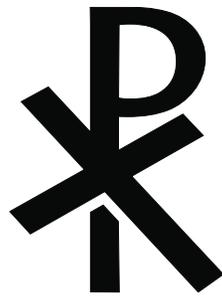


Reports to the Synod



2020

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

(This page left intentionally blank)

These *Reports to the Synod*
are provided
For Information Only
as an update concerning
the work of the synod
and have no official status.

No action is intended or will be
taken on any items in these reports.

The reader is at liberty to print these reports.

Table of Contents

Reports to the Synod

The Convention.....	v
President’s Report.....	1
Doctrine Committee.....	9
Ad Hoc Committee on Apologetics.....	12
Bethany Lutheran College	14
Board of Regents.....	21
Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary	25
Board for Home Outreach.....	30
Board for World Outreach	34
Board for Lutheran Schools	44
Board for Youth Outreach.....	48
Board for Christian Service.....	51
Committee on Worship	54
Laymen’s Delegates Equalization Fund Committee.....	56
Planning and Coordinating Committee.....	57
Board of Trustees	62
Synod Review Committee	70
Memorial.....	71

The Convention

The 2020 convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the 2020 annual meeting of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., and the 2020 annual meeting of the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc. are not being held due to the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19).

The White House Coronavirus Task Force (United States Department of State) declared a public health emergency on January 31, 2020 and the federal government began to put in motion executive, legal, and regulatory pandemic response procedures. On March 13, the President of the United States declared a national peace-time emergency. Commencing the following Sunday, this emergency began to disrupt many synod congregations as they began to add safety precautions to their normal practices.

On March 16, the President of the United States recommended that public gatherings should be limited to ten people or fewer. The following day, ELS President John Moldstad wrote, “The ELS Catechism reminds us of our duty to our country: What is our duty to our country? *It is our duty to love our country, obey its laws, assist its officials in keeping law and order, and promote its general welfare.*” He continued, “This recommendation is being made for our protection and for the safety and protection of our neighbors and does not ask us to violate God’s Word. ... Following a unanimous resolution from our ELS Doctrine Committee, I am asking that our churches suspend public services and urge following the health recommendations and restrictions of our national, state, and local governments.”

This resulted in many congregations ceasing to hold face-to-face Sunday services and Lutheran elementary schools beginning distance learning. The state of Washington issued a state-wide shelter-in-place order on March 23. The state of Minnesota followed suit two days later with a similar two-week executive order as also was the situation in many other states; the Minnesota order was extended twice until May 18.

At Bethany Lutheran College, all international travel was suspended on March 3. Nine days later, it was announced that the college’s spring-break, which began on March 6, would be extended by one week with online classes to begin the following day. The situation changed rapidly with the announcement on March 17, that the college campus would be closed until April 14. On March 25, it was determined that Bethany Lutheran College would extend the three weeks of online learning “for the rest of the semester.”

On April 13, the synod’s Board of Trustees took the unprecedented action of cancelling the 2020 conventions of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., and the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc.

President's Report

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

We here are providing a collection of reports as informal summaries of activities by our boards and committees. There is no scheduled *Synod Report* to be published this year, but it is important to disseminate to our synodical membership what actions have been taken since the time of the 2019 convention. Any of the items in these reports which will require action by the convention will need to be published in the 2021 *Book of Reports and Memorials* (BORAM).

In these unsettling times of pandemic concerns and economic hardships—let alone dealing with the psychological, emotional and spiritual fallout—it is good to be reminded of the words written by the apostle Paul in the eighth chapter of his letter to the Romans. That powerful chapter describes for each of us as believers in Christ the solid hope and confidence we can have as we face any kind of obstacle on our journey through this present world to life eternal. Since there is “no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1), for Christ already has paid the full price of our redemption from sin and death, we followers of the risen Savior know we are more than conquerors of all evil. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... No in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, nether height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35–39).

Focusing our thoughts on things above, we as individual believers and as a synod can move forward with the assurance that the Lord directs our paths. He will bring blessings as is best determined by his will, and we can trust him to provide us with the necessary resources and strength to carry out his commission in furthering his kingdom. “[T]he church perpetually looks beyond dark shadows of uncertainty and disorder to glimpse the dawning light of eternity. She has the promise of her living Lord to sustain her: ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ In Christ Jesus her Lord the church in every age has a hope and a future” (*The Care of Souls*, by H. Senkbeil, p. 273).

ORDINATION AND INSTALLATIONS

The Rev. Peter Heyn was installed as a home missionary pastor of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in San Angelo, Texas on June 2, 2019. His father, the Rev. Thomas Heyn, preached for the occasion. Circuit Visitor, the Rev. Micah Ernst, performed the rite of installation.

Mr. Jacob Kempfert was installed as vicar of Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Mankato, Minnesota, on June 23, 2019.

On Sunday, August 25, 2019, three teachers were installed at King of Grace Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, Minnesota: Kari Strausser (director of preschool), Katie Roeber (assistant director of preschool), and Lauren Farquhar (math for fifth through eighth grade and homeroom teacher for eighth grade).

The Rev. Robert Lawson, Jr. was installed as pastor of Bethany and Concordia Lutheran Churches in Hood River and The Dalles, Oregon, on August 11, 2019.

Candidate of Theology Patrick Ernst was ordained and installed as pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Frankenmuth, Michigan on December 8, 2019. Rev. Mark DeGarmeaux preached for the occasion, while Rev. Homer Mosely served as liturgist, and Rev. Paul Schneider performed the rites as Visitor of Circuit 3. Also participating in the laying on of hands was Rev. Paul Lange.

The Rev. Daniel Ruiz was installed as pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in San Antonio, Texas, on December 8, 2019.

The Rev. Andrew Burmesiter was installed as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Escondido, California on Monday, December 9, 2019. Rev. Steven Sparley preached for the occasion, while Rev. David Jay Webber, visitor for Circuit 11, performed the rite of installation.

The Rev. Trent Saari was installed as pastor of Western Koshkonong Lutheran Church in Cottage Grove, Wisconsin on December 15, 2019. Rev. Eugene Kock (the vacancy pastor) presided over the

liturgy. Revs. Mark Bartels, Bernt Tweit, and Bill Grimm served as lectors. Rev. Daniel Hartwig (alternate circuit visitor) preached and conducted the rite of installation.

The Rev. Kurtis Freimuth was installed as pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in Deshler, Ohio, on January 19, 2020.

The Rev. Lee Kuhns was installed as pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in Kissimmee, Florida, on April 26, 2020. Pastor Herb Huhnerkoch preached the sermon and performed the “online installation.”

DEDICATIONS, ANNIVERSARIES, AND MORTGAGE BURNING

Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church in Madison, Wisconsin, had a mortgage burning party on June 30, 2019. The morning service included the burning of the mortgage and a potluck dinner following. This is the first time that the congregation has been debt free since moving to the Droster location.

Center Lutheran Church in Scarville, Iowa, observed its centennial anniversary on June 30, 2019.

Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Albert Lea, Minnesota, observed its centennial anniversary on June 30, 2019. President Moldstad served as preacher for the special afternoon service.

Holton Lutheran Church in Holton, Michigan, observed its 150th anniversary on September 8, 2019. President Moldstad preached for the occasion.

Faith Lutheran Church in Clara City, Minnesota, celebrated its silver jubilee on September 8, 2019.

Trinity Lutheran Church in Calmar, Iowa, observed its 75th anniversary on September 15, 2019.

On September 15, 2019, Living Water Lutheran Church in San Angelo, Texas, held a grand opening and dedication of a worship facility. The congregation is receiving support from our synod’s Board for Home Outreach.

On September 22, 2020, Hope Lutheran Church in West Jordan, Utah, celebrated the 30th anniversary of the dedication of their church building. The occasion was marked by an anniversary service, followed by a meal.

St. Luke Lutheran Church in Mt. Vernon, Washington, observed its 50th anniversary on September 22, 2019. President Moldstad was the preacher at the special service.

On October 13, 2019, the members of Holy Scripture Lutheran Church in Midland, Michigan, gave thanks to God for fifty years of his grace. Holy Scripture was an independent congregation in fellowship with the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation (LCR) until the time that it joined our ELS in 1979. Pastor Paul Schneider has been serving the congregation for the last thirty-nine years. The theme of the special day was “Thy Word is Truth,” and Pres. Moldstad served as the preacher for the anniversary worship.

Members of St. Martin of rural Shawano, Wisconsin, gave thanks to God for 160 years of grace on Sunday, October 27, 2019. After the church left the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod in 1966, St. Martin was independent and then joined the ELS in 1976 under the Rev. Wilbert Werling. The current pastor of the church is the Rev. Kurt Kluge. President Moldstad brought greetings and preached for the festival service.

On November 10, 2019, Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Mankato, Minnesota, held a dedication of their new organ and church addition, as well as the laying of the cornerstone. President John Moldstad preached for the occasion on Psalm 103, with the theme “Praise God for All of His Goodness.” The building project has included a spacious narthex, office facilities, a new kindergarten room, and space for youth activities. Seventy years ago, the congregation moved from Bethany Lutheran College to its location at Marsh and McConnell and erected its first sanctuary. Mt. Olive is our synod’s largest congregation and is served by Pastors John Petersen and Luke Ulrich.

Pastor Ron Peterson who serves King of Grace Lutheran in Waukon, Iowa, writes: “We are thankful to God for our new church building. [On December 2] we approved the purchase of a new building in northwest Waukon. It is designed very well both on the inside and outside to be a church. We look forward to start the renovating and will likely have our first worship there before the new year where we will continue to proclaim the good news of sins forgiven in the Lord Jesus.” The congregation was able to hold its first service in their new building on December 22, 2019.

On January 12, 2020, Norseland Lutheran Church, St. Peter, Minnesota, held a rededication service and open house following repair and restoration work of the sanctuary in the 109-year-old building. The floor-to-ceiling project is already debt-free thanks to several large legacies and the generous gifts of the membership. May God grant that this historic house of worship continues to direct hearts and minds for years to come toward the Savior who gathers and sustains His own there.

On January 19, 2020, Redeemer Lutheran Church in Scottsdale, Arizona, held a service of thanksgiving for being debt free and having clear title to their property. The special service was followed by a presentation on the history of the Redeemer property, and by a catered lunch. This event was touted as a reunion/homecoming event, and many former members of the congregation were present for this special occasion. Also present as honored guests were Dr. William and Lynne Kessel. Pastor Kessel was the first ELS home missionary in the Phoenix/Scottsdale area, in 1985–86.

MEMBERSHIP REQUESTS

The following individuals have applied for membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod:

Patrick Ernst, graduate of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Lee Kuhns, by recommendation of the Colloquy Committee.

The following congregation has applied for membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod:

Living Water Lutheran Church, San Angelo, Texas; Rev. Peter Heyn serves as the pastor.

COLLOQUY

Rev. Lee Kuhns successfully completed his pastoral colloquy on January 16, 2020. Lee is a former pastor of the AFLC (Association of Free Lutheran Congregations). Members of this Colloquy Committee were: President G. Schmeling, Prof. Thomas Rank, Vice President G. Obenberger, Pastor John Petersen, Mr. Greg Costello, Mr. Keith Wiederhoeft, and President J. Moldstad. As of the time of this report, Pastor Kuhns and his wife, Pam, are moving from Texas to Florida, where he has accepted the call to serve as pastor of Peace Lutheran in Kissimmee.

CONSTITUTION REVISION

A revised constitution has been received from Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota.

RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Alex Ring resigned as Secretary for Schools in July 2019. Shu Ting Lai has been appointed to the position.

Ryan MacPherson resigned from the *ad hoc* Committee on Apologetics effective September 20, 2019. Dr. Doyle Holbird has agreed to be appointed and serve. Dr. Andrew Das, a member of our St. Timothy Lutheran Church in Lombard, Illinois, also has consented to serve as an extra appointee to the *ad hoc* Committee on Apologetics.

Mr. Norman Hartigan resigned from the Board of Trustees on September 30, 2019, for personal reasons. Mr. Brian Sorenson of River Heights Lutheran Church in East Grand Forks, Minnesota, has been appointed to serve until the next convention.

At the request of the Board for World Outreach, Rev. Herb Huhnerkoch was appointed as an advisory member to the board in November 2019. This advisory appointment is for a two-year term.

The Rev. Matthew Brooks, who served Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Waterloo, Iowa, and Faith Lutheran Church in Parkersburg, Iowa, has announced his resignation from his call for personal reasons. The resignation will be in effect as of Sunday, May 4, 2020.

RETIREMENTS

Missionary Young Ha Kim retired from the mission in South Korea on December 31, 2019.

Rev. Charles Keeler retired from his pastorate at Resurrection in Winter Haven, Florida, effective as of January 31, 2020.

Rev. Homer Mosley has announced his retirement from his pastorate at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Saginaw, Michigan, effective as of June 30, 2020.

DEATHS

Mrs. Linda Teigen was taken to her heavenly rest the evening of July 20, 2019.

Rev. Richard Waters (age 69) passed away on November 8, 2019, following complications from surgery.

Kim Holtz (age 62), the wife of Rev. Roger Holtz, died on November 12, 2019. She had been suffering from Alzheimer's in the last years of her life.

Clarice Madson, age 94, wife of sainted Prof. J. B. Madson, died on May 16, 2020. By faith in her risen Savior she now enjoys her heavenly rest. A funeral is being planned for later in June.

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. Yea, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors. And their works do follow them.”

ANNIVERSARIES OF ORDINATION

The following anniversaries of ordination are being observed this year:

- Joseph Burkhardt – 40 years
- Craig Ferkenstad – 40 years
- Thomas Heyn – 40 years
- Marin Hoesch – 40 years
- Matthew Luttman – 40 years
- John Moldstad – 40 years
- Thomas Smuda – 40 years
- Ernest Geistfeld – 25 years
- Gene Lilienthal – 25 years
- Ronald Pederson – 25 years

STRATEGIC PLANS FOR 2020

At its February meeting, the Planning and Coordinating Committee adopted for proposal to the convention objectives, assignments, and dates of completion for the following goals (see the Report of the Planning and Coordinating Committee for details):

- To have every congregation, in Christian love, enhance its focus on reaching the lost
- To equip the next generation through Christ-centered education
- To develop and disseminate evangelism resources for home and world outreach

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The Planning and Coordinating Committee (P&C) has the responsibility to recommend annual budgets to the synod. For the year of 2021, the P&C is proposing a congregational contribution budget of \$820,000, anything over \$800,000 will go toward Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary (seventy-fifth anniversary).

AD HOC COMMITTEES:

Committee on Apologetics

The committee members at this time are Rev. David Thompson, Prof. Allen Quist, Dr. Doyle Holbird, Chaplain Don Moldstad, Rev. Thomas Heyn, and Dr. Andrew Das.

Committee for Rural Revitalization

Members of the committee are Peter Faugstad, Andrew Soule, Luke Ulrich, and Larry Wenzlaff.

Explanation Review Committee

The Explanation Review Committee (ERC) gathered at Holy Cross, Madison, Wisconsin on August 5, 2019. The committee has been tasked with reviewing and updating our 2001 Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism. The committee is also looking at electronically communicating the catechism; also at the production of a workbook(s). Please contact the chairman, the Rev. Mark Bartels, with any suggestions you may have for a new edition of the explanation. Members of the committee are Mark Bartels (chairman), Daniel Hartwig, Kyle Madson, Matthew Moldstad, Glenn Obenberger, Piet Van Kampen, and Ben Wiechmann.

Military Monument Committee

A groundbreaking ceremony was held on November 11, 2019 (Veterans Day) for a new military monument commissioned by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The monument will be built on the campus of Bethany Lutheran College, in Mankato, Minnesota. For more information on the monument project visit: els.org/monument. Members of this committee are: Glenn Obenberger, Dennis Behr, Ray Pederson, and Larry Wentzlaff.

