayne Uhlhorn, chairman of the Board for Home Missions, were introduced. PowerPoint was used as the men presented a Home Missions report. A 2019 \$1 million grant for Home Missions from the WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF) and more than \$38 million in grants over the years were highlighted. Financial investments in CEF were encouraged. Multi-cultural missions were noted. Mission trips with Mission Journeys were promoted. Internet updates can be obtained through the WELS website at wels.net/missions. The men were thanked for their presentation with a round of applause.

District President Donald Patterson again promoted visits to the NPH display.

At 10:27 a.m., a recess was declared. First Vice President James Huebner took the chair.

At 10:49 a.m., Pastor Jonathan Hein, representing WELS Congregational Services, was welcomed to the dais with the five Congregational Services directors: Pastor Bryan Gerlach, WELS Commission on Worship; Pastor Donn Dobberstein, WELS Commission on Discipleship; Pastor Eric Roecker, WELS Commission on Evangelism, Mr. James Rademan, WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools; and Pastor James Behringer, WELS Commission on Special Ministries. Each reported on the work of their division using PowerPoint. Attendance at the January 2020 National Conference on Lutheran Leadership was encouraged. Evangelism initiatives were described. An example of new elder training videos was shared. The *10 for 10* stewardship emphasis was proclaimed. (It's free!) The 2020 WELS international youth rally, under the theme "2020 Vision" was highlighted, as was the *Kids Connection*, now celebrating its 25th year. An idea from Gerlach: Begin budgeting for the new hymnal now and strongly consider using "Service Builder"—it is amazing! WELS school statistics were shared. School counseling, support, growth, coaching, and evaluation tools are ongoing. Principal and future principal training is being provided. School accreditation as quality assurance was explained. Compassion (love in action) is a key word in Special Ministries. How can we be more caring? Many materials are available. Many volunteers are working with prison ministry, themselves growing in the Savior's love. There was a round of applause, and the presenters were thanked.

After announcements, the morning session adjourned for lunch with prayer at 12:02 p.m.

Second Vice President Joel Voss took the chair and called the afternoon session to order at 1:18 p.m. Dr. Joel Pless was introduced. He reported for the WELS Historical Institute. He referenced pp. 133-136 in BORAM and briefly shared Lutheran history and special anniversaries. Membership in the WELS Historical Institute was urged. There was a round of applause. He was thanked for his report.

Pastor Robert Hein came to the dais and reported for Christian Aid and Relief using a video. Disaster relief, assistance with medical and financial need, and humanitarian assistance are carried out by WELS Christian Aid and Relief. Assistance in local and faraway locations was delineated. Applause followed his presentation, and he was thanked for his presentation.

Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, director of the Ministry of Christian Giving, reported. Blessings and opportunities in synodwide church attendance, membership, and giving were noted. Of special note were the synodwide special offerings, including "Equipping Christian Witnesses." The results of the work of the WELS Christian giving counselors were reported. Several charitable giving techniques were shared. Available resources were listed. Applause followed, and Lueneburg was thanked for his presentation.

Pastor Jason Hacker, board member of the Lutheran Military Support Group (LMSG), was introduced. All veterans present in the assembly were asked to stand and were thanked for their military service with a round of applause. His report stressed the guilt experienced by many veterans and the fact that Lutherans have the answer for guilt not found in many other places. Help is available for those suffering with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). A Christian Service Handbook will soon be available. The "Ammo Can" can be placed out for gifts twice a year with a display illustrating what LMSG is doing. A round of applause followed, and Hacker was thanked.

At 2:15 p.m., Pastor Michael Schultz, director of the WELS Hymnal Project, reported on the progress with the new hymnal. Past progress and the upcoming introduction to the new hymnal were covered. A round of applause followed, and he was thanked for his report.

Prof. Gregory Diersen, chairman of Committee #18: Elections, read the committee's report. It was moved and supported to accept the report and thank the committee. The motion carried.

