

WELS Support Committee

2016 Report to the Twelve Districts

Our Calling

“As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Galatians 6:10). As a synod, we take this calling seriously. The WELS Support Committee has been established by the synod to carry out Christ's love for our faithful called workers and/or their spouses who are now retired but do not have the financial resources to meet normal living expenses. The committee works through the district first vice-presidents to identify those individuals who have needs and provide them with the level of financial support that allows them to live with dignity and in reasonable comfort. Requests for support need to be made and approved in order for assistance to be provided. Application forms are used to determine the level of need when requests are made.

The following considerations affect the financial assistance the Support Committee provides.

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

Our Current Situation

The committee is composed of five district first vice-presidents of the WELS. The first vice president in every district is the contact person for the Support Committee. The Support Committee looks to local pastors, circuit pastors, and district officers to be alert to possible circumstances of need on the part of retired called workers and their surviving spouses living in their district. These pastors inform the retired called worker/spouse needing help of the possibility of receiving financial assistance from the Support Committee and, if needed, communicate this situation also to the chairman of the Support Committee. In 2017 there were 19 individuals, couples or family units throughout the Synod receiving support. The amount budgeted to provide support for these family units was an expenditure of \$250,000 for the year. Sometimes during the course of a year new requests are made to the support committee. We thank our Lord for enabling our synod to take care of all those who needed assistance in 2018.

A Look Ahead

The Support Committee continues to provide assistance to retired called workers and/or their surviving spouses as long as synod finances make it possible. At the beginning of 2018 there were 18 individuals or couples receiving support, calling for a monthly expenditure of \$14,315 and an annual anticipated expenditure of \$171,780. The Support Committee thanks Northwestern Publishing House for again covering the costs of *Forward in Christ*, *Meditations*, and *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* subscriptions to the recipients of funds in 2018.

Rev. Dennis Klatt
Rev. Joel D. Leyrer
Rev. Joel Nitz
Rev. Glenn Schwanke
Rev. Mark J. Johnston, chairman