WORLD OUTREACH:

Peru

At its November 12, 2019, meeting, the Board of Trustees authorized a four-year loan of \$100,000 to the Board for World Outreach at 0% interest in response to a request for the stated amount to be used for purchase of land by the "Dios Es Mi Fortaleza" congregation in Chimbote. This is part of a concerted effort by the congregation to do gospel outreach in a nearby vicinity.

We are thankful for a grant that has been received enabling the start of a preschool in the Peruvian Amazona village called Parinari. This gift should assist with recruitment for the school currently competing with a public school that attracts students away from the village. Also, in the Amazon region, we understand that certain Shawi villages have suffered from recent flooding. At this point in time we have no updates on how this has impacted our current congregations.

Chile

Pastor Herb Huhnerkoch, along with his wife, Barb, was in Linares in the fall of 2019 providing pastoral services and giving guidance to the congregation in that city, which is about 200 miles south of Santiago where other congregations of the Christian Church of the Lutheran Reformation of the Republic of Chile are located. We are pleased to report that a member from Linares, Mr. Jon Gross, is currently in an online instruction program with our Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary as he prepares to become the pastor of the congregation. May God bless his training, and also the church members at Linares.

India

Our Board for World Outreach sent substantial assistance to leaders in the Lutheran Mission of Salvation-India (LMSI) in November 2019, which has been of help to residents of India as they recover from devastating flooding.

Australia

Our Redeemer Lutheran in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, served by the Rev. Dan Finn has requested the establishment of a relationship with our synod's Board for World Outreach. The congregation is an independent church in fellowship with our synod, but it desires a stronger connection with our board for the purpose of outreach and mission planning. There are no plans at the present to request any funding from the board.

LUTHERAN YOUTH ASSOCIATION

The synod's 2019 Lutheran Youth Association Convention was held at our Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota. The theme for the July 25-28 convention was "One Thing Needful," the motto of

the college, taken from the account of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38–42. The keynote speaker on Saturday was the Rev. Jerry Gernander of Princeton, Minnesota who spoke of the Christian in relation to one's own conscience. We are pleased to note that a number of the attendees are very interested in enrolling at the college in the near future. Please pray for the youth of our Evangelical Lutheran Synod as they make important decisions for further education in the days and months ahead.

CIRCUIT VISITORS CONFERENCE

The annual Circuit Visitors Conference was held on September 12–13, 2019, in Eagan, Minnesota. The twelve circuit visitors serve as assistants to the president and as such give encouragement and counsel to the congregations and pastors, assist in the calling process, conduct visitations of the congregations, and disseminate information about the work of the synod. The conference includes both the visitors and the synod's officers.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Under the direction of the Board for Home Outreach, we are pleased to report that a new devotional has been published. The name of the devotional is “Good News for You” and has been edited by Rev. Luke Ulrich, a member of the board. The board received a grant from the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation for the publication. Therefore the booklet of fifty devotions is available free of charge for congregations and members of the synod. It is the hope of the board that this devotional can be used for evangelism purposes. To obtain a copy please get in touch with our Bethany Lutheran College bookstore (1-800-944-1722).

At the urging of our Doctrine Committee, a pamphlet, entitled “Addressing Current Concerns: Some Positional Statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod,” has been produced. This is simply a collection of statements adopted or affirmed by the synod on various topics: “We Believe, Teach, and Confess” (adopted 1992), “Position Statement on Sex and Gender Identity” (affirmed 2018), “Agreement in Our Practice of Closed Communion” (affirmed 2017), and “Roles of Men and Women in the Church” (adopted 1990). Copies of these will be available for distribution at the convention.

OTTESEN MUSEUM

On August 27, 2019, former members of the closed Oslo Lutheran in Volga, South Dakota, Walter Wosje and Blaine Hoff, transported the altar painting of the ascension of our Lord to Mankato. The painting is now on display in the synod's Ottesen Museum. This congregation was for an extended period of time in a dual parish arrangement with Bethel Lutheran in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Your synod president had the opportunity to serve Oslo during the years of 1980–84. The congregation was located seven miles south of Volga and joined the synod in the year of 1927.

LUTHERAN MILITARY SUPPORT GROUP

In August, the Lutheran Military Support Group met at our Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary campus. Some members of this group belong to our ELS. We give thanks to God for all who serve in the armed forces—not least of all, for fellow Christians—who are willing to risk their lives for the blessed freedoms we enjoy daily!

KENYA

In 2016 the secretary of a church body in Nyamira, Kenya, wrote to Pres. Moldstad formally requesting information about the ELS and “the possibility of having some continued mutual correspondence.” In his message to the 2019 convention, Pres. Moldstad stated, “[W]ithin the past year or two, several of our ELS pastors have been involved in teaching online classes to seventeen seminary students in Kenya. While the BWO is not so directly involved at this time (nor is it a synod-adopted new field), the board has decided to offer marginal financial support for enabling the training to continue. There is the hope that soon pastors and leaders (twenty-some) of this group will be able to gather for official doctrinal discussions with our ELS representatives” (*Synod Report 2019*: 23).

At the urging of the Board for World Outreach, a series of online doctrinal talks were initiated in 2019 to determine the doctrinal agreement necessary for declaring fellowship between the ELS and this group of pastors and congregations. Meetings were held July 29, September 30, and November 4, 2019, via Skype. Those representing the ELS at these meetings were Thomas Heyn (BWO administrator), Gaylin Schmeling (seminary president), and John Moldstad (synod president). The men representing the Kenya church were Bishop Sospeter Okongo, the Rev. Evans Gwachi (secretary), Tom Otuke (seminary principal), and Pastor David Ombogo (seminary online coordinator). The basis for the discussions was our ELS adopted document from 1992, “We Believe, Teach, and Confess.” At the final meeting, which showed full agreement in confessing the doctrines of the Lutheran church, we also addressed the need for the Nyamira diocese to register itself as a separate church body, certified by the government, and removing itself from its fellowship arrangement with the ELCK (a church body connected with the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod).

Since the Doctrine Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod advises the president in matters of both teaching and practice, the issue of a potential declaration of fellowship between the ELS and the Kenyan Nyamira diocese was brought to its March 16–17, 2020, sessions. After discussion the committee recommended full doctrinal fellowship (see the Report of the Doctrine Committee).

RESOLUTION CONCERNING CHURCH BODIES SEEKING A RELATIONSHIP

Both WELS and ELS have received numerous requests from church bodies around the world seeking relationships, much of this due to the continued demise of the ELCA-led Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and its open acceptance of sexual deviance. From time to time ELS pastors are approached by groups seeking affiliation. The 2019 convention requested guidance for individuals when contacted by such foreign church bodies (see Resolution 1, Synod Report 2019: 99).

The Board for World Outreach discussed the matter at their March 25–26, 2019, meeting, and adopted the following resolution by way of advice to the president: “Be it resolved that the BWO encourages the President’s Office to communicate the following statement to our clergy: If you are getting approached from foreign church bodies or individuals seeking information or affiliation from or with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), we urge you to direct such requests to Rev. Thomas Heyn, our BWO Administrator, who will make the initial further contact and will also follow up with advising both the President’s Office and the BWO, consulting also, if necessary, with our CELC affiliates.”

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD (WELS)

On September 11, 2019, members of the WELS Conference of Presidents and members of the ELS Doctrine Committee met at Bethany Lutheran College. The one-day session initiated what will be a biennial meeting to strengthen our fellowship ties with one another; in the past the WELS Commission on Inter-church Relations (CICR) carried on the discussions with the ELS. This fall, twelve leaders of WELS and twelve from the ELS will meet for the Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum. The dates for the Forum are October 19-20, 2020, as we do the hosting on our Bethany campus.

FORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION (CLC)

The WELS, ELS, and CLC reps are planning at least one more meeting for August 7, 2020. The CLC, is holding its biennial convention at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, this June. Up for consideration by the CLC is the acceptance of the “Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship.” Both the ELS and the WELS accepted the document in the years of 2016 and 2017, respectively. Were the statement to be adopted by the CLC, there still remain areas which would need to be addressed prior to the reestablishment of fellowship.

WELS–ELS–LCMS INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS IN JACKSONVILLE

On December 9–10 representatives from WELS, ELS, and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) held the eighth annual meeting of informal discussions. Each of these meetings have been helpful in identifying where the synods agree and where differences remain. The meetings also have been

helpful to increase mutual understanding of one another's doctrine and practice and to facilitate communication between synodical leaderships. These informal sessions are being held with the realization that a restoration of fellowship is not anticipated in the near future.

The December sessions included a focus on the doctrine of justification (emphasis on objective justification). This is an area where the leadership of all three synods find themselves in agreement. Much time also was spent on the doctrines of the public ministry and prayer fellowship, where certain differences remain. Specifically, as to ministry: ELS and WELS maintain there is a wider concept of God's institution of the public ministry where, for example, both pastors and Lutheran elementary school teachers are included as divinely called workers in the church, with respective roles defined by the call; the LCMS tends to view God's institution of the public ministry to include only those who serve in the pastoral role, i.e., ordained clergy. Specifically, as to prayer fellowship: ELS and WELS hold that joint public prayers are to be made between participants of church bodies only when there is full agreement in doctrine; the LCMS permits such prayers between churches even when full agreement in doctrine is not achieved nor anticipated. This latter issue is one of the items that contributed to the break-up of the old Synodical Conference. One could mention too a concern on the part of ELS and WELS that there is a need for consistent internal discipline within the districts of the Missouri Synod; e.g., where certain congregations may tolerate an open communion practice.

Rev. Peter Lange, newly elected first vice president of the LCMS, and Rev. Paul Prange, newly appointed administrator for WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR), were two additions for the sessions. Another meeting is planned for 2020, once again in Jacksonville, Florida, November 30–December 2. Planned for the next agenda is a more thorough discussion on prayer fellowship and ministry, as well as to focus on the recent WELS restatement on the roles of man and woman, "Male and Female in God's World." A point of departure on this issue between ELS/WELS and the LCMS is that, while the Missouri Synod allows for women voting in their congregations and at their synod conventions, both ELS and WELS do not have this practice, reflecting what God's Word says in 1 Corinthians 14:33f. and 1 Timothy 2:12.

CONGREGATIONS VISITED DURING THE PAST YEAR

Our Savior's, Albert Lea, Minnesota; Holton Lutheran, Holton, Michigan; St. Luke's, Mt. Vernon, Washington; Holy Scripture, Midland, Michigan; River Heights, East Grand Forks, Minnesota; St. Martin, Shawano, Wisconsin; Mt. Olive, Mankato, Minnesota; Divine Mercy, Hudson Oaks, Texas.

PASTORAL CONFERENCES ATTENDED

General Pastoral Conference; Iowa Winkel Conference; Great Plains Pastoral Conference; and Circuit 8 Winkel.

INACTIVE MEMBERS

The Guidelines for the Clergy Roster (III.A) read: "An ordained clergyman who does not have a current call but desires to remain on the clergy roster and is eligible to perform the duties of the office of ministry described in Article II., and who is not emeritus may, by action of the president and secretary, be continued on the Clergy Roster for a period not to exceed three years from the beginning of the period of inactivity. Upon the application of the individual and the recommendation of the president and secretary for an extension of such classification, the convention shall determine in each instance, on written ballot, whether the request shall be honored for an additional three-year period."

For the past three years the following names have been on our inactive list: Brad Homan and David Meyer. Requests to extend the clergy roster status for Brad Homan and David Meyer have been received and are recommended to the next convention.

John A. Moldstad, president

Report to the Synod Doctrine Committee

And I said, "My strength and my hope Have perished from the LORD." Remember my affliction and roaming, The wormwood and the gall. My soul still remembers And sinks within me. This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!" (Lamentations 3:18-24 NKJ)

“These are the two chief works of God in men, to terrify and to justify and quicken the terrified. One or the other of these works is spoken of throughout Scripture. One part is the law, which reveals, denounces, and condemns sin. The other part is the Gospel, that is, the promise of grace granted in Christ. This promise is repeated continually throughout Scripture; first it was given to Adam, later to the patriarchs, then illumined by the prophets, and finally proclaimed and revealed by Christ among the Jews, and spread by the apostles throughout the world. For all the saints were justified by faith in this promise, not by their own attrition or contrition.” (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XII, Repentance, 53,54)

Comfort and consolation for sinners are the goals for the preaching of the gospel, in our own day, as in previous centuries. Where we lose sight of this truth, there we show that something or someone other than Jesus Christ and His work of salvation has co-opted the work of the church. Many challenges face those who desire to be and to remain faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. At times we may, like Jeremiah, look out over the many ruins we see—in our lives, in our homes, in churches, in the world—and wonder: has my hope perished from the Lord? But in the midst of all the ruins there remains God’s promise: He is merciful, He is compassionate, He is faithful. These mercies of God will not be achieved or maintained by our own efforts, no matter how sincere. It is God alone who is our strength, not we ourselves. It is the promise of God’s grace and the Holy Spirit’s powerful working among us that create, maintain, and strengthen faith in Jesus Christ as Savior from sin, death, devil. God grant that our synod may continue to stand firm on the truth, revealed to us in Holy Scripture; the truth that gives us Jesus and all the gifts of His crucifixion and resurrection. To God alone the glory!

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Since the last convention, the committee consisted of the Rev. Karl Anderson, Mr. Gregory Costello, Mr. Allen Quist, Prof. Thomas Rank, Prof. Gaylin Schmeling, Prof. Em. Erling Teigen, and the Rev. David Jay Webber. President John Moldstad is an advisory member, and Vice President Glenn Obenberger is an advisory member. The Doctrine Committee’s three meetings were devoted to the consideration of questions and other matters referred to it by the synod convention, the synodical president, the chairman of the committee, and groups or other individuals within the synod.

The committee held regular meetings August 7,8, 2019; December 2,3, 2019; March 16,17, 2020.

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

The ELS Doctrine Committee met with representatives of the WELS Council of Presidents Doctrine Subcommittee in September, 2019. The biennial meeting of the ELS/WELS Forum is scheduled to meet in Mankato in October, 2020. These meetings allow opportunity for fraternal discussions on matters of doctrine and practice.

FORMAL MEETINGS WITH THE CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

A meeting is planned for later this summer, following the CLC convention in July.

INFORMAL MEETING WITH THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

For the past eight years, representatives from the ELS and from the WELS have been holding informal discussions with representatives from the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). The most recent meeting occurred December 9-10, 2019, Jacksonville, Florida. There was discussion on the topic of the Public Ministry, as well as Justification.

A subsequent meeting is planned for December, 2020, in Jacksonville, Florida.

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

The committee has continued its study of Bible translations.

CONFESSIONAL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

The triennial convention of the CELC scheduled for May 29-June 1, 2020, in Seoul, Korea, was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Extensive information about the CELC is available at the website: www.celc.info.

NYAMIRA DIOCESE (KENYA)

Since the Doctrine Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod advises the president in matters of both teaching and practice, the issue of a potential declaration of fellowship between the ELS and the Kenyan Nyamira diocese was brought to its March 16–17, 2020 sessions. After discussion, the following resolution was passed by the committee by way of advising Pres. Moldstad in connection with an unspecified trip and also an upcoming synod convention:

WHEREAS, The Psalmist says, “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity” (133:1), and,

WHEREAS, God-pleasing Christian fellowship between church bodies must be based on unity in doctrine and practice, and,

WHEREAS, In light of the foregoing doctrinal discussions with leaders of the Nyamira diocese, it has been determined that confessional unity in doctrine and practice does exist, and,

WHEREAS, There is an expectation that the Nyamira diocese will be registered and certified as a separate church body in the immediate future; such certification being essential to any acknowledgement of fellowship by the ELS, which then demonstrates the removal of the diocese from its fellowship arrangement with the ELCK, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Doctrine Committee advises that the synod convention expresses itself in full doctrinal fellowship with the Nyamira diocese, once the proper registration has been secured.

GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING COVID-19

The committee discussed issues concerning regulations and recommendations by federal, state, and local government concerning assemblies and other matters issued in order to reduce the rate of transmission of the coronavirus were discussed.

The committee resolved to encouraged and congregations to follow the recommendations of the President of the United States and various levels of government. The synodical president and communication director will provide guidance and suggestions for pastors and congregations as to how they may adapt their congregation and worship practices in accord with the faith and confession of our church during the time of this coronavirus emergency.

THEOLOGICAL TRENDS

The Doctrine Committee desires to keep informed of doctrinal trends and issues within the church at large (e.g., apologetics, various topics under the LGBTQ heading, the influence of feminism, the “church growth” movement, “contemporary worship” practices, modern Gnostic influences, government encroachment on religious liberty, universalism, etc.). The committee members continue to monitor and read from a variety

sources, including theological journals, magazines, periodicals, internet materials and discussions, and theological essays.

One item of specific study of the committee was “the seal of the confessional.” This topic includes the question of if or when a pastor must divulge to law enforcement agencies a sin confessed to him in the setting of private confession. A statement was prepared by the committee and presented to the 2019 ELS General Pastoral conference in October. The statement was printed in the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*.

O Holy Spirit, enter in And in our hearts Thy work begin,
Thy temple deign to make us.
Sun of the soul, Thou Light divine, Around and in us brightly shine,
To joy and gladness wake us.
That we To Thee
Truly living, To Thee giving Prayer unceasing,
Still may be in love increasing.

Give to Thy Word impressive pow’r That in our hearts from this good hour
As fire it may be glowing,
That we confess the Father, Son, and Thee, the Spirit, Three in One,
Thy glory ever showing.
O stay And sway Our souls ever
That they never May forsake Thee,
But by faith their refuge make Thee.
(ELH 27:1,2)

Prof. Thomas L. Rank, chairman
Prof. Em. Erling T. Teigen, secretary

Report to the Synod Ad Hoc Committee on Apologetics

The Committee on Apologetics has met three times since the last synod convention (August, November, and February) with another meeting planned for May (to be livestreamed).

Ad Hoc committee members include the Rev. David Thompson (chair), the Rev. Donald Moldstad (secretary), the Rev. Thomas Heyn, Prof. Allen Quist, Dr. Doyle Holbird (appointed November 2019), and Dr. A. Andrew Das (appointed November 2019); Dr. Ryan MacPherson served through November but had to step down due to other responsibilities; current advisory members: Pres. John Moldstad, Pres. Gaylin Schmeling, and Pres. Gene Pfeifer.

The sustainability and extended work of this committee is dependent on an anonymous donor who gave a gift of \$20,000 in 2019; this has been followed by a \$10,000 matching-fund challenge grant in 2020 and again in 2021. As of March 23, fundraising for 2020 has already exceeded the \$10,000 matching-fund challenge. The committee will continue to seek to raise matching funds this year and next year.

The synod at its 2019 Convention passed a resolution “that the synod president endeavor to establish a center for Christian apologetics” (*Synod Report*, 2019, page 68). In keeping with this resolution President Moldstad directed the committee to go forward with a plan. The committee requested of the college that a Bethany professor, well-qualified in the area of apologetics, be released from three credits of teaching per semester to be the Director of an Apologetics & Worldview Center starting in the fall of 2020 for at least two years. The college administration is willing to go forward with this proposal, pending funding that would come from outside the college (\$4,400/semester). We are pleased to report that Dr. Ryan MacPherson has been offered and accepted the position of Director.

Dr. Doyle Holbird was the 2019 synod convention essayist with the theme, “My Help Comes from the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and Earth.” As a result, he has also appeared on the “Issues, Etc.” radio program several times; he also has presented at various conferences.

On June 27, 2019, the committee sponsored the second annual Apologetics and Worldview Seminar: “Making the Case for the Truth of the Bible: Bringing Jesus to My Unbelieving Neighbor.” Presenters were the Rev. David Thompson, Dr. Ryan MacPherson, Prof. Allen Quist, and Dr. Michael Berg. Over two hundred individuals were in attendance.

The day after the June 27 seminar, an Apologetics Breakfast was held in Honsey Hall that included pastors and others from outside of the ELS who have an interest in apologetics, including those from the LCMS, WELS, and CLC. The purpose of this gathering was to find out where others are at in their understanding and utilization of apologetics, with the hope that a study and use of apologetics can be encouraged among those with a confessional Lutheran perspective. Another such meeting had been planned for the day after the next seminar on June 25, 2020, but will now be postponed due to the cancellation of the synod convention.

Two committee members, pastors Thomas Heyn and David Thompson, attended the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Apologetics Symposium in September.

The essay, “A Confessional Lutheran Understanding of Christian Apologetics and Its Practice,” was presented by Pastor David Thompson to the General Pastoral Conference in October. John Warwick Montgomery has requested that this essay be printed in his *Global Journal of Classical Theology*.

The first Student Apologetics Conference, now suspended, was to be held at Bethany on March 17, 2020. This year’s theme was going to be “Bringing the Truth of Christianity to Our Neighbors” with presenters Dr. A. Andrew Das, the Rev. David Thompson, and Dr. Gene Edward Veith. Due to COVID-19 and the changes at Bethany, consideration is being given to livestreaming this conference at some future date.

The committee will also be supporting and promoting a youth camp, Apologetics Camp 2020, sponsored by Bethany Lutheran College’s History Department. This one-day camp (June 19) will feature

instructors Ryan MacPherson, Courtney Agenten, Doyle Holbird, David Reagles, and Allen Quist. (Note: this camp is subject to postponement due to COVID-19 accommodations.)

The third annual Apologetics and Worldview Seminar was to be held on Thursday, June 25 with the Rev. Donald Moldstad, Dr. Gary Locklair, and Dr. Doyle Holbird presenting. This has been suspended due the cancelation of the synod convention.

Plans are underway for the Biblical Worldview Conference to be held in Chicago (Lombard) this coming September. David Thompson is the director.

The committee has submitted its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan Objectives to the Planning and Coordinating Committee.

The committee will continue other efforts, as time and resources allow, such as fundraising, the “Question & Answer” project, planning regional conferences, refining a description of an Apologetics & Worldview Center (that will include responsibilities of its Director), updating apologetics websites (<https://els.org/resources/apologetics-resources/> and <https://blc.edu/campus-life/spiritual-life/christian-apologetics/>), connecting with others outside our synod involved in apologetics, and developing other resources. The committee members agree that the progress of sound apologetics among us largely depends on continued support and development of an Apologetics & Worldview Center.

The Rev David Thompson, chairman

Report to the Synod President of Bethany Lutheran College

BOARD OF REGENTS

Members of the board during the past year: the Rev. Herbert Huhnerkoch, Kissimmee, Florida, chairman; the Rev. Mark Bartels, Madison, Wisconsin, vice-chairman; Mr. William Soule, Chicago, Illinois, secretary; Dr. Willis Anthony, St. Peter, Minnesota; the Rev. Erwin Ekhoﬀ, Golden Valley, Minnesota; Mr. Lyle Fahning, Prior Lake, Minnesota; Mr. Timothy Roemhildt, Mankato, Minnesota; Dr. Joshua Mears, Lakeville, Minnesota; Mr. James Minor, Danbury, Wisconsin; Mr. Tim Thiele, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin; and the Rev. David Thompson, Lombard, Illinois.

Voting Member by Virtue of Office: the Rev. John Moldstad, Mankato, Minnesota, president of the ELS.

Advisory Members: Dr. Gene Pfeifer, Mankato, Minnesota, president of Bethany Lutheran College, and the Rev. Gaylin Schmeling, Mankato, Minnesota, president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

The Board of Regents at its May 2019 meeting, appointed Mr. Tim Roemhildt of Mankato, Minnesota (Mt. Olive Lutheran Church) to fill out the remaining one-year term of Mr. Bruce Gratz as a type “B” member. Mr. Gratz stepped down from the board because he accepted a position in April 2019 in the Institutional Advancement Department at the college. That one-year appointment was ratified by the 2019 synod convention. Elected as type “A” members to the Board of Regents for three-year terms at the 2019 convention were Rev. Herbert Huhnerkoch, Dr. Joshua Mears, and Rev. Alexander Ring. In addition, the board’s appointment of Rev. Mark Bartels to a second three-year term as a type “B” member was also ratified by the 2019 synod convention.

The board at its November 2019 meeting appointed Mr. Timothy Roemhildt for a three-year term as a type “B” member beginning August 2020. The synod’s ability to ratify this appointment will need to be held in abeyance until the 2021 convention.

THE FACULTY AND STAFF

Bethany Lutheran College and Theological Seminary are thankful that the Lord continues to provide talented and committed men and women who embrace the mission of the college and seminary and serve as faculty and staff. We praise God for sending us these dedicated workers. During a special service on February 4, 2020, the college observed the following anniversaries:

BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE ANNIVERSARIES OBSERVED 2020

Wanda Hull – Housekeeping Technician.....	10 years
Emily Kimball – Theatre Costume Design, Adjunct Faculty	10 years
Jacob Krier – Manager of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving.....	10 years
Stacey Dawley – Director of Accounting	15 years
Robert Hanna – Professor, English	15 years
Patrick Hull – Director of Facilities	15 years
Donald Moldstad – Director of Campus Spiritual Life.....	15 years
Jennifer Wosmek – Professor, Psychology	15 years
Glenda Bossow – Administrative Assistant, IT Services; Adjunct Faculty.....	20 years
Chad Heins – Associate Professor, Biology	20 years
Daniel Mundahl – Vice President of Finance & Administration; Adjunct Faculty	20 years
David Norris – Manager of Visual Media.....	20 years
Tiffany Young Klockziem – Professor, Health & Human Performance	20 years
Mark DeGarmeaux – Professor, Religious Studies; Chapel Organist	25 years

Gina Moldstad – Admissions Data Specialist..... 25 years
 Paul Wold – Int’l Students Coord; Urban Initiatives Coord; Event Coord..... 25 years
 Lyle Jones – Associate Professor, Exercise Science;
 Head Coach Women’s Basketball..... 30 years
 Lance Schwartz – Director of Institutional Communication 30 years
 William Bukowski – Professor, Studio Art..... 40 years

This past August 2019 the following new faculty and administration were installed during the opening service: John Gunderson, Associate Professor, Spanish and Study Abroad Coordinator; Angie Johnson, Assistant Professor, English; Benjamin Kohls, Director of Graduate Studies in Clinical Mental Health Counseling; Emma Morris, Women’s Head Soccer Coach and Career Services Coordinator; Josh Pederson, Manager of Human Resources and Head Men’s Golf Coach; Esther Peng, Assistant Professor, Business Administration; and Sergio Salgado, Registrar.

GRADUATES

On December 14, 2018, 26 students graduated and on May 10, 2019, 102 students graduated for a total of 128 graduates receiving the baccalaureate degree as part of the twentieth four-year graduating class. These graduates represented 23 of the 27 majors.

ENROLLMENT

10-year BLC Fall Report on Attendance Statistics										
	FA2010	FA2011	FA2012	FA2013	FA2014	FA2015	FA2016	FA2017	FA2018	FA2019
Full Time	575	572	558	534	488	490	514	523	593	591
FTE	591	587	577	558	507	500	537	566	641	641
All Enrolled	607	634	621	605	536	529	588	655	743	742
# of FT ELS	98	97	97	92	85	79	87	90	88	81

The Lord continues to bless Bethany with stronger enrollment in recent years. Following a large increase in the fall of 2018, enrollment in the fall of 2019 remained steady. Of particular interest, the college again experienced a strong enrollment of first-year students that numbered 212 new freshmen and transfer students.

Since the fall of 2015, enrollment of full-time students is up just over 100 students. This is indeed a blessing from our gracious Lord, and enables the college to engage more students with the gospel message: The One Thing Needful. This surge in enrollment can be attributed to several factors including our growth in international students (from 8 in 2014 to 83 in 2019), growth in the numbers of students from urban and minority populations (from 11% of the full-time student body in fall 2015 to 29% in fall 2019), and enrollment growth in our newest majors (as of fall 2019: nursing 44 students, engineering 29 students, and computer science 25 students).

ADMISSIONS

In July 2019, Bethany Lutheran College hosted the Lutheran Youth Association (LYA) convention, in which approximately 145 ELS students in grades 8 to 12 and over 20 congregational youth leaders attended. Bethany Lutheran College usually hosts the LYA convention every four years but would like to host again in three years, in summer 2022, so the calendar aligns better with other summer student events taking place on campus. Avoiding odd numbered years will make the scheduling work well. Special thanks to the BLC professors who also serve on the LYA committee and to the ELS pastors who made the effort to encourage their youth to attend.

There are 191 ELS students graduating from high school in the spring of 2020. The admissions office has data on 167 of them. Of these students, they shared their email in 65 instances and phone numbers in

145. Of the 167 ELS students on which we have data, 26 applied to attend Bethany. In total, Bethany served 81 ELS students during the 2019–20 school year as traditional, full-time students and several others who are in high school via PSEO and dual credit online classes.

Bethany’s international reach was consistent in a number of core countries including Congo, Ethiopia, and China, and experienced expansion in the newer markets of Vietnam, Spain, Brazil, and Albania. Due to a partnership in Albania, 15 students came to Bethany in fall 2019. International student enrollment now represents 14% of the Bethany full-time student population. Moving forward, we will continue toward expansion as opportunities arise so that we may continue to proclaim the gospel message to students from around the world, as well as seek opportunities for a culture-rich, worldwide student body, and stabilized tuition revenue.

In consultation with the synod office, Bethany adjusted international scholarships for ELS students. Instead of providing one full scholarship for each country in which the ELS has a mission, Bethany continues to provide a generous scholarship but spreads the opportunity across any interested ELS student from that country. International ELS students usually receive the typical country by country academic scholarship that all students receive and then are provided an additional \$4,000 USD scholarship in most instances.

Watch for Bethany’s recruitment theme “Bethany. Values. Me.” to focus this coming year on “Bethany. Values. My Spirit.” Spirit will be emphasized in the duality of faith in our Savior, as well as the spirit of a gifted young person in his or her vibrant years of college. Bethany students are life-long learners who discern truth through the lens of the Bible’s authority. Key messages for parents and students include:

- Safe hilltop campus within walking distance of thriving downtown Mankato.
- Expert Christ-centered professors, coaches, and directors eager to guide my growth and champion my future.
- Active learning experiences that expand my sense of self and launch my ambitions.
- A Christ-centered education at the heart of every class and performance, from the field to the stage.
- Daily opportunities to dive deeper into your faith through chapel, Bible studies, Vespers, Christian counseling, Biblically-founded faculty, and more.
- Over 25 majors that enrich my opportunities to dynamically serve others.

Bethany will host a variety of summer camps for students entering grades 5–12 in sports, fine arts, and academic areas. Complete information will be available at www.blc.edu/camps.

It is a joy to have church groups and grade school groups visit campus. The best experiences are available Monday to Friday while Bethany is in session. It would be wonderful to develop a rotation of having your group visit every 2–3 years. Bethany is often able to set up over-night accommodations for students and hosts as well as provide reimbursements to aid in travel costs. Contact admissions@blc.edu to make arrangements.

BETHANY RANKED A TOP LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

Bethany supporters have long known that the college provides its students high-quality Christian higher education in a challenging academic environment that prepares them well for productive and fulfilling lives. And now for the first time in the college’s history, *U.S. News and World Report*, in their annual ranking of liberal arts colleges throughout the nation, agrees! In fall 2019 the magazine ranked Bethany #42 in the nation, and #1 in Minnesota, for the college’s success in helping its graduates achieve social mobility. A high ranking in such a category indicates that the college helps alumni to outperform what their academic and demographic profile would have predicted for their upward social mobility in their adult lives. We’ve long known that Bethany is the champion for helping students find success for this life, and now this ranking statistically proves that. Well done, faculty and staff!