Pastor Duane Rodewald, chairman of Floor Committee #1: President's Report, read the committee's report and resolutions. Resolution 01-01 was moved and supported. The motion carried. Resolution 01-02 was moved and supported. The motion carried. It was moved and supported to accept the report and thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

Pastor Jay Bickelhaupt, chairman of Floor Committee #2: Conference of Presidents, read Report 02-02. Report 02-03 was read. Report 02-04 was read. Resolution 02-04 was moved and supported. The motion carried. Resolution 02-05 was moved and supported. The motion carried. It was moved and supported to accept the report and thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

Teacher Chris Holman, representing Floor Committee #4: Ministry of Christian Giving and Communications, read Report 04-01. It was moved and supported to accept the report and thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

Pastor David Bivens, chairman of Floor Committee #5: Synodical Council, read Report 05-01. Resolution 05-01 was moved and supported. The motion carried. Resolution 05-02 was moved and supported. The motion carried. It was moved and supported to accept the report and to thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

After announcements, the afternoon break was declared at 3:00 p.m. Schwan's ice cream was provided to all delegates by Christian Family Solutions and The Lutheran Home Association.

The afternoon session resumed at 3:40 p.m. Pastor Steven Gabb, chairman of Floor Committee #6: Finance and ministry financial plan (budget), read Report 06-01. Resolution 06-01 was moved and supported. The motion carried. It was moved and supported to accept the report and thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

Pastor Peter Prange, chairman of Floor Committee #7: Home Missions, read Report 07-01. It was moved and supported to accept the report and to thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

Pastor William Brassow, chairman of Floor Committee #8: World Missions and Joint Mission Council, read Report 08-01. Resolution 08-01 was moved and supported. The motion carried. It was moved and supported to accept the report and to thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

Pastor Timothy Otto, chairman of Floor Committee #10: Congregational Services A (Congregational Counseling, Evangelism, Discipleship), read Memorials 17, 18, and 19 and Report 10-01. It was moved and supported to accept the report and thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

Pastor Peter Kiecker, chairman of Floor Committee #11: Congregational Services B (Worship, Special Ministries), read Report 11-01. Resolution 11-01 was moved and supported. The motion carried. It was moved and supported to accept the report and thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

Teacher Jim Henrickson, chairman of Floor Committee #12: Congregational Services C (Lutheran Schools), read Report 12-01. Memorial 2019-20 was also read. Resolution 12-01 was moved and supported. The motion carried. Resolution 12-02 was moved and supported. The motion carried. It was moved and supported to accept the report and to thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

In all cases, there were rounds of applause following each of the committee reports.

At 4:45 p.m., after announcements, the afternoon session adjourned with prayer led by Pastor Benjamin Kratz. Following the evening meal, the launch of the "Equipping Christian Witnesses" campaign was conducted in the Chapel of the Christ, led by Martin Luther College President Mark Zarling and Pastor Kurt Lueneburg, director of the Ministry of Christian Giving. Campus tours followed. Fellowship and refreshments were offered beginning at 8:30 p.m.

Thursday, Aug. 1, 2019

President Mark Schroeder called the morning session to order at 8 a.m. The morning devotion, prayer, and hymn were

led by Rev. Daniel Heiderich, serving at Good News, Lehi, Utah. The devotion was based on Acts 8:26-35; the hymn was "Christ Alone, the World's Redeemer." Heiderich was thanked for his devotion.

Teacher Paul Schriver, chairman, Floor Committee #17: Constitutional Matters, presented the committee's report. Resolution 17-01 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-02 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-03 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-04 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-05 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-06 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-07 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-08 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-09 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-10 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-11 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-12 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-13 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-14 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-15 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-16 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. Resolution 17-17 was moved and supported. The motion carried with more than a two-thirds majority. It was moved and supported to accept the report and thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

Pastor John Vieths, chairman of Floor Committee #09: Ministerial Education, read Report 09-01 and Memorials 2019-05, 2019-10, 2019-11, 2019-14, and 2019-16. Report 09-02 and Memorial 2019-12 were read. Report 09-03 and Memorial 2019-13 were read. Report 09-04 and Memorial 2019-15 were read. Resolution 09-01 was moved and supported. The motion carried. It was moved and supported to accept the report and thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

Teacher Keith Bowe, chairman of Floor Committee #13: Support Services, read Report 13-01. A standing round of applause was given in thanks to the lay workers in synod employment. It was moved and supported to accept the report and thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