SERVING RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS IN SPRING 2020

Bethany began the spring 2020 semester with 395 students living on campus, 74% of our second semester full-time student body. After spring break 2020, when courses moved to online instruction in response to the Covid-19 virus, the college quickly made provisions to keep our res-halls open for the 79 residential students who needed to remain on campus. These included international students with closed borders, students with little to no home technology or internet access, or for students who may have family members with compromised immune systems. The college also adapted means to continue supporting these students' needs, such as in dining and housekeeping services, that were compliant with Covid-19 social distancing and sanitation practices.

At the time of this writing, the college continues to make use of every means possible to connect with our students and to ensure they are engaged in our online learning format. For just one example, the Res-Life department re-imagined how to use our Resident Assistants to host weekly community engagement activities in a virtual environment.

RETENTION

After enjoying three years of first-year retention rates in the low 80% range, last year's retention rate for 2018 entering freshmen dropped to 72%, representative of our historic 10-year average. The college conducted an in-depth analysis, and one of the contributing factors determined was that a significant component of our growth last year was in higher risk categories, such as more transient international students. The college has since revised retention projections into a tiered structure that takes retention factors into consideration, and has implemented additional support mechanisms for students in each tier. As a result, at the end of the fall 2019 semester, we experienced outstanding retention with 96% of first-year students coming back for their second semester.

Bethany now requires all new students to complete a survey called the *College Student Inventory (CSI)*. The CSI is a tool that helps the college identify potentially at-risk students, determine areas where they may be at risk, and allow us to direct resources to support them. Analysis of the fall 2018 data led to discussions on how to best advise, mentor, and follow-up with students who present higher risk for departure and were not connecting with the college. One example of applying that knowledge was that in the fall of 2019, students identified as being at the highest risk on the CSI were assigned a mentor. The program produced initial favorable results, in that all nine of the students in the pilot program returned for their second semester. In the future, we plan to apply a similar mentor program to other populations and continue implementation of the *College Student Inventory* toward enhancing student success.

BLC GRADUATION RATES CLIMB

The most recent tabulation of Bethany's four-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at BLC in fall 2015 was 51%, exceeding our 10-year average of 42%. Our 5-year graduation rate for students who started in 2014 was 60%, exceeding our 10-year average of 49%. In other words, by 2019, 60% of Bethany students stayed and completed their bachelor's degree here, at the same institution where they started in 2014. Similarly, Bethany's completion rate is 77%, meaning 77% of graduating seniors did so in four years or less, showing that students who complete their education at Bethany do so in a very timely manner. While student completion rates at Bethany have historically been high, the recent increase in graduation rate is another metric demonstrating our attention to student persistence and success.

BETHANY FINANCES

Through an outpouring of gifts and support for Bethany, as well as difficult decisions made to help reduce expenditures, Bethany was able to achieve a balanced budget a year ago for the 2018-19 fiscal year. We praise the Lord for His blessings upon the mission of the college so that we may continue to equip students for productive and fulfilling lives, and most importantly engage them with the message of Jesus as their personal Savior from the consequence of sin.

In fiscal year 2019-20, the academic year we are currently completing, the college is projecting an operational deficit, perhaps nearly \$700,000, but it is difficult to determine the amount of deficit at this time due to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. This pandemic is causing changes to higher education throughout the country and will necessitate Bethany to continue to prioritize and identify additional campus efficiencies.

Looking ahead to the 2020-21 fiscal year, the college finds itself in a challenging situation. COVID-19 is not the only cause of Bethany Lutheran College's projected future budget challenges, but it certainly is bringing the college's financial challenges into focus. Like most small colleges, Bethany seems at a crossroads. Going into the 2020-21 fiscal year revenue shortfalls seem likely in several areas: enrollment (especially from among international students), endowment income, mineral rights royalties, ELS support, and contributions to the Bethany Fund. With the college facing, perhaps, a decrease in revenue as much as \$1.25M, controlling expenses will continue to be necessary in order to keep Bethany's annual budget deficit manageable, and a number of budgetary cuts for the upcoming fiscal year have been adopted by the Board of Regents.

Looking ahead toward future budget forecasts, enrollment alone will not solve the college's deficit spending. Increased outside revenue, personnel adjustments, and other cost containment measures will need to continue to occur. Potential collaboration with other like-minded institutions for instruction and operations may also need to take place.

The need for increased and ongoing financial support from Bethany constituents and the ELS is perhaps more important now than ever before. If we as a synod and its constituents believe that the good news gospel message found in the saving work of Jesus is the message of sure and certain hope college-age students need for this life and for their eternal lives, then support of Bethany's mission is critical now. Such support will continue to enable the college to fulfill its charge to proclaim the "One Thing Needful" for students today and in the future. May God continue to send blessings and resources upon Bethany Lutheran College, so we may continue to carry out this vital mission.

CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR PROJECTS

Despite the disruption that has been a part of the higher education landscape this year, Bethany Lutheran College continues to be blessed by God as our faculty and staff work to serve the learners and constituents of our synod and beyond.

Staffing:

As the college has been active in providing new majors to entice a greater student enrollment, the challenge has been to find highly qualified individuals to serve in these new programs. God has led us to a number of important hires in the following areas:

- **Engineering** - Our Engineering program has been moving along well with the help of part-time coordinator, Nicklaus Ollrich. In November of 2019, the Lord blessed us with a full-time department chair in the Engineering program. Dr. Sheng Sang served as a research specialist at the University of Minnesota, and will take over the role of Engineering department chair in July 2020. Dr. Sang's specialties lie in meta-materials and solids, particularly in the area of acoustics. Dr. Sang's versatility will serve our students well, as he has recently served in engineering labs focusing on biomedical advancements.
- **Computer Science** - For the past three years, we have been seeking the right fit for our full-time Computer Science position. The Information Technology (IT) team at Bethany has been faithful in providing high quality instruction for our students. This spring, one of the IT team members, Chris Merritt, accepted our position to serve in that full-time faculty role. Chris has been serving in both industry and higher education for the past few years. Professor Merritt is a graduate of BLC, and has provided valuable service in teaching as an adjunct professor, as well as a trusted

source for IT support. We thank God that Professor Merritt is now part of our faculty in a full-time role.

- **Dean of Faculty** - In the past five years, 22 new faculty members have joined the BLC community and will greatly benefit from the acclimation into the full-time professorship role by having a Dean of Faculty. It is imperative that the college have the right person with experience in academia, as well as pedagogical skills to help share ideas and guidance with the faculty. We are blessed to have Professor Julie Kjeer stepping into this role. Professor Kjeer has many years of experience at both Bethany and other colleges in the Midwest and on the East Coast. Professor Kjeer's ability to break down lessons for teachers to grow in their pedagogical knowledge and skill will be a valuable asset for our faculty. Professor Kjeer is set to officially begin her service in this role July 1. In this role, she will maintain a teaching load in the math department, while also serving as our Dean of Faculty.

Programs:

- **Master's in Special Education** - This past year, the Board of Regents approved an initiative to begin work on our second master's degree program in special education. This program will allow students the opportunity to serve in a number of special education fields in K-12 schools. The initial data came back with strong encouragement to pursue this program and serve the needs of children and adults that are in need of special services within both public and parochial education. The 2020-21 academic year will provide an implementation year for the program to be built and then approved by the Higher Learning Commission, with the formal launch of the program set for Fall 2021.
- **Master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling** - The work continues in earnest for our flagship Master's Program in clinical mental health counseling. Dr. Benjamin Kohls serves as our program director, and has spent over a year developing and shaping this program to meet the structure of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). As our program grows, it is the intent of the college to become formally accredited by CACREP. Pending final approval from the Higher Learning Commission, we anticipate launching our program in Fall 2020.
- **Internship Opportunities** - As we look forward to the 2020-21 academic year, we continue to actively seek ways to provide real-world experiences, and align students to careers as an outcome of our programs and majors by ways of internships prior to graduation. These internship opportunities offer students ways to explore career pathways, as well as network with employers in the field who may be looking for the specific skill sets our students can offer.

PHYSICAL PLANT

During the summer of 2019, the college undertook the demolition of the baseball field and construction of a new \$3.2M artificial turf soccer complex on that site. The baseball team now practices and plays at Franklin Rodgers Park that was completely renovated with artificial turf, locker rooms, etc. In addition to the soccer complex that includes grandstand, lighting, press box, scoreboard, fencing, and stormwater retention pond, two additional parking lots were constructed creating another 88 stalls on campus.

Larson Hall apartments, used for the residential hall housing for upper division men, were refurbished with new paint, flooring, countertops, and appliances. Total roof replacements of Tweit and Gullixson Hall were also completed, as well as other summer maintenance projects.

GRANTS

Financial support from a variety of grants continues to provide assistance to carry out the mission of the college. Bethany again received a generous grant from the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation to continue to enhance our programmatic offerings and physical facilities. In total, Bethany received from the Foundation \$2,872,500 in 2019. We are thankful for the Foundation's generous support.

Bethany Lutheran College is also thankful for the continued support of Thrivent Financial. During calendar year 2019, the college received \$11,661 as a result of the Thrivent Choice program, down slightly from the previous year. In this program, Thrivent members direct funds to organizations and charities of their choosing.

Bethany is also thankful for the support received from the national Bethany Auxiliary. The national auxiliary meets annually on the fourth Monday of September. During the auxiliary's annual meeting in 2019, several projects were approved for support including \$3,000 towards the Dorothy Theiste Memorial Auxiliary Scholarship Fund, \$1,515 to the Nursing Department, \$500 to the Biology Department, \$450 to the Education Department, \$600 for the Chapel, \$800 for a ping pong table, and \$500 toward the Piano Replacement Program. They also covered a deficit of \$2,635 for a grand total of \$10,000.

CONCLUSION

The Lord has richly blessed Bethany Lutheran College during the past year. We are humbled by the generous financial support, prayers, and words of encouragement of alumni and friends. We are grateful to have the opportunity to provide a Christ-centered education to give our students the foundation needed as they leave campus to pursue their vocation of choice.

Dr. Gene R. Pfeifer, President

**Report to the Synod
Board of Regents
of
Bethany Lutheran College
and
Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary**

BOARD OF REGENTS' MEMBERS

Type A members of the board during fiscal 2020:

- The Rev. Herbert Huhnerkoch, chairman; Peace Lutheran Church, Kissimmee, Florida
- Mr. William J. Soule, Esq., secretary, Chicago IL; St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Lombard Illinois
- Dr. Willis Anthony; Norseland Lutheran Church; St. Peter, Minnesota
- The Rev. Erwin Ekhoﬀ; King of Grace Lutheran Church; Golden Valley, Minnesota
- Mr. Lyle Fahning, Prior Lake, Minnesota; Heritage Lutheran Church; Apple Valley, Minnesota
- Dr. Joshua Mears, Lakeville, Minnesota; Heritage Lutheran Church; Apple Valley, Minnesota
- Mr. James Minor, Danbury, Wisconsin; King of Grace Lutheran Church; Golden Valley, Minnesota
- The Rev. Alexander Ring; Christ Lutheran Church; Port St. Lucie, Florida
- The Rev. David Thompson; St. Timothy Lutheran Church; Lombard Illinois

Type B members of the board during the past fiscal year:

- The Rev. Mark Bartels, vice chairman; Holy Cross Lutheran Church; Madison, Wisconsin
- Mr. Tim Roemhildt; Mt. Olive Lutheran Church; Mankato, Minnesota
- Mr. Tim Thiele; Holy Trinity Lutheran Church; Okauchee, Wisconsin

Voting member – Ex officio

- The Rev. John A. Moldstad, Mankato, MN, president of the ELS

Advisory members:

- Dr. Gene R. Pfeifer, Mankato, Minnesota, president of Bethany Lutheran College.
- The Rev. Gaylin Schmeling, president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

**ACTION TAKEN IN FISCAL 2020 BY THE BOARD OF REGENTS for
BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE**

Financial Action

- A. Adopted the 2019-20 budget for the college and approved the fiscal 2019 Audit Report.
- B. Authorized President Gene Pfeifer and Daniel Mundahl to sign and file IRS Form 990 for fiscal year 2019.
- C. Approved the 2020-21 tuition and fee rates.
 - Tuition: \$27,700 (Deposit \$150)
 - Room and board: \$8,150 (Room \$3,810, board \$4,280, Laundry \$60)
 - Student fees and deposits: \$680
- D. Approved the new salary ranges for non-faculty employees.
- E. Approved a normal request to the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation for \$2,422,500 and a special request for \$330,000.
- F. Approved the borrowing of up to \$3,000,000 at 3% interest per annum for the construction of Phase 2, with the BLC Endowment supplying 50% of the loan amount and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod supplying the remaining 50% of borrowing.

- G. Approved refinancing \$10,500,000 in outstanding debt at 2.5% interest per annum.
- H. Subsequently approved a Bonding Resolution through the Port Authority of North Mankato to borrow an additional \$5,000,000 for capital improvements, keeping the mortgage payment the same as previously.
- I. Approved seeking proposals for both our Investment Management and Audit services for Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.
- J. Established BLC's endowment spending rate for fiscal 2021 at 6% for scholarships and 6% for operations.

Academic and Enrollment Action

- A. Accepted the President's and BLC annual goals for fiscal 2020.
- B. Approved the list of 2019 graduates, including the mid-year graduates.
- C. Ratified the hiring of Dr. Sheng Sang as a faculty member of Engineering and Julie Kjeer as the Dean of Faculty.
- D. Approved exploring the next steps in the creation of the Master's Program in Special Education.

Legacies

- A. Acknowledged estates received through December 31, 2019:
 - Arneson, Isabel G.
 - Butt, Ellsworth A.
 - Dalchow, Wayne A.
 - Fenske, Doris J.
 - Jeppesen, Ada Amelia
 - Luedtke, Gloria J.
 - Madson, Paul G.
 - Mahnke, Jean Marie
 - Newsom, Barbara Y.
 - Petersen, Orla A.
 - Phillips, Eunice

ACTION TAKEN IN FISCAL 2020 BY THE BOARD OF REGENTS for BETHANY LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

- A. Approved the president's goals and objectives for 2019-2020.
- B. Approved the Seminary fiscal 2020 budget.
- C. Established a 4.5% endowment spending rate for the Seminary for fiscal 2020.
- D. Approved that the "Path Forward" summation as presented in the "Review of BLTS MDiv Curriculum," dated January 27, 2020, be implemented during the next one-and-a-half years.
- E. Acknowledged estates received in 2019:
 - Ellsworth Butt
 - Wayne and Marilyn Dalchow
 - Isabelle Ebmeier
 - Merlyn Hayes
 - Paul Madson
 - Jean Sumrall

ACTION REQUIRED AT THE SYNOD CONVENTION

The Board of Regents appointed Tim Roemhildt* as a type B member and seeks ratification of this action at the next synod convention.

CONCLUSION

Efforts undertaken to increase enrollment at Bethany Lutheran College and retain current students at the college continued to bear fruit in fiscal 2020 as both first-year and full-time enrollments were strong for the second year in a row. These accomplishments were achieved through the efforts of the entire college community, but especially by the gracious hand of God.

The COVID-19 crisis has created many uncertainties going forward in every aspect of the ministries of both the college and the seminary. The administration, faculty and staff have done a remarkable job in quickly adjusting to online instruction for the entire student body. The future fallout for enrollment, finances, instruction and many other areas remains a huge uncertainty, more than ever before. The challenge is more difficult than any group of Christians can hope to comprehend alone. We implore almighty God to have mercy on our institutions and synod and to show us the course which he lays out for us.