Pastor Jonathan Kehren, chairman, Floor Committee #14: Subsidiaries and Benefit Plans, read Report 14-01. Report 14-02 was read. Report 14-03 was read. Report 14-04 was read. It was moved and supported to accept the report and thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

Pastor Matthew Zimpelmann, chairman of Floor Committee #15: Northwestern Publishing House and Publication Coordinating Commission, read Report 15-01. It was moved and supported to accept the report and thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

Pastor Fred Guldborg, chairman of Floor Committee #16: Christian Aid and Relief, read Report 16-01. Resolution 16-01 was moved and supported. The motion carried. It was moved and supported to accept the report and to thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

Pastor Jay Bickelhaupt, chairman of Floor Committee #02: Conference of Presidents, returned to the podium. He read Report 02-01. Resolution 02-01 was moved and supported. The motion carried. Resolution 02-02 was moved and supported. The motion carried. Resolution 02-03 was moved and supported. The motion carried. It was moved and supported to accept the report and thank the committee for its work. The motion carried.

At 10:15 a.m., President Schroeder offered closing remarks. He reviewed highlights of the convention but above all the amazing grace of our God. Go back home and share the unending grace of God.

It was moved and supported to close the convention. The motion carried. The assembly stood and joined in singing the Doxology.

The convention adjourned at 10:21 a.m.

At 10:45 a.m., the closing service was held in the Chapel of the Christ. The presiding minister was Pastor Mark Zarling, president of Martin Luther College. The preacher was Pastor Donald Tollefson, North Atlantic District President.

During the service, Pastor Mark Schroeder was installed for his four-year term as WELS President and Pastor Joel Voss was installed for his four-year term as WELS Second Vice President.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Robert W. Pasbrig,
WELS recording secretary

2019 memorial disposition

Memorial	Title	Submitted by	Committee assigned to	Disposition	Action
2019-01	Loving concern for brothers and sisters with student debt	Central Conference of the Western Wisconsin District	#2 Conference of Presidents	Addressed in a committee report	See report 02-02
2019-02	Doctrinal statement on divorce	Mr. Glenn M. Brunner, Kewaskum, Wis.	#2 Conference of Presidents	Addressed in a committee report	See report 02-03
2019-03	Encouragement for Congregation Mission Offerings	Central Conference of the Western Wisconsin District	#2 Conference of Presidents	Addressed in a committee report	See report 02-04
2019-04	Encouraging education about the staff ministry program	Arizona-California District	#2 Conference of Presidents	Addressed in a committee resolution	See resolution 02-04
2019-05	Publicity of student debt	Central Conference of the Western Wisconsin District	#4 Ministry of Christian Giving/ Communication Services	Addressed in a committee report	See report 09-01
2019-06	Compensation Review Committee	Arizona-California District	#5 Synodical Council	Addressed in a committee resolution	See resolution 05-02
2019-07	Directing synod budget to relieve MLC students of financial burden	Central Conference of the Western Wisconsin District	#5 Synodical Council	Addressed in a committee report	See report 05-01
2019-08	Encouraging synodical support for multi-site ministry	Pastor Nathan Strutz, Verona, Wis.; Pastor Jeff Mahnke, Weston, Wis.; Pastor Matthew Vogt, Las Vegas, Nev.	#7 Home Missions	Addressed in a committee report	See report 07-01
2019-09	Encouraging synodical support for Home and World Missions	Pastor Nathan Strutz, Verona, Wis.; Pastor Jeff Mahnke, Weston, Wis.	#7 Home Missions #8 World Missions	Addressed in a committee report/resolution	See report 07-01, report 08-01, and resolution 08-01
2019-10	Use surplus gifts from "Equipping Christian Witnesses"	Central Conference of the Western Wisconsin District	#9 Ministerial Education	Addressed in a committee report	See report 09-01

2019 memorial disposition

2019-11	The application of WELS Endowment Funds toward the ministry of MLC	Central Conference of the Western Wisconsin District	#9 Ministerial Education	Addressed in a committee report/resolution	See report 09-01
2019-12	Martin Luther College mission addition	Mr. Carl Toepel, Howards Grove, Wis.	#9 Ministerial Education	Addressed in a committee report/resolution	See report 09-02
2019-15	Encouraging recruitment for the pastoral ministry	Arizona-California District	#9 Ministerial Education	Addressed in a committee report/resolution	See report 09-04
2019-16	Encouraging MLC students to earn money for tuition	Central Conference of the Western Wisconsin District	#9 Ministerial Education	Addressed in a committee report/resolution	See report 09-01
2019-17	Declare 2020 the year of the Sunday school in WELS	Mr. Carl Toepel, Howards Grove, Wis.	#10 Congregational Services A	Addressed in a committee report/resolution	See report 10-01
2019-18	Growing our spiritual maturity	Mr. Glenn M. Brunner, Kewaskum, Wis.	#10 Congregational Services A	Addressed in a committee report/resolution	See report 10-01
2019-19	The spiritual family	Northern Wisconsin District Commission on Discipleship	#10 Congregational Services A	Addressed in a committee report/resolution	See report 10-01
2019-20	Change Voluntary Supplemental Contributions to CLS to Annual School Support Fee based on school enrollment	WELS district schools coordinators	#12 Congregational Services C	Addressed in a committee report/resolution	See report 12-01
2019-21	Change wording of the Lord's Prayer	Mr. Daniel R. Falck, Mechanicsburg, Va.	#11 Congregational Services B	Addressed in a committee report/resolution	See resolution 11-01

Convention presentations

For a complete list of convention presentations, see the minutes, which begin on p. 73.

Opening service sermon: The bigger our picture of the Church, the bigger our prayer for the Church

July 29, 2019

Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

Rev. Jonathan Bauer

Text: Ephesians 3:14-21

When you focus on one thing, the price you pay is that you become blind to everything else. Back in 1999 psychologist Daniel Simons demonstrated this in a now-famous experiment. He had people watch a short video in which there were three people wearing black shirts all circling around each other and passing a basketball among them. There were also three people wearing white shirts doing the very same thing. The people watching the video were asked to count how many passes were exchanged by the players wearing white. When asked how many passes they counted, everyone got it right. 15. But then they were asked if they saw the gorilla. Sure enough, in the midst of all the action a man wearing a gorilla suit walked into the middle of the shot, looked at the camera, thumped his chest, and walked away. The kind of thing that normally catches your attention. And yet, more than half of the people watching the video didn't see the gorilla at all.

Why? When you focus on one thing, the price you pay is that you become blind to everything else. That's a bit of a scary thought for life in general. But it's an especially scary thought for a gathering like this. You're here to make decisions about the work we do as a synod, work we do walking together that none of us could do walking alone. And of course, we can't do everything, which means we must focus. We must decide where to direct our attention and along with it our money and our manpower. But what if we're wrong? What if, as we're completely preoccupied with one thing, which may very well be a good thing and an important thing, we become blind to the biggest thing and best thing? In other words what if the proverbial 800-lb gorilla is standing right in front of us, but because our focus is elsewhere we completely miss it?

So what's the gorilla? Well, I'm guessing that if this convention began with a motivational talk from a corporate consultant or industry expert, he might say things like, Dream big. Aim high. He'd tell you not to limit yourselves or sell yourselves short. But instead this convention begins with these words of Paul in front of us. And I'm not sure even the best and most inspiring speaker could possibly get you to think as big as Paul does. When Paul thinks about the work he's involved with as a member of Christ's Church, we know how big of a picture he has in mind. Why? Because these verses are a prayer. They tell us where Paul's focus is. God-willing, as we look at these verses, and as we think about the work we're involved with as members of Christ's Church, our picture of that work will match his. Why? So that our focus matches his. So that we don't become so preoccupied with things that are good and important but in the process, miss the 800-pound gorilla. So that we too have the biggest possible picture of the Church and thus the biggest possible prayer for the Church.

I. What we pray from.

So where does a prayer of this magnitude come from? Recently I heard someone describe prayer this way. That when we pray not on the basis of what we think God should do but on the basis of what we've seen him do and what he's promised to do, it's sort of like when a young child sees his father do something he finds really impressive. What's his response? Daddy, do it again. This prayer is the conclusion and climax of the entire first half of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Paul has just described in all its beauty the Church, this building God, this family, this nation that God has built. And having seen that, Paul kneels before his Father in heaven and says, "Daddy, do it again."