*The Rev. Herbert Huhnerkoch, chairman
Mr. William Soule, secretary*

* Tim Roemhildt

Education and Credentials:

Minnesota State University Mankato, MN (MS in Mathematics Education 2000)

Winona State University Winona, MN (BS in Mathematics - Computer Science minor 1983)

Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee WI (AS Liberal Arts 1981)

University of Colorado Pueblo (Graduate Credits)

Carleton College, Northfield, MN (Graduate Credits)

Employment: Minnesota State-Certified Mathematics Instructor.

Taught at Mankato East Senior High, Mankato, 2000-2018 and South Central College, North Mankato 2018-present.

Church Membership: Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Mankato MN.

Congregational Positions Held: Mount Olive Board of Parish Education, School Board, and Vice Chairman of the congregation.

Synodical positions held: *Builders for Christ* worker on several projects. One year as a type B member of the Board of Regents.

BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE, INC.
Mankato, Minnesota
Consolidating Statement of Activities
Year Ended June 30, 2019

	<u>College</u>	<u>Seminary</u>	<u>2019 Total</u>	<u>2018 Total</u>
REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT				
Tuition and general fees	15,862,673	379,275	16,241,948	14,218,979
Less: Scholarships and grants	(8,396,170)	(365,025)	(8,761,195)	(7,007,304)
Net Tuition and Fees	7,466,503	14,250	7,480,753	7,211,675
Government Grants	97,444	-	97,444	73,402
Contributions	5,266,214	410,853	5,677,067	4,598,371
Investment income	275,221	48,717	323,938	246,501
Investment gains (losses)	646,618	211,224	857,842	2,893,276
Gains (losses) on beneficial interest in funds held in trust	985	2,283	3,268	4,781
Gain (loss) on beneficial interest in perpetual trust	(55,559)	(55,559)	(111,118)	63,178
Sales and services of student activities	74,128	-	74,128	59,677
Mineral rights royalties	545,287	-	545,287	530,412
Other sources	766,095	42,623	808,718	732,248
Auxiliary services	3,456,799	-	3,456,799	3,239,801
Adjustment of actuarial liability	38,657	(47,563)	(8,906)	87,851
Total Revenues, Gains and Other Support	18,578,392	626,828	19,205,220	19,741,173
EXPENSES				
Program expenses				
Instruction	6,794,291	529,854	7,324,145	8,039,855
Academic Support	622,143	-	622,143	670,577
Student services	4,850,104	96,094	4,946,198	4,685,117
Auxiliary	2,891,147	-	2,891,147	2,882,612
Support expenses				
Institutional Support	3,503,894	67,201	3,571,095	3,676,756
Allocable expenses				
Operation and maintenance of plant	1,894,548	42,543	1,937,091	2,037,448
Depreciation	1,885,324	72,745	1,958,069	1,985,031
Interest	377,845	-	377,845	398,270
Less: Allocated expenses	(4,157,717)	(115,288)	(4,273,005)	(4,420,749)
Contributions receivable written-off	2,000	-	2,000	57,038
Total expenses	18,663,579	693,149	19,356,728	20,011,955
Change in Net Assets	(85,187)	(66,321)	(151,508)	(270,782)
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	67,785,125	11,940,516	79,725,641	79,996,423
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	67,699,938	11,874,195	79,574,133	79,725,641

Report to the Synod

Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:18). The Savior’s gracious invitation is wonderful rest. Our soul, says Augustine, was created by and exists for God and is, therefore, never at rest until it rests in the Lord. Our soul is like Noah’s dove in the deluge. That dove, after it left the ark, found no rest on the earth until it returned to the place from which it came. So there is no real rest for the sinful soul in this delusive world with its many distractions until it is brought back to Him from whom it came. Without Him we are hopelessly lost in sin. Jesus obtained for us that rest and peace which the world cannot give. He accomplished it through His holy life and innocent suffering and death. He endured the weariness and the burdens of this life in our place so that we could have divine peace. He warred with Satan and the powers of evil throughout His life—a war culminating in the battle of the ages on the cross. There Jesus, the victor divine, crushed the old evil foe under His feet obtaining heavenly rest and peace for all. This wonderful comfort is offered to us in the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments, and is received by faith alone in Him as the Savior which faith is worked, strengthened, and preserved through these same means of grace.

Our Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary continues to play a vital role in preparing men to go forth to proclaim the beautiful message of the Gospel, which brings peace, comfort and joy. As these men and all pastors dispense the means of grace, Jesus is lovingly inviting, “Come to me in Word and Sacrament all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.” Each year we continue to send forth more workers who have been trained to preach the blessed truths of God’s Word. The Lord has permitted us to complete another school year where men were trained for this blessed ministry. Those who served their vicarage stand ready to answer the call: “Here am I; send me.” May our gracious Lord continue to bless our seminary to the glory of His name and the welfare of precious blood-bought souls.

BOARD OF REGENTS

The Board of Regents is responsible for overseeing and governing the operations of the seminary. The board met quarterly during the year and the president of the seminary submitted a report to each meeting. The members of the board are: The Rev. Herbert Huhnerkoch, Kissimmee, Florida, chairman; Mr. William Soule, Chicago, Illinois, secretary; the Rev. Mark Bartels, Madison, Wisconsin; the Rev. Erwin Ekhoﬀ, New Hope, Minnesota; the Rev. David Thompson, San Antonio, Texas; Dr. Willis Anthony, St. Peter, Minnesota; Mr. Lyle Fahning, Prior Lake, Minnesota; Dr. Joshua Mears, Lakeville, Minnesota; Mr. James Minor, Danbury, Wisconsin; Rev. Alex Ring, Port St. Lucie, Florida; Mr. Timothy Roemhildt, North Mankato, Minnesota; and Mr. Tim Thiele, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. By virtue of office, the president of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., the Rev. John Moldstad, Mankato, Minnesota, serves as an ex officio member of the Board of Regents.

SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEMINARY

Next year will be the seventy-fifth anniversary of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. When our synod was organized in 1918, it was without an institution to train its pastors for twenty-eight years. The seminary was opened in 1946 with Norman A. Madson as the first dean of the seminary. Next year at our convention we will celebrate this anniversary and thank the Lord for the wonderful blessings that he has given us through this institution. In the course of the year there will be historical articles in the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* and in the *Lutheran Sentinel*. In thanks to the Lord for pouring out His blessings upon our seminary, the seminary will establish a seventy-fifth anniversary fund for the support of the seminary.

FACULTY

The following professors taught in the seminary during the 2019–20 school year: Brian Klebig, Nicholas Proksch, Allen Quist, Timothy Schmeling, Andrew Schmidt, and Gaylin Schmeling. Prof.

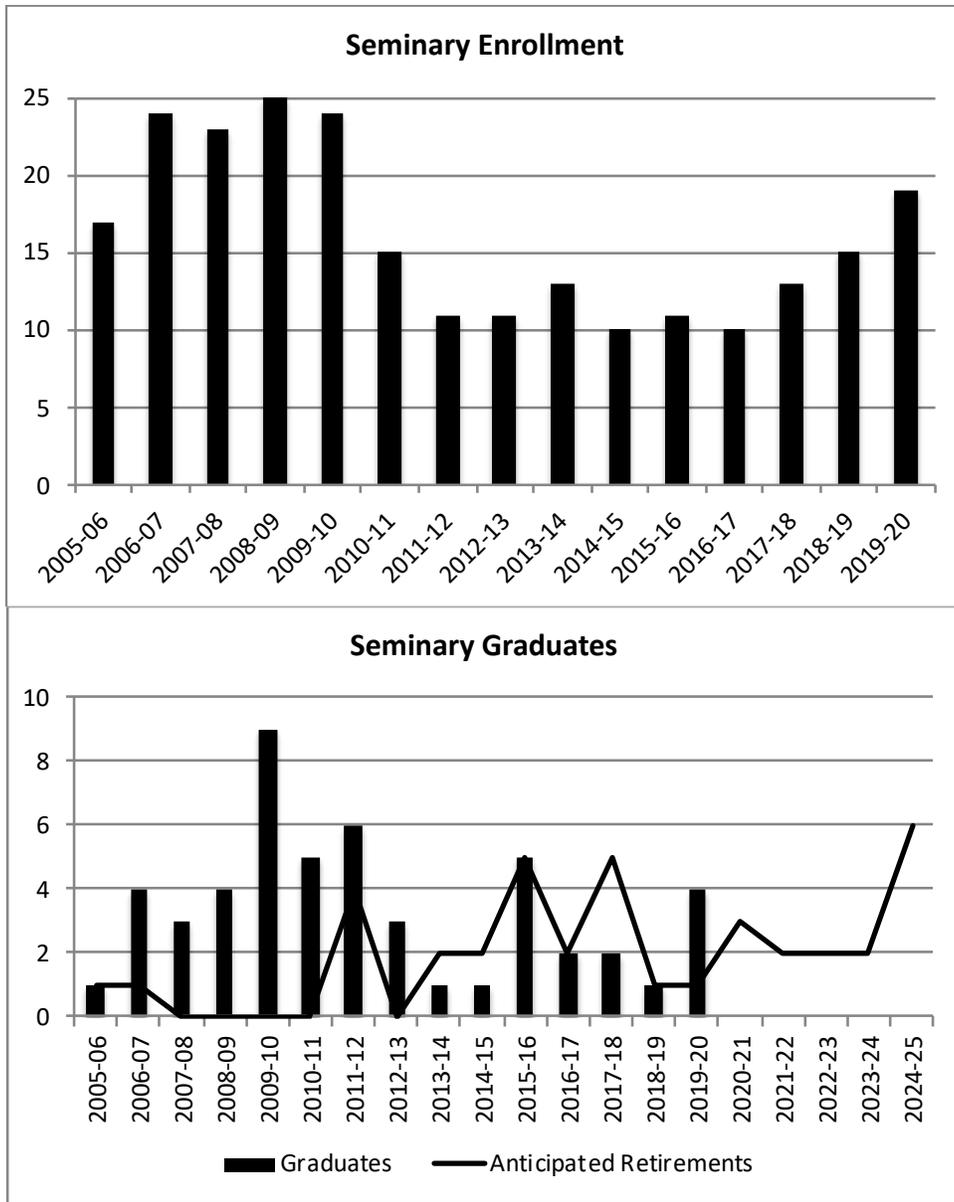
Proksch leads our New Testament studies and teaches church history, hermeneutics, and other practical courses. He is working on a doctoral degree in the history of New Testament exegesis at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. Dr. T. Schmeling led our Old Testament studies and teaches symbolics, homiletics, and other practical courses. He has completed the coursework for his master of theology degree in Old Testament studies at St. John’s University, Collegeville, Minnesota. He is now writing his thesis on the book of Ezekiel (entitled “The Glory of the Lord Whose Likeness Is Like the Appearance of a Human Being: A Study of Ezekiel’s Son of Man Anthropology”). Prof. Quist taught apologetics, Dean Schmidt taught parish administration and counseling, and Dr. Klebig taught communication. President Schmeling taught church history, homiletics, pastoral theology, and other practical courses.

ENROLLMENT

There were nineteen students enrolled at the seminary in the 2019–20 academic year. It breaks down as follows: 3 juniors, 5 middlers, 5 seniors, 4 vicars, and 2 special students. The vicars were Patrick Ernst at Faith Lutheran Church (San Antonio, Texas); Jacob Kempfert at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church (Mankato, Minnesota); Ethan Urtel at Hartland and Manchester Lutheran Church (Hartland/Manchester, Minnesota); and Karim Yaghleji at Bethany Lutheran Church (Port Orchard, Washington).

This is the history of the seminary enrollment in the past fifteen years:

	Juniors	Middlers	Seniors	Vicars	M.A. <i>or</i> Special	Total
2005-06	7	3	4	1	2	17
2006-07	10	5	3	4	2	24
2007-08	5	9	4	3	2	23
2008-09	6	4	9	4	2	25
2009-10	4	5	4	9	2	24
2010-11	0	5	5	5		15
2011-12	2	0	3	6		11
2012-13	5	2	1	3		11
2013-14	3	5	3	1	1	13
2014-15	1	2	5	1	1	10
2015-16	1	2	2	5	1	11
2016-17	5	1	2	2		10
2017-18	5	5	1	2		13
2018-19	5	5	4	1		15
2019-20	3	5	5	4	2	19



RECRUITMENT

Our synod is facing a potential shortage of pastors to fill the various vacancies, and more young men are needed for the public ministry. If there is a shortage of pastors, congregations will remain without a shepherd. The seminary is employing various procedures for recruiting but the support of our congregations and pastors is needed.

We urge pastors and laity to be recruiters for the seminary by encouraging promising young men to study for the ministry. The Lord of the harvest reminds us that “the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest that He will send out laborers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:37–38). In addition to fervent prayer let us also do what we can in the form of encouragement and financial assistance, if possible, to make it feasible for students to study for the ministry.

The gracious Savior who laid down His life for our salvation is calling for pastors to shepherd and nurture the flock purchased with His own blood. The seminary would like to encourage every young man in our synod—and not merely the young men but also older men—to consider this vital work which the Savior has placed before us. There is no greater work!

ACTIVITIES

Bjarne Wollan Teigen Reformation Lectures: The Bjarne Wollan Teigen Reformation Lectures were held October 31–November 1, 2019. This year the theme was **Lutheran Preaching Through the Centuries**. 1. Preaching in the Reformation—Dr. Paul Robinson; 2. Preaching in the Nineteenth Century—Dr. Thomas Kuster; 3. Preaching Today—Pres. Paul Wendland.

Mission and Ministry: An invitation was extended to our students to attend the annual Mission and Ministry Seminar at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin, on February 4–6, 2020. The theme of the seminar was “Share the Feast.” The seminar was extremely informative for our students.

Seminary Marriage Workshop: On February 22, 2020, Dean Andrew Schmidt conducted a marriage workshop with our faculty for the students and their wives. The workshop, entitled “Boundaries in Marriage and Parish Life,” focused on why boundaries are vital for a thriving and God-pleasing marriage. It emphasized the importance of boundaries between a marriage and Christian home with the work of the ministry in a congregation and how to maintain a healthy balance. It also emphasized maintaining a healthy balance for the pastor and his family between home life and parish life with the hope that proper boundaries will help the pastor avoid issues, such as compassion fatigue, burn-out, etc.

Seminary Wives: The seminary wives have regular monthly meetings where important issues concerning the pastor’s family, finances, and parish life are discussed. This program is led by President Gaylin and Rebecca Schmeling.

Commencement Service: The seminary commencement service was held on Wednesday, May 6, 2020, at 10:30 a.m. in Good Shepherd Chapel. President Gaylin Schmeling served as the preacher, using Ephesians 3:8 as the text for the sermon. The following graduated from the seminary with a Master of Divinity degree: Jacob Kempfert, Ethan Urtel, and Karim Yaghleji. The vicars assigned at this service were: Adam Brasich, David Choi, Roger Emmons, Samuel Johnson, and Sean Scheele.

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY

The *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* is a continuation of the *Clergy Bulletin* (1941–1960). The purpose of the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, as was the purpose of the *Clergy Bulletin*, is to provide a testimony of the theological position of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and also to promote the academic growth of her clergy roster by providing scholarly articles, rooted in the inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The subscription price is \$25.00 per year and can be obtained by writing to Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, 6 Browns Court, Mankato, MN 56001. If you would prefer to receive the *Quarterly* in PDF format, rather than a printed copy, please contact the seminary office. Past issues of the *Quarterly* are to be found on the Bethany Seminary website, www.blts.edu/lcq.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

We are grateful to the individuals supporting the seminary through the Thrivent Choice program of Thrivent Financial.

Each year there are corporations that match their employees’ contributions to the seminary through their foundations. We are thankful for this added support.