And the first thing we learn from Paul's words is what we pray from. In other words, what resources are we drawing on? What cookie jar, so to speak, are we trying to get our hand into and pull something out of? When my kids run up to me at the football game asking for money for the concession stand, their request depends on two things. How much does dad actually have in his pockets and how willing is he to give it? What are we praying from?

As we think about the work we do together and the resources we have to do it, it's easy to think, *What can we get done with 370,000 people? How far can \$20 million of CMO in each of the next two years be stretched? What kind of opportunities do our mission fields present?* Paul pictures something far bigger. As he offers his prayer, he asks that God would grant it "out of his glorious riches." Those are the same glorious riches that earlier in the letter Paul said caused God to send his Son Jesus Christ. So the same Father who possesses all the wealth in the world has something in his pocket more valuable than it all. And not only does he have it. We know he's willing to give it. Willing to give it in spite of how little we deserve it. If God has already reached into his pockets and pulled out his Son, it's safe to say that everything else in those pockets is also free game.

From those glorious riches we pray. Those glorious riches are the resources we have at our disposal. Yes, it is good and necessary for us to have pie charts in BoRAMs showing how we plan to allocate what God has given to us. But realize that our entire pie chart is just a slice of an infinitely bigger pie. Our Father has proven what he possesses. He's proven his willingness to give it. It's no wonder that Paul prays—and we with him—Daddy, do it again.

II. What we pray for.

Do what? After telling us what he prays from, Paul tells us what he prays for. And it's a good thing he's praying from God's glorious riches because what he's praying for is a kind of a biggie.

As we think about the work we do together, what might be a really big prayer? Stanford business professor Jim Collins calls them BHAGs. Big Hairy Audacious Goals. What would be the BHAG-iest BHAG for the Wisconsin Synod for the next two or five or ten years? X number of new churches? Y number of new mission fields? Free tuition at all our schools? Paul pictures something far bigger. That we know the love of Christ. Yes, that sounds simple and small. Something we can already check off the list. Not so fast. Christ's love has dimensions that go beyond any human wingspan. It exceeds human grasp and human knowledge. But Paul wants us to grasp it and know it. And not just us. Not just preachers and teachers and theologians. Not just the Wisconsin Synod. This is Paul's prayer "for all the Lord's holy people."

And it's no wonder why. He says that Christ's love is the one thing that causes the Church to be rooted and established. In other words, if the Church is a plant, there might be times a scorching sun causes our flower petals to wither, when a howling wind causes branches to bend, when a lightning strike causes the trunk to split. But with Christ's love as the soil in which we are rooted, we will never die. Or if the Church is a building, there might be times when we build up structures and systems, when we decorate walls with this paint or that picture. And then a few decades later, we might look at what we've built, wonder what in the world we were thinking, scrape it to the ground and start over. With Christ's love as the bedrock on which that building rests, we will always stand.

Paul's words suggest, by the way, that at the heart of every problem we see within the Church is an inadequate grasp of the love of Christ. For example, when churches rush to affirm and embrace every lifestyle and behavior imaginable, we might be tempted to think that they've gone too far, that they've made the love of Christ too wide. The reality is they haven't made it wide enough. Every redefinition of morality is an attempt to redraw the line that separates the righteous from the wicked, God's friends from his enemies, assuming that God's love is only wide enough to include all his friends. The reality is that the only line that counts puts everyone in the same group. Enemies. But Christ's love embraces every single one of those enemies. That's how wide the love of Christ is.

Or when churches focus all their efforts on helping the poor, fighting climate change, or solving our immigration problems. Or when the church focuses all its efforts on creating a society where abortion is illegal, marriage is

between one man and one woman, and Intelligent Design can be taught in public schools, we might be tempted to think that they've gone too far, that they are doing things Christ hasn't told them to do. That they are setting their sights too high. The reality is that haven't set them high enough. The reason our focus is not to create a slightly better heavens and earth is because God has promised a new heavens and new earth. Christ didn't simply come down, put on human flesh like some sort of hazmat suit, do the dirty work that needed to be done, and then take it off once he got back to the clean room of heaven. No, he took that human flesh—this human flesh—back with him to heaven. And in so doing he secured a salvation for us that is not a rescue out of a material world gone bad but a resurrection for a material world where everything is once again very good. That's how high the love of Christ is.

For the knowledge of that unknowable love we pray. Our Father has proven that no matter what forces are turned against it, a Church rooted and established in that love is indestructible. It's no wonder that Paul prays—and we with him—Daddy, do it again.

III. What we pray on.

So this would be the natural place to ask, Do you think it's safe to say that very often our picture of the Church—and therefore our prayers for the Church—are not nearly as big as Paul's? That it's easy for us to become so focused on smaller things—good things and important things—that we miss the biggest and the best thing, the 800-pound gorilla?

In fact, I wonder what our Father in heaven thinks—or at least ought to think—about what we think about him based on our prayers. When, for example, I think that maybe if God is really generous and really in a good mood, maybe just maybe he'll have a few more families and a few more dollars to spare for my congregation. When that's what I pray from, what should God think? "I was actually hoping to make it rain with crisp, new hundred dollar bills, to employ everything at my disposal for my kingdom, but if you want to work with my pocket lint, you go right ahead." Or when all of my attention is on whether membership is going up and seats are being filled and bills are being paid. And whether or not anyone has the faintest grasp of Christ's love is the farthest thing from my mind. When that's what I pray for, what should God think? "I was actually hoping to build a house that's indestructible, but if you want to build that house of cards, you go right ahead." I hope it's abundantly clear that if the answer to this prayer in any way depended on us, all would be lost. Not only do we have no power to make it happen. Very often we're not even asking for it.

That's what makes Paul's final words so important. After showing us what he prays from and what he prays for, he helps us see what he prays on. The basis for his confidence that what he asks for will be done.

Where does that confidence come from? Paul knows just how powerful God is. He knows that God is able to do more than we ask or can even imagine. And again, he knows that because he's already seen it. The power Paul mentions here is the same power he said was at work when God did the ultimate undoable, unimaginable thing. This was the power at work when he raised Christ Jesus from the dead. The power strong enough to lift the unliftable burden of our guilt and hurl it into the depths of the sea. The power strong enough to break the unbreakable prison bars of death and reverse the irreversible curse of sin. That same power is at work in us.

And on that basis, one more time, Paul prays—and we with him—Daddy, do it again. Get the glory that you deserve. Get the glory that is rightfully yours. And not just from boomers or from Gen X, not just from millennials or Gen Z. Not just from whoever comes next. From generation to generation and for the generations to come. Far from wishful thinking, Paul is praying on the power he knows is at work. And so this closing doxology is prayed with the utmost confidence and rightfully ends with an emphatic Amen.

If Paul's picture of the church is our picture of the church and if Paul's prayer for the church is our prayer for the church, there's no way we could miss the 800-pound gorilla. And that's a good thing, especially when you consider where that expression comes from. It's one of those old cheesy jokes, the kind my grandpa would have told. Question: Where does an 800-pound gorilla sit? Answer: Anywhere he wants. Kingdoms are going to rise and fall. Church bodies are going to grow and shrink. Who knows what the next great fad or technological development or heresy du jour will be? Who knows who will sit in the White House next or how long there will be a White House for someone to sit in? But rest assured, we do know this. The 800-lb gorilla will sit where he wants. Christ's Church, not your church or my church or this church or that church but the Church will sit where it wants. It will do that for which Christ has bought it. It will bring God the glory that is rightfully his. So sit back. Relax. Grab your popcorn and silence your mobile devices. Because when this is what you pray from, and for and on, when you pray, Daddy do it again, he is going to do it again. And you don't want to miss it. Amen.

Keynote presentation: "For the generations to come"

July 30, 2019

Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

Rev. Jonathan Hein

The keynote presentation's theme was "For the generations to come." Rev. Jonathan Hein, the keynote's presenter, felt the topic content was better suited to a verbal presentation with visual aids than an academic essay. A video of the full presentation can be found at vimeo.com/352951307. A PowerPoint or pdf of the presentation is available at wels.net/2019synodconvention under "Convention presentations and resources."