Members of the ELS ladies’ organizations have given support to the Seminary Fund, Scholarship Fund, and Student Support Fund. This has been a wonderful blessing for our students. Thank you for all your help.

The Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation has supported the seminary in a significant way. Grants from the foundation have provided support for the seminary operations and for our seminarians and their families.

Legacies received during the past fiscal year are noted in the report of the ELS Board of Regents.

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

The Scholarship Endowment Funds continue to be a blessing to the seminary students. Several scholarship funds have been set up in memory of individuals and the annual dividends are used to help students with their tuition costs. The students are most appreciative of this financial assistance as they pursue their theological education. It is our concern that no one desiring to study for the ministry be denied a theological education for lack of funds. The present Scholarship Endowment Funds are:

Rev. Theodore and Melvina Aaberg; Merle Aasen; Otto and Dorothy Abrams; Herman and Evelyn Anderson; Joey and Trisha Anderson; Keith G. Anderson; John, Ethel and Rodney Arends; Robert, Flora and Charlotte F. Becker; Edmund Bolstad; Kenneth and Audrey Bolstad; Gregory C. and Susan D. Bovid; Bruss Family; Nora Buffington; Larry and Jane Carlovsky; Arthur O. Carlsen; Glenn and Dorothy Collins; Mabel Dahlgren; Allen and Susan Daniels; Davis-Nelson; Robert and Betty Diesing; Roger and Lois Dohrmann; Stuart Dorr; John Dukleth Memorial; Keith and Claudia Eisberg; George and Dorothy Feil; Ole Martin Fjar; Howard and Jeanette (Hovland) Gulbrandson; Donald and Opal Hackbarth; Albert S. Hammer; Paul and Cordia Hasz; Hoiland Family; Lyle and Debby Hoverson; Lenwick and Glenna Hoyord; Roger and JoAnn Keske; Brian Koch; Ewald and Verda Kohlmeyer; Jens, Jerome and Laverne Kvam; Ernest W. Larsen; Albin Levorson; George O. Lillegard; Harold and Ellen Loe; Lorentz Book; Gwenn and Sigfred Lysne; Juul B. Madson Memorial Fund for Excellence in New Testament Greek; Norman A. Madson Sr.; Rev. William and Jean McMurdie; Clarence E. and June Labb Miller; Moldstad/Fick Family; Joe and Peggy Moll; Julius F. Mundschenk; Rev. Richard and Hazel Newgard; George Nygaard; Arleta M. Olson; Ordal; George and Ruth Orvick; Kenneth and Violet Peter; Pres. Wilhelm and Naomi Petersen; Emil and Martha Peterson; Timothy and Gail Peterson; Richard and Florence Rado; Chauncey and Enanda Reinertson; Roland and Lois Reinholtz; Richland Lutheran Church; Merrill and Dorothy Rope; Ronald and Gay Rose; Herbert, Linette, and Grace Sahnaw; Edna May Scherzer-Getz; Eugene and Bertha Schiller; Gaylin and Rebecca Schmeling; John and DeLores Seime; Robert and Madelyn Soule; St. Mark's Lutheran Memorial; Alhert and Clara Strand; Thomas Stueck; Calhoun and Jean Sumrall; Timothy and Nancy Thiele; Gerald and Gwen Tjernagel; Rev. Milton E. and Delphine Sonstegard Tweit Student Support; Jim and Juanita Walberg; Walker-Schneider; William and Eunice Wehrenberg; Gerhard and Lois Weseloh; Patty Jo Weseloh; Whipple; Wayne and Esther Wiechmann; James and Carol Williams.

There is also a General Scholarship Fund to which individuals and organizations donate during the year and which is also used to render assistance to students in need.

SEMINARY ENDOWMENT FUND

A Seminary Endowment Fund has been established to be used for seminary needs. We want this fund to grow over the years and therefore we encourage our people to remember it. A bequest would certainly be an appropriate way to perpetuate the work of the seminary as it carries out its task of training pastors to proclaim the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Rev. Gaylin Schmeling, president

Report to the Synod Board for Home Outreach

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

The following members comprise the board: Rev. Timothy Hartwig,* chairman; the Rev. Rodney Flohr, vice chairman and chaplain; the Rev. Ben Wiechmann, secretary, Mr. Keith Duin,* Financial Coordinator; the Rev. Aaron Hamilton, Missionary Care; Mr. Mark Perlwitz, Site Selection Coordinator; Mr. Channing Smith,* Property Management Coordinator; Mr. David Sparley, Resource Coordinator; and the Rev. Luke Ulrich, Outreach Strategy. Members marked with an asterisk also serve on the Trustees/Home Outreach Subcommittee. Rev. Larry Wentzlaff serves as the Evangelism-Missions Counselor (EMC) for the board and synod. Mr. Keith Wiederhoeft serves as an advisory member to the board.

COVID 19 RESPONSE

The pandemic caught our missions, and us all, by surprise. Services and Bible Studies were moved online. The missions and missionaries were well equipped for this transition. Online services have been promoted through Facebook with success.

COVID 19 has limited person to person evangelism. We pray that when the restrictions are lifted, the digital contacts will present an opportunity for face to face evangelism.

MLI AND LONG-RANGE PLANNING

The BHO has continued to pursue the six year plan formulated with Ministry Leadership Institute (MLI) in January, 2018. The six year, three year and one year goals were reviewed at the March meeting. God has blessed our work. Some of the initial three year goals are already realized.

EVANGELISM-MISSIONS COUNSELOR

The Evangelism Missions Counselor, the Rev. Larry Wentzlaff, continues to support our six home missions. He communicates with the missionaries regularly, providing guidance in outreach, evangelism and the development of a mission congregation and moral support.

Rev. Wentzlaff also supports and counsels the 131 ELS congregations of the synod, many of which he is assisting with strategic planning. He has also been appointed to serve on an ad hoc committee that has been tasked with the study and research of means of advising and assisting rural congregations. If your congregation is in need of assistance, please contact Rev. Wentzlaff.

BUILDING PROJECT

Divine Mercy, Weatherford, Texas is striving to build a sanctuary on the 18.5 acre lot that was purchased in September, 2108. The land is well situated along I-20 and close to major retail centers. An architect has been secured and blueprints are being drawn. Once the blueprints are finalized, they will be put out to bid.

ARABIC OUTREACH PROJECT

God has provided a candidate from our seminary with Arabic language skills. The BHO is partnering with an existing congregation to establish an Arabic Outreach Ministry. St. Timothy, Lombard, Illinois has agreed to this project. St. Timothy is helping with the expense of this project and it is hoped that she will be able to cover a greater portion of the cost as the ministry develops. The Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation has given a grant to help support this endeavor.

HOME MISSION UPDATES

Cristo Rey/Christ the King Lutheran Church, Bell Gardens, California: The Rev. Matthew Behmer serves this cross-cultural mission. In addition to serving the existing members of Christ the King, Rev. Behmer focuses on reaching out to the Spanish-speaking community of Bell Gardens. The congregation hosts outreach events and conducts neighborhood canvassing. Bilingual worship services are held on Sundays. In the future, the congregation may add an additional service in Spanish. The congregation numbers 44 baptized and 30 communicant members.

Divine Mercy Lutheran Church, Weatherford, Texas: The Rev. James Kasserer serves Divine Mercy. As stated above, the congregation is planning for a building. A 12' x 16' billboard on the land faces Interstate 20 and advertises the future home of Divine Mercy. The mission has promoted a community presence through booths at the area Easter Egg Hunt and 4th of July celebration. The mission holds a unique community outreach event. In October, pumpkins are given away and carved at a local park. The congregation numbers 45 baptized and 31 communicants.

Hope Lutheran Church, Cedar Park/Leander, Texas: The Rev. Brad Kerkow continues to serve Hope, located in the northwest part of the Austin, Texas metro area. Rev. Daniel Ruiz accepted a call to Faith, San Antonio. The two missionary team experiment concluded with his departure. Hope makes many and consistent efforts to be known in the community. The congregation numbers 136 baptized and 80 communicant members.

Hope Lutheran Church, Farmington, Minnesota: Just south of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area, Hope is served by the Rev. Dan Oberer. Hope's services are streamed and Rev. Oberer regularly produces videos for online distribution. The congregation numbers 123 baptized and 90 communicant members.

Grace Lutheran Church, Lincoln, Illinois: The Rev. Dan McQuality serves this central Illinois congregation. The BHO increased its subsidy to Grace in an effort to help Rev. McQuality dedicate more time to outreach and evangelism. Updates and repairs on the building are on going. Much of the work has been carried out by generous members. The congregation numbers 26 baptized and 17 communicant members.

Living Water Lutheran Church, San Angelo, Texas: Rev. Peter Heyn was installed as missionary in San Angelo on June 2, 2020. A building has been rented and the opening service in the new building was held on September 15, 2019. Learning from her sister in Weatherford, the mission held a pumpkin event in the park. The congregation numbers 24 baptized and 18 communicant members.

SALARY SCALE FOR 2020

In addition to the following scale, a housing and utilities allowance for home missionaries is determined using 135% of the three-bedroom fair market value within a specific county according to the most recent survey of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (Federal Register, Part III, 24 CFR Part 888). If the house is to also serve as the office for the mission, the scale may increase to include a four-bedroom fair market value using the HUD figures. Increment for years of service and education allowance is provided within the salary scale and allowance for additional pay for continued education or other factors is contained in the 5% and 10% columns. Car allowance is paid per mile for actual miles driven based on the Internal Revenue Service rate for mileage. Health insurance is provided at the \$2700 deductible level. The board approves an annual contribution of \$2700 to a Health Savings Account (HSA) of the called worker. Pension is 6% of base salary with up to an additional 2% employee contribution match. Vacation time allotted: 0-5 years: 2 Sundays plus 20 days; 6-15 years: 3 Sundays plus 25 days; 16+ years: 4 Sundays plus 30 days.

2021 Salary Schedule				
<i>Years of Service</i>	<i>Home Mission Salary</i>	<i>Increment Increase</i>	<i>*5%</i>	<i>*10%</i>
0	35,661	250	37,444	39,227
1	35,911		37,706	39,502
2	36,161		37,969	39,777
3	36,411		38,231	40,052
4	36,611		38,494	40,327
5	36,911		38,756	40,602
<hr/>				
6	37,236	325	39,097	40,959
7	37,561		39,439	41,317
8	37,866		39,780	41,674
9	38,211		40,121	42,032
10	38,536		40,462	42,389
<hr/>				
11	38,936	400	40,882	42,829
12	39,336		41,302	43,269
13	39,736		41,722	43,709
14	40,136		42,142	44,149
15	40,536		42,562	44,589
<hr/>				
16	41,011	475	43,061	45,112
17	41,486		43,560	45,634
18	41,961		44,059	46,157
19	42,436		44,557	46,679
20	42,911		45,056	47,202
<hr/>				
21	43,461	550	45,634	47,807
22	44,011		46,211	48,412
23	44,561		46,789	49,017
24	45,111		47,366	49,622
25	45,661		47,944	50,227
<hr/>				
26	46,286	625	48,600	50,914
27	46,911		49,256	51,602
28	47,536		49,912	52,289
29	48,161		50,569	52,977
30	48,786		51,225	53,664
<hr/>				
31-W	48,786		51,225	53,664

OPERATING BUDGET – 2020

Please refer to the audited financial report submitted by the synod treasurer for actual home outreach expenditures for 2019.

Anticipated Income \$460,516

Subsidies:

Arabic Ministry, Lombard	\$50,000
Christ the King, Bell Gardens	\$78,667
Divine Mercy, Hudson Oaks	\$90,667
Grace, Lincoln	\$56,431
Hope, Farmington	\$90,667
Hope, Leander	\$168,168
St. Angelo	<u>\$69,907</u>

Total Subsidies \$604,507

EMC	\$77,641
EMC Travel and Expenses	\$24,150
Vicar in Mission, Redmond	\$15,000
Moving Expense	\$5,000
Board Meeting Travel	\$10,000
Other Travel and Expenses	<u>\$37,043</u>

Total Expected Expenditures 2019 \$773,341

Anticipated Deficit -\$312,825

THANK YOU

We thank God that He has caused various individuals, congregations, and other organizations continue to contribute special gifts toward our home outreach efforts. Thanks are extended to Cross-stitch for its generous support of home outreach efforts. In 2019, the synod budgeted \$10,000 of congregational contributions for the home outreach program. The remainder of the money needed to fund the program came from special gifts, the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation (home outreach portion: \$312,000), estates, earned and accumulated interest, and home outreach reserve funds.

Please pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out labors and that they would have many opportunities to proclaim Jesus as the Savior of sinners.

The Rev. Tim Hartwig, chairman

Report to the Synod Board for World Outreach

“And [pray] for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ... that ... I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” Ephesians 6:19, 20.

Paul asked that the Ephesian Christians pray for his gospel outreach ministry. To this day, many Christian missionaries and pastors request the same prayer. The Board for World Outreach (BWO) of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod asks our members to do the same.

The BWO is that arm of the synod that oversees, assists and supports the synod’s world outreach efforts. It directly supports and assists with Gospel outreach in seven different fields in three parts of the world: South America, Asia and Europe. As these fields grow, we rejoice to see them embrace biblical Lutheran theology and to share their faith in situations that are often difficult, and perhaps even dangerous. We pray that God continues to bless these fields as we, and they, continue to make known the name of Jesus throughout the world.

BOARD ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL

The BWO consists of nine members, each member serving on one of three committees. The South America committee is responsible for ELS-supported work in Peru and Chile. The members of this committee are Pastors Matthew Behmer and Timothy Bartels, and Mr. Rodney Rivera. The Asia committee is responsible for ELS-supported work in India and Korea. The members of this committee are Pastors Bradley Kerkow and Steven Sparley, and Mr. Daniel Browning. The Europe committee is responsible for ELS-supported work in Czech Republic, Latvia and Gift of Life in Ukraine. The members of this committee are Pastors John Petersen and Timothy Buelow and Mr. Matthew Lukasek. The Rev. Thomas Heyn serves as BWO administrator. Mrs. Denise Luehmann is the financial assistant to the board.

The BWO meets in plenary session in Mankato several times a year. The board and/or committees also meet via internet multiple times per year as needed. The board continues to develop a goal-setting and long-range planning process to review our work and to plan for the future.

COMMUNICATIONS AND FUNDRAISING

To promote our synod’s world outreach efforts, we distribute two publications. *Mission News / Helping Hands* focuses on mission work in South America (Peru and Chile) and Asia (India and South Korea). *Thoughts of Faith Newsletter* covers work being done in Europe (Czech Republic, Latvia and the Gift of Life program in Ukraine.) We especially encourage the pastors of our synod to be sure these newsletters are distributed in their congregations and we thank you for your help in promoting our world outreach work. The BWO promotes world mission outreach also through articles in the *Lutheran Sentinel*. We continue to look for more ways to inform ELS members of the work being done in the various foreign fields.

Cross-stitch is a network of various ELS women’s organizations. Regional rallies are held, usually in the fall, where the women of our congregations meet for worship, fellowship and presentations to learn what their support is helping to accomplish in world and home missions. It has been especially helpful in supporting programs that care for orphans as well as programs that support education for young women, where, in some countries, their education is often neglected.

More information on these and other programs can be found at tof.org (Thoughts of Faith) and elsworldoutreach.org. You can also find updates at facebook.com/ELSWorldOutreach.

NEW RELATIONSHIPS

This past year, the BWO has also been involved as the official liaison of the ELS with pastors of the former Nyamira diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya (ELCK). These men, who are

separating from the ELCK for reasons of doctrine and practice, are currently working with Pastor David Jay Webber and others in receiving seminary instruction to help them become better grounded in confessional Lutheran theology. A visit to Kenya by Pastors John Moldstad, Joseph Abrahamson, and Thomas Heyn was planned for March but has been postponed because of the coronavirus restrictions on travel. When travel becomes possible again, the trip will be rescheduled.

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Queensland, Australia requested a mentoring relationship with the BWO. Pastors Brad Kerkow and Larry Wentzlaff visited the congregation and began the process of strategic planning. The BWO will continue to work with this congregation offering workshops and resources for long-range planning and outreach through evangelism and apologetics.

Please note that these are mentoring relationships, and neither of these groups, at the present time, are official, financially-supported mission fields under the Board for World Outreach.

THANK YOU

During the past year many donors have supported our ELS world outreach efforts. Individuals, congregations and foundations have provided much needed support. Special grants have been given by the Marvin. S. Schwan Charitable Foundation as well as the Antioch Foundation and Niles Foundation. We thank all donors for their generous gifts to assist in reaching out to our world with the precious Word of God.

May God continue to grant his blessings on our efforts to share the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world so that many may be blessed and share in the salvation won by Jesus.

*The Rev. Thomas A. Heyn,
Administrator of the Board for World Outreach*

SOUTH AMERICA COMMITTEE

Peru

Peru is geographically and culturally diverse. Large, urban cities are located in desert, coastal regions. Small villages are scattered throughout the Andes Mountains. Indigenous communities are situated along the Amazon River and its tributaries. The Sínodo Evangélico Luterano de Perú (SELP) continues to share the live-saving gospel message in these areas.

Lima & Desert, Coastal Regions

In Lima, there are eight congregations, two Lutheran elementary schools, a seminary, and the SELP's headquarters. Combined, active membership of the eight congregations in Lima is approximately 75 baptized souls. The congregations are served by bi-vocational pastors. The SELP is actively reviewing the status of each congregation and looking at ways to enhance outreach and evangelism efforts.

The Lutheran elementary schools are Martín Lutero in Reynoso and Jesús Redentor in Año Nuevo. There are 195 students enrolled at Martín Lutero and 85 students at Jesús Redentor. The two schools continue to serve as bridges that connect children to the message of their Savior. Rev. Giovanni Rivas serves as campus pastor and religion professor at both schools. He also serves as the principal at Jesús Redentor. Rev. Jaime Cortez serves as the promotor, or administrator, for both schools.

Rev. Rivas continues to hold worship services with school families on the weekends. Strides are being made to organize a congregation in connection with the Jesús Redentor school. Approximately 30 are meeting for worship services. Recently, the SELP was able to obtain and renovate a building across the street from the school to use for services. This building was previously a church facility owned by the SELP. However, it was severely damaged by an earthquake, condemned by the government, and abandoned for many years. The South America Committee (SAC) commends the SELP for taking the initiative to secure and utilize this building.

The seminary is in Santa Beatriz. Seminary professors are Segundo Gutierrez, Jaime Cortez, and Guillermo Fernandez. No students are currently enrolled. However, three vicars are under the supervision

of the seminary. The leadership of the SELP is encouraging all congregations to identify and recruit potential students. The seminary professors focus their efforts on teaching at extension campuses in Chimbote and Tarapoto. They provide opportunities for continuing education to pastors in Lima. They also provide theological classes to the teachers at the elementary schools.

Several hours north of Lima, work continues to thrive in Chimbote and Cajamarca. Chimbote has an established congregation served by Rev. Segundo Gutierrez. Approximately 40 people gather for worship services. Due to growth, the congregation recently purchased land in nearby Nuevo Chimbote and plans to build a larger worship facility. The SELP and ELS Board for World Outreach (BWO), with help from a loan from the ELS Board of Trustees, are trying to purchase additional land adjacent to the land purchased by the congregation. The congregation would like to use this land to build facilities for medical, dental, and legal consultations. It would also like to build and operate a Christian elementary school. The congregation is blessed with a doctor, dentist, nurses, lawyer, and educators who are eager to start and support this work. Their goal is to provide these services and use the school for outreach and evangelism. North of Chimbote, the SELP continues to carry out exploratory work in Cajamarca. A preaching station is served by Rev. Gutierrez. Approximately 15 people gather for worship services. There are plans to establish a more permanent location and presence. This year, the SELP held a pastors conference in Cajamarca.

Andes Mountains

In the Andes Mountains, work is led by Rev. Fidel Convercio. In his mid-seventies, he continues to serve in a retirement capacity to the best of his ability. Many of congregations and preaching stations in the Andes Mountains have diminished in size or closed as people move to Lima in search of employment. Rev. Convercio serves the four remaining congregations. Unfortunately, the SELP has been unable to find replacement pastors for the region.

Amazon Region

In the Amazon region, the work is based out of Tarapoto. In Tarapoto there is a congregation and extension seminary. Rev. Ronal Rivas serves the congregation, oversees the extension seminary, and directs the Amazon jungle mission program. Three indigenous pastors and seven indigenous evangelists serve approximately 28 Chayahuita communities. These pastors and evangelists travel to Tarapoto six times a year for seminary classes and continuing education. In between these sessions, Rev. Rivas makes trips to the communities.

In the Chayahuita community of Louis Terry there is a Lutheran elementary and high school. There are 28 students in the elementary school and 15 students in the high school. Pastor Rivas and the SELP are working with the community of Taiwan (formally called Parinari) to establish a new Christian preschool or elementary school. The ELS Board of Trustees provided a grant to help with construction and teacher salaries for the first two years of operation.

The Amazon region presents great potential for continued and new work. Pastor Rivas has started leading Bible Studies in the port city of Yurimaguas. In addition to serving their own communities, the Chayahuita pastors make evangelism trips to other communities deeper in the jungle. For example, Pastor Antonio serves preaching stations in eight additional villages. Pastor Marabi serves preaching stations in fourteen additional villages. Pastors Antonio and Marabi travel to these villages in their dugout canoes, their trips often lasting several days. They are regularly receiving invitations to new communities. The total number of souls being served in the Amazon region is approximately 755.

Administration

As there are no longer North American missionaries in the field, the SAC continues to work with the SELP to dissolve the mission corporation. Before the mission corporation can be dissolved, all properties in the name of the mission corporation must be transferred to the SELP. Given the complexity of legal procedures in Peru, this process is taking more time than anticipated. The SAC continues to work with

SELP to develop and adopt best practices for statistical and financial reporting. The SAC also regularly provides encouragement and guidance to the SELP as it manages the work in Peru.

The diverse country of Peru provides an array of opportunities for sharing the message of God's grace. Please pray that the Lord provides the church in Peru with more pastors. Please join us in giving thanks to the Lord for the blessings of expansion in Chimbote, Cajamarca, and the Amazon region. Please pray that the Lord continue to provide the SELC with his strength, wisdom, and perseverance as they continue to carry out the Great Commission.

Chile

In Chile, the message of forgiveness and eternal life through Christ is preached at three congregations in Santiago and one congregation in Linares. The three congregations in Santiago are located in La Cisterna, Puente Alto, and San Bernardo. Linares is approximately 300 kilometers south of Santiago. These four congregations comprise the Iglesia Cristiana de la Reforma Luterana Confesional de la Republica de Chile. Total synod membership is 114 baptized members. The four congregations have a combined average weekly attendance of 51.

The La Cisterna congregation is served by Pastor Mario Galvez. It has an average attendance of eighteen people. The congregation reaches out to its community by offering physical education programs and martial arts workshops. It also plans to offer English classes in the near future. The Puente Alto congregation is served by Vicar Guillermo Ruz. It has an average attendance of four. The San Bernardo congregation is served by Vicar Víctor Henríquez. It has an average attendance of four. In addition to leading their parishes, Pastor Galvez and Vicars Ruz and Henríquez each work full-time in other secular vocations. The congregation in Linares has an average attendance of 25 people. It reaches out to its community through collaboration with Kingdom Workers. Kingdom Workers volunteers operate a health and wellness program called "Holistic Health Education" in Linares and use the church facility.

Linares Vacancy

The congregation in Linares does not have a resident pastor or vicar. In 2018, it issued temporary, limited-scope calls to two men in the congregation to provide the congregation with limited pastoral services. One call was issued to Mr. Jon Gross. Mr. Gross is a graduate of Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota. The other call was issued to Mr. Ariel Arriagada. Mr. Arriagada has served as congregational president for many years. He underwent some pre-seminary training with former North American missionaries. These two men were called to officiate worship services, using sermons prepared by Pastor Mario Galvez or other ordained clergy within our fellowship. The congregation issued these calls to provide good order during the vacancy.

The 2019 synod convention urged the Board for World Outreach (BWO) to clarify the nature and limitations of the calls involved in Linares. It also urged the BWO to seek a lasting solution to the current shortage of proper pastoral care at Linares as quickly as is feasible and report their actions to the 2020 convention.

The BWO and its South America Committee (SAC) worked closely with the congregation in Linares and Chilean national church to address the vacancy situation. In July 2019, the BWO called Rev. Herb Huhnerkoch to serve as a limited-term pastor in Chile. He accepted the call and served in Linares for 90 days. He provided pastoral services, helped the Chilean national church address some specific issues, and was part of a collaborative effort to assess the vacancy situation in Linares and develop solutions.

The SAC met frequently to consider a variety of lasting solutions, including the calling of a national pastor from other Spanish-speaking fields and the calling of a full-time expatriate missionary to Linares. After carefully reviewing several options, the BWO unanimously approved the following resolution at their 2019 fall plenary session:

The BWO endorse the long-term plan developed by the Linares congregation and the Chilean National Church for Jon Gross and Ariel Arriagada to study for the pastor ministry with the intention of serving as pastors in Linares;

Be it further resolved that the BWO endorses the plan developed by the Linares congregation and the Chilean National Church in which Rev. Mario Galvez will make a monthly visit to Linares and Jon Gross and Ariel Arriagada will provide limited pastoral care, including the administration of the sacraments, in Linares under the supervision of Rev. Galvez while they are studying for the ministry;

Be it further resolved that the BWO endorses the South America Committee's plan to send Rev. Herb Huhnerkoch, and others as appropriate, to Chile for temporary appointments of 90 days in 2020 to provide support and relief to Jon and Ariel while they are studying for the ministry;

Be it further resolved that the BWO encourage Herb Huhnerkoch, Rodney Rivera, and others as appropriate to continue to collaborate with the Linares congregation on seminary training and Bible studies.

Be it further resolved that the BWO continually assess these solutions to the pastoral vacancy in Linares.

In summary, the BWO came up with a short-term vacancy solution. Rev. Huhnerkoch was sent to Chile for a period of 90 days. The Chilean national church adopted a medium-term solution. Mr. Gross and Mr. Arriagada will provide vacancy services under the supervision of Rev. Galvez in addition to a monthly visit by Rev. Galvez. Finally, a long-term solution is in place. Mr. Gross and Mr. Arriagada have committed to studying for the ministry with the goal of becoming pastors in Linares. Mr. Gross is currently enrolled at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary in the Master of Religious Arts program. When he completes his Bible language pre-requisites, he will transition into the Master of Divinity program.

Challenges

The Chilean national church faced a unique set of challenges in 2019. The country faced severe social unrest. Marches, riots, roadblocks, vandalism and looting were common. Public transportation was limited. Safety was a concern. This severely impacted the work of the church.

The Chilean national church also has had to wrestle with interpersonal conflicts. However, reconciliation has occurred. The Lord facilitated much of it through Rev. Huhnerkoch. At the time of this report, the leaders of the Chilean national church are working together in harmony. It is also actively in communication with the BWO and SAC.

Fortunately, our Lord can use challenges for the good of his church. We pray that he works through the challenges in Chile so that more people may be connected to the gospel. Please pray that the Lord guide the national pastor, vicars, and seminary students. Please join us in giving thanks for the blessings poured out upon the Kingdom in Chile.

The Rev. Matthew Behmer, South America Committee chairman

ASIA COMMITTEE

India

As the country of India continues to grow in population and develop as a nation, the need for the gospel of Christ also grows with great urgency. The Lutheran Mission of Salvation-India (LMSI) is a mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, which continues to labor faithfully to spread the gospel in India. The LMSI is primarily funded through the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation, along with growing support from many ELS donors as well. The LMSI also receives funds from the Women's Mission Societies of the ELS and Cross-stitch which have shown a special love for the gospel work in India and have contributed to many humanitarian projects that are so numerous in this country.

The LMSI consists of more than 23,000 members worshipping in over 200 congregations. Some congregations are in large cities, some are in tiny rural villages which do not even appear on Google Maps. More than 1,500 new members were received into membership during the 2019 calendar year.

The LMSI is served by fifteen national pastors, 250 Gospel Workers, and dozens of Bible Women. Most of the fifteen ordained pastors not only shepherd their own busy congregations, but they also

supervise about 20 Gospel Workers each. Gospel Workers are faithful Christian men in various stages of theological training who tend to pastoral duties for congregations of many sizes. Bible Women are faithful Christian women who help serve their congregations in various ways, for example, assisting with the operation of orphanages or going door to door to speak the Gospel and assist women (often Hindu) at home during the day.

Pastor Solomon Mamidi serves as president of the Hyderabad District, while Pastor G. J. Ananda Raju serves as president of the Rajahmundry District. Mr. Vijay Sidney, a layman with some seminary training, serves as president of the smaller Jabalpur District.

The BWO's primary focus for India is the training of national pastors and providing financial assistance for capital projects in each district which often far exceed their ability to undertake by themselves.

Each district conducts monthly workshops for Gospel Workers and Bible Women. Lessons are taught in Luther's Catechism, church liturgy, sermon writing and other practical courses. Some Gospel Workers who show potential to be trained and ordained as pastors attend monthly seminary courses. These once a month, week-long courses are conducted both in Hyderabad and Rajahmundry Districts, and, depending on the advancement of the student, will continue for five years. Currently there are eight students in each district for a total of sixteen seminary students. Please pray for this important work.

James 1:27 says, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress." The distress of orphans and widows in India is very great and common due to a lack of any government welfare. Over 300 orphans are cared for in nineteen orphanages operated by the LMSI. Pastors, Gospel Workers, Bible Women and others work hard to care for these children. Cross-stitch has supplied funding so that the orphans can receive an additional clothing outfit per year for a total of two. Considering how fast young children grow these clothes are joyously received by the children who have few worldly possessions. Care is also provided for many widows in India. Some receive housing through work in the orphanages.

Of paramount importance to LMSI is the education of children in Sunday schools, VBS programs, and Christian Day School operations. Last year over 10,000 children heard the gospel message. God be praised!

Over 320 Indian children are hearing the word of God and Luther's Catechism taught daily at three LMSI operated grade schools. Many of these students come from Hindu families and have the opportunity to hear of the one true God who has provided salvation through Christ.

Simeon Mamidi continues his studies at Asia Lutheran Seminary in Hong Kong to receive his Master of Divinity (M.Div) degree. Simeon is the son of President Solomon Mamidi, and continues to split his time between serving at the three congregations in Hyderabad and studying in Beijing.

BWO Administrator Rev. Thomas Heyn meets with the LMSI presidents and other leaders annually to review the work of the mission, discuss issues, goal setting and to make joint plans for the coming year.

The LMSI is growing and at the same time funding has decreased in recent years. This is a great challenge! Donations from ELS individuals and congregations are ever-the-more important considering the reduction in funding over the past several years. The generosity of individual and congregational donors is gratefully received then divided among the districts, schools and orphan homes on a *pro rata* basis.

Persecution against Christians is increasing in India, in part, due to the Hindu nationalist BJP political party and its leader Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

South Korea

Asia is expected to remain the world's fastest growing region through 2030 both in terms of economics and population. Our mission work in South Korea puts the ELS in a favorable and unique position to advance Confessional Lutheran teaching and preaching in South Korea, and from there, into other Asian fields of potential. China and North Korea are countries that are "ripe for the harvest" and we continue to watch for developments and opportunities in these areas.