The presentation had four main parts.

Part one

Hein quantified what is happening to WELS. He demonstrated that the statistical decline of WELS is not a new phenomenon but a 50-year-long trend that parallels the decline of American Christianity. He shared a statistical forecast range for WELS, demonstrating that WELS could, in two generations, have fewer than 100,000 members.

Part two

Hein defined the challenges before Christian congregations in America. He cited a series of seismic shifts in the American religious culture: the rise of religious pluralism and secular humanism, changes in the ways the younger generations consume content, the decline of the nuclear family, etc.

Part three

Hein shared some possible steps WELS congregations might take in an effort to meet these challenges. He explained how, due to the shifting religious culture in America, corporate outreach is going to become less impactful. He cited examples of how the believers in the early Christian church used hospitality, generosity, and compassion to win an audience for the gospel. Hein suggested that may be a model for us to imitate moving forward. Although corporate outreach and church programs will always have a place, to reach the lost in the generations to come will require congregations to equip and encourage members to intentionally befriend unbelievers.

Part four

Hein talked about our motivation to attempt to meet these challenges. He stressed that the motivations cannot be fear or guilt. He shared how the Great Commission passages give us our mission but not our motivation. Instead, our motivation for zealous ministry grows as our love for Christ grows. Hein stressed that our love for Christ grows as we better understand both the immensity and intimacy of our forgiveness.

Conclusion

Hein concluded by emphasizing the need for us to remember what our ultimate goal is—the glory of Jesus Christ. While statistical growth is something we desire, plan for, and work towards, ultimately all we want to do is give Jesus Christ glory. So, we strive to do all we can with the gospel to feed the faithful, seek the lost, and retain the straying. But we must leave the results of those gospel efforts up to the Holy Spirit.

Closing service sermon: Pray boldly

Aug. 1, 2019

Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.

Rev. Donald Tollefson

Text: Matthew 21:21,22

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer" (Matthew 21:21-22).

Dear fellow redeemed—partners in the gospel,

These words of Jesus are what might be called one of his blank checks. More than once he said, "whatever you ask in my name, believing you will receive."

"Whatever you ask . . ."—quite a promise! Does it ring true?

Now as many Christians have experienced, there are times that you pray . . . and you pray . . . and you pray . . . and nothing seems to be happening.

One brother in the ministry said he's prayed for the same thing for 17 years . . . and he's still praying!

Yes, our prayers are not always answered in the way that we'd like nor in the timeframe that we'd like.

And yet, these are the words of the Lord Jesus, the One whose every promise rings true. As the all-knowing, all-powerful Son of God he says, you too can move mountains. "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

So how do we reconcile that with those prayers of God's people that seem to go unanswered?

- A Christian father who has young children to raise is stricken with cancer and despite the prayers of God's people, his prognosis goes from bad to worse.
- We pray that God would bless our congregations, that they would be strengthened and flourish and grow, so that they might be beacons of light in our communities to reach others with the gospel of Jesus. But many are struggling—numerically, financially, spiritually.
- We pray that God would increase the reach of our worldwide mission efforts that we might reach more with the saving gospel of Jesus. But manpower—pastors, teachers, servants of the gospel—is limited.

Is God not hearing our prayers? Is God not inclined to answer our prayers that will be for the good of his people and for the welfare of his Church?

To those questions we can speak a resounding, "No!" God not only hears our prayers, he answers them in a way that will be for the spiritual welfare of his people, for the good of his kingdom, and for the glory of his name.

"Call upon me in the day of trouble," God told his Old Testament Church. "I will deliver you and you will honor me" (Psalm 50:15).

"Pray continually," God tells his New Testament Church. "Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18).

The problem isn't that God is not inclined to hear or to answer, the problem is we are not inclined to pray.

"Before they call I will answer," says the Lord, "while they are still speaking I will hear" (Isaiah 65:24).

We confess our half-heartedness, our shallowness, our weakness when it comes to our prayer-life.

So to encourage us in our boldness to pray with conviction, to pray with confidence—to pray from God’s riches in Christ, to pray for God’s glory and the good of his kingdom, to pray on the confidence of Christ’s love that He is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine—the Lord Jesus gives us this prayer-promise, “I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, . . . you can say to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and it will be done.”

“But I haven’t seen many mountains move”, you say, “much less be thrown into the sea.”

You know and I know that the One who has the power to move mountains removed the biggest one of all—the mountain of debt we owed to God but could not pay. He cast it into the heart of the sea. Willingly Jesus walked up that mountain, determined to face the consequence of his love for us and obedience to his Father’s will.

The One who prayed frequently, fervently, persistently to his Father—spending whole nights in prayer—on a hill outside Jerusalem also prayed in near despair. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?”

You and I know the answer. We are the answer, “for us and for our salvation”—to be declared right with our Father, to be called his sons and daughters by faith in Christ, to know that he was abandoned and forsaken in those three hours that we might never be.

Now the privilege of prayer is just that—a privilege to call God our heavenly Father, to call on him any time and know in our Lord Jesus that our prayers are heard.

And not only heard but answered in a way that will be for our spiritual good, for the blessing of God’s kingdom, and for the assurance that whatever God does or allows he does to lead his sons and daughters safely to their eternal home.

And now he uses them—us—to lead others to Christ and to that home.

Talk about answered prayers! We were reminded again this week of the blessings the Lord has poured out by his grace through the prayers of many:

- In Home Missions, since 1960 more than 600 mission congregations planted; 89 new mission congregations since 2011; 4 pastors assigned to mission starts or restarts this year.
- And what of the blessing of welcoming two young church bodies—one in Kenya, one in Taiwan—into our fellowship, rejoicing in the Word of God at work.
- Or consider how the Lord is working in a wonderful and winsome way among the Hmong in Vietnam, where the desire on the part of leaders to be rooted in the Scriptures, trained in law & gospel, is bearing rich fruit as they proclaim Jesus to their people.

We are challenged to consider how, leaning on the promises of God, we might recommit ourselves, take God at his Word and not only hold on to it but hold it out for others to hear, receive, and believe. We witness how the Lord blesses our efforts to reach souls with the saving gospel of Christ.

And isn’t all this reason for us not only to rejoice in what the Lord has worked through the prayers and service and gifts of God’s people, but to increase the boldness of our prayers; to step up and take God at his Word; to live and breathe and rely on his promises!

But perhaps there is room to examine the reasons for my shallow prayer-life, for my half-hearted efforts at living out the truth of the gospel, for my weakness when it comes to storming God’s throne of grace in prayer. Yes, there are motives—low-motives, self-centered motives, look-at-me-first-before-anyone-else motives.

I have reason to get down on my knees and not only ask but repent.

And the Lord who desires a renewal in my relationship with him says through the psalmist, “The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18). Are you crushed? God is close to you.

“The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth” (Psalm 145:18).

By an act of his grace, by the atoning work of Jesus that has washed us clean in his blood, rather than wither like a fig tree, we are claimed by God, made his very own, renewed, refreshed, rejuvenated, restored.

Yes, God is for us. “And if God is for us, who can be against us?” The eternal God graciously gave his dearest, his most

treasured possession for us! “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all—how will he not also along with him graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:31,32).

Yes, “all things.” “All things” doesn’t mean that where we serve—the school, the church, the mission, the ministry—will now be so flush with financial support that it will never face a budget shortfall again. Nor does it mean that all of our problems will disappear like the morning mist.

But it does mean that our God who knows all things and our God who has shown his love to us in his Son will give us “all things” that are necessary to accomplish the spiritual and eternal purposes He has in mind for us. Of that we can be sure that he will give us “all things” that are necessary to ensure that through faith in Christ His people will enjoy being in His presence through all eternity.

So we pray . . . and we keep on praying for the generations to come. As believers in our Lord Jesus, we pray with boldness, with persistence, with resolve. Not for our glory but for his. Not our will, but his be done!

As we go our separate ways after four days of a most uplifting convention, go in peace. Armed with Word and prayer, go to serve with a renewed zeal to carry out the task you have been given, the calling the Lord has given you. Amen.

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 turf 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



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