In 2017, a change was made in the pastoral staff at Seoul Lutheran Church (SLC). After many years of faithful service to SLC as missionary and then senior pastor, Pastor Young Ha Kim retired from SLC. The senior pastor position at SLC is now held by the Rev. Sung Gyu (Sam) Choi.

Seoul Lutheran Church serves as the anchor of our South Korean outreach efforts. It is located in a leased building with one floor serving as a sanctuary, another as office space and classrooms, and a third as kitchen and fellowship hall. This style of church is common not only in South Korea, but in many Asian countries. There are currently about 265 baptized members.

SLC is also the location of Seoul Lutheran Theological Institute. SLTI was created to assist in the vital first steps of training qualified pastors and evangelists to advance the vision of our Kingdom work in South Korea and the greater Asian region. Rev. Sam Choi continues to lead these efforts as he serves as Director of SLTI.

English as a Second Language (ESL) is offered at SLC through an affiliated program named Canaan Lutheran Academy. This program, successful in teaching English to high school aged students headed toward placement in WELS high schools in the U.S., is in transition as new students and a Director are being recruited. Canaan Lutheran Academy is built on the premise that the parents of these may be drawn into a deeper relationship and membership with SLC in the process of preparing for their children to study in the USA.

Pastor Jae Woong Kim continues to shepherd Anyang Hee Mang (Hope) Lutheran Church in western metro Seoul. The work, which began here in 2017, has proved to be challenging, but we continue to pray that the Holy Spirit would bless the mission efforts of this congregation. BWO Administrator Thomas Heyn and other Asia Committee members assist Pastor J. W. Kim as we partner to develop outreach strategies and goals.

The Rev. Bradley J. Kerkow, Asia Committee chairman

EUROPE COMMITTEE

Following the dismantling of the Soviet Union in the late 1980's, Thoughts of Faith, Inc. began reaching out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and Latvia. We thank God for granting us another year of service to the people of those countries, and for all our friends who have faithfully supported our work up to the present day. In particular, we give our gracious Lord thanks and praise for the continued and generous funding provided by the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation.

Czech Republic

Through the ELS Board for World Outreach, we continue to assist in the work of St. Paul's Congregation and Martin Luther School in Pilzen, along with a preaching station in the nearby village of Tlucna.

Our congregations are ably served by the Rev. Petr Krakora who conducts weekly worship services and Bible classes. This year, Pastor Krakora conducted two weddings, in addition to several baptisms and confirmation classes for young people. Pastor Krakora has also been working to be in contact with graduates of Martin Luther School, and the idea of a general school wide reunion remains as a goal for the near future. We note that the village of Tlucna readily calls on Pastor Krakora to be present and to officiate at ceremonies with his devotions and prayers. The Europe Committee is hopeful that these occasions will continue to provide opportunities for the preaching of the gospel in that community.

Through the years, Pastor Krakora has also maintained an active ministry to individuals incarcerated in area prisons, and although that effort is very challenging, there are several men who have heard the gospel and received Christian instruction during that period of time.

We have invited Petr and his wife, Gabriella, to visit our synod convention this year. We look forward to hearing him speak about the work going on in that beautiful, but very secular and unspiritual land.

Pastor Krakora is joined in his work by Pastor Martin Vrsecky whose main responsibilities are directed to Martin Luther School where he serves as the director. Martin attended the Europe CELC conference held in Albania last summer, and there he presented a theological paper. Pastor Vrsecky also

conducts the worship service at St. Paul's church once each month and conducts the weekly chapel services at Martin Luther School. He is planning to represent the Czech Lutheran Church at the tri-annual convention of the CELC in Seoul, South Korea now postponed to the end of May in 2021.

Martin Luther School continues to thrive, enjoying a good reputation in the city of Pilzen. The school is comprised of students in grades Kindergarten through 9th grade. This past school year saw a total enrollment of 300 boys and girls. We are thankful for the opportunities we have to teach and preach the good news of our Savior to the children in weekly chapel services and religion classes.

This past year, an ambitious remodeling project has been carried out on our physical plant, and in particular, in the area of the apartments on the top floor of the church and school. This work has included the replacement of many windows, along with new paint and carpeting, and the replacement of some of the kitchen and bathroom appliances.

Both Petr and Martin keep an active interest in finding and encouraging young people in the school and church to consider full time service in gospel ministry as pastors and teachers in the years to come. They request the prayers of our ELS for their work, and especially their efforts to encourage personal outreach among the church members so that their friends and neighbors may be drawn also to the gift of eternal life through faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Latvia

The Confessional Lutheran Church of Latvia (CLCL) has its origins in the early 1990's when BLC professors Erling Teigen and Mark Harstad began conducting classes and speaking at retreats, especially among college age people in that Baltic nation. As a result of those visits, several pastors began studying the Lutheran Confessions and eventually decided to break away from the larger and more liberal national church.

Today, the CLCL consists of six congregations, served by seven pastors. Five of the clergymen are serving in bi-vocational ministries, receiving a small stipend from the BWO through general or Latvia directed donations.

Pastor Ilars Plume serves as the full-time pastor to the congregation in the town of Kekava. Pastor Uldis Fandejevs serves the church in Ozolnieki, another suburb of the large, capital city of Riga. Both of these congregations worship in very attractive church buildings erected within the past fifteen years with the generous assistance of American friends. In August, Pastor John Petersen, Europe Committee chairman, was privileged to conduct the wedding of Petris Plume and Shanna Berrospid at the Kekava church. The bridal couple met while studying at our synod's Bethany Lutheran College. Petris is a son of Pastor Ilars Plume, and Shanna is from Lima, Peru, and a member of our synod's Peruvian church.

The CLCL also has a congregation which worships in the Old Town neighborhood in Riga. Served by Pastors Gundars Bakulis and Ugis Sildegs, it enjoys a steady attendance, and draws some students from the nearby university. Both pastors are bi-vocational. Pastor Bakulis is a surgeon, and Pastor Sildegs has been overseeing the Latvian Lutheran, a well-regarded online theological journal. A major project for Dr. Sildegs over the past few years has been the production of a new Latvian language hymn book, which is now nearly completed. God willing, it will serve the CLCL and probably other Latvian churches for many years to come.

The congregation in the city of Jelgava has been working for a couple years on the renovation of their old and rather decrepit building, and by God's grace, they have transformed it into a very attractive and vibrant worship space. Under the leadership of their Pastor, Ivo Sildegs, the congregation is now in a better position to reach out to their neighbors with the precious word of life. They too are very thankful for the support received from various Thoughts of Faith donors. Pastor Sildegs was a guest at last fall's ELS General Pastoral Conference in Bloomington, Minnesota. He preached and gave presentations on the CLCL at Bethany Lutheran College, Mount Olive in Mankato, and Holy Cross in Madison, Wisconsin. In addition, Pastor Sildegs also presented at the Women's Missionary Rally held at Christ the King in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

The CLCL maintains the hope of starting a new congregation in a village near Riga which currently has no churches at all. Much of the support for this project would come from the existing membership of the nearby Kekava and Ozolnieki congregations, as well as the other members of the CLCL.

The pastors and members are diligent in identifying potential candidates to serve in the pastoral ministry. At this time, two very bright and gifted young men are beginning an informal theological study with their local pastors, and we pray that the Lord will guide them to pursue seminary education and ordination in the future.

The Europe Committee of the Board for World Outreach remains optimistic about the future for our fellow congregations in Europe. It requests prayers and support for these pastors and congregants living in the changing economies and cultures of the Czech Republic and Latvia.

The Rev. John Petersen, Europe Committee chairman

Gift of Life Ukraine, The International Charitable Fund “Gift of Life”

At this writing (March 2020), considerable changes have occurred at Gift of Life due to Covid-19. However, this report is for 2019 only.

Gift of Life (GOL) had another very productive year in 2019. Client numbers at clinics and Lutheran Pro-life Centers (LPLC) have grown. The material aid (MA) program continues to thrive stateside and is appreciated by Ukrainians who benefit from it. Several very generous donations were received from individuals, as well as many smaller, but greatly appreciated donations. Additionally, sizable grants allowed for other improvements. The Lutheran faith is promoted, and the gospel message proclaimed. Presently, more employees are Lutheran members than in the past, changing critical mass. Requests for mobile clinics services exceed availability.

Medical Clinic on Wheels (MCOW): During the 2019 traveling season, MCOW visited fifteen different destinations (ten new). The medical bus had 5,217 visits (staff of three) and the dental bus had 5,367 visits (staff of four). GoL has good cooperation with local governmental officials so that planning of work in and around Ternopil is effective, that being, reaching more needy children. At the destinations, MCOW served children who suffer from lack of medical and dental care. Deaconess Lyudmyla Voychunas continues to travel with the buses proclaiming the “good news of salvation.” Three new employees joined MCOW this year: Dentists Oxana and Yaroslav and nurse Mariya—professionals with big hearts—the caliber of people GoL employs. This year, as usual, the clinic buses were maintained: repair of the hydraulic system with considerable upgrades inside and out. GoL skilled drivers/mechanics keep the buses in excellent condition.

Lutheran Pro-Life Centers (LPLC): 14,951 people attended pro-life presentations conducted by GoL counselors at institutions throughout Ukraine. GoL is blessed to have the opportunity to provide presentations in government and private facilities. 3,156 attended programs conducted in the life centers. 1,491 individual counseling sessions were given, and another 1,424 attended group counseling. Not every woman in crisis saves her baby; however, hundreds of lives were saved by the grace of God. 149 babies and 1 adult were baptized, some in the Lutheran faith. Bible studies were provided for the Life Centers by Ukrainian Lutheran Church (ULC) pastors. There were 200 new clients attending studies. Christian witness is provided at all counseling sessions, presentations and programs. Two new counselors (ULC members) started to work at GOL. Counselor Inna started to work at the Kyiv Left bank life center. She will replace counselor Svitlana (age 70) who will retire in 2020. Counselor Larysa became a wonderful replacement for counselor Oleksandra in the Ternopil Life Center.

Material Aid (MA) is dispensed at MCOW, LPLC’s, orphanages and children’s shelters accompanied by Christian witness. Trinity Lutheran (Saline, Michigan), Richland (Thornton, Iowa), Quilters for Christ (Hustisford, WI) and numerous individuals continued shipping needed aid. A drive for sample size toothpaste distributed at the dental clinic was well received. Toothpaste is still arriving. Our thanks and appreciation to all.

Financial Information and Conclusion: A generous grant from the Antioch Foundation for Lutheran Pro-Life Centers allowed for the following: Remodeling of the Ternopil Life Center (a big accomplishment). Centers received new, compact projectors for use during presentations. Counselors

attended an International pro-life seminar organized by Life International in Croatia (they presented GoL programs at the seminar and grew as professionals). Counselors actively used new booklets and brochures to bring God's word to people. Niles Foundation also provided a grant to GoL allowing for the purchase of a new laptop (medical bus), a more user friendly computer reception program for MCOW and a smart phone (for taking pictures and receptionist's work), machine for sealing dental tools, set of dental scaler tips, dental hand pieces, and replacement of a fuel pump. Multi-Language Publications (MLP) provided funds to translate and print two new booklets from their Bible series. A \$1,500.00 donation was received from Humanitarian Aid Response Team (HART), an NGO host. Ukrainians support GoL when they have opportunity. Nearly \$2,400.00 was donated in Ukraine at MCOW, LPLC, and from other hosts and individuals. GoL has created an official Facebook page which is updated regularly with information about the LCs and MCOW. The web site is currently being reconstructed. Ukraine continues to endure trying times. Eastern Ukraine still suffers from the effects of the ongoing war. NGO's/religious organizations no longer receive reductions for utilities due to Ukraine's dependence upon other countries for fuel. GoL maintains a wage rate above most other entities here without being excessive. Young, well-educated men and women have continued to leave Ukraine to live and work abroad. GoL saved hundreds of children from death by abortion and improved the lives of thousands of others through its services, all the while proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We thank the many who contribute financially and pray for this extraordinary mission, of which we are privileged to be a part. A special thank you, from all of us at GoL to the administration of Thoughts of Faith and the Board for World Outreach for their leadership and support.

Nicholas and Kerry Laper and Roman Khodzinsky, administrators

Report to the Synod Board for Lutheran Schools

BOARD MEMBERS

The board serves to support the schools of the ELS using the insights of pastors, professional educators, and laymen from the various geographical areas of the synod. Currently the board is served by the following members: Mr. Steven Beilke, the Rev. Chris Dale (chair), the Rev. Michael Dale (secretary), Mr. Todd Knutson, the Rev. Paul Lange, Mr. Ken Meyer (Treasurer), Mr. Nathan Rovey, the Rev. Kurtis Freimuth and Mr. Shu-Ting Lai (Secretary of Schools). In addition, Dr. Polly Brown and Dr. Carrie Pfeifer (Bethany Lutheran College Education Department) serve the board as advisory members.

MEETINGS

The board holds two in-person meetings per year. For many years it has been the custom to hold the fall meeting in Mankato and the winter meeting at an ELS school, traveling to a different region of the United States each year. In keeping with this practice, the board met October 7–8, 2019 in Mankato, Minnesota and on January 27–28, 2020, at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church and School, Okauchee, Wisconsin. The 2020 winter meeting will be held at Peace Lutheran School in Kissimmee, Florida.

SECRETARY OF SCHOOLS

The Secretary of Schools, Shu-Ting Lai, oversees the work of ELS schools by providing call lists, managing the continuing education grant program, and providing guidance and support. He reports to the Board for Lutheran Schools at the semi-annual meetings. In the previous year, the Secretary of Schools performed school visits at Mt. Olive (Mankato, Minnesota), Holy Trinity (Okauchee, Wisconsin), Trinity (West Bend, Wisconsin), Lakewood (Lakewood, Washington), Columbia (The Dalles, Oregon), and Parkland (Tacoma, Washington).

LITTLE LAMBS CHILDCARE CENTER

Faith Lutheran Church (Carthage, Missouri) began operating a childcare center/preschool in the winter of 2020. The board assisted by providing grant money for start-up costs.

WORK OF THE BOARD IN THE PAST YEAR

Grant Disbursement

Lutheran School Subsidy Grants were dispersed to Peace (North Mankato, Minnesota), Mt. Olive (Mankato, Minnesota), Scarville (Scarville, Iowa), Faith (Carthage, Missouri), and the ELS Homeschool Association.

National ELS Teacher Conference 2021

The board is busy planning for the 2021 ELS National Teacher Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on July 14–18, 2021. Grants are being requested through the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation and the Antioch Foundation with the goal of keeping the congregational cost at \$300 per teacher. ELS schools are encouraged to make every effort to have their teachers and administrators attend this important conference.

School Visitation

The board encourages every ELS school to request a visit from a neighboring ELS principal, the Secretary of Schools, or a member of the education faculty at Bethany Lutheran College. Grant disbursements to schools are contingent on the requesting school hosting a school visitation. Principals are encouraged to contact the Secretary of Schools for help in setting up a school visitation.

Principal Meeting

There will be a meeting for all ELS principals on Monday, June 22, during the synod convention lunch recess. All principals are encouraged to meet Rev. Chris Dale at the convention stage as soon as the convention breaks for lunch.

Incentive Program for Bethany Lutheran College Education Students

Recognizing the need for BLC-trained teachers in our ELS schools, the board resolved to set aside \$15,000 as seed money for a new program to incentivize BLC Education students to teach in our ELS schools. The program will cover the cost of the student's religion text books while taking courses in the BLC ELS Teacher Certification Program as well as offer a \$1000 bonus after completion of each of the first four years teaching in an ELS school. This program will need continued support if it is to be long-lasting. The board hopes that individual members of the ELS will support the fund with donations. An ELS certified teacher from the BLC 2019 graduating class received the first of these grants after completing her first year of teaching.

Continuing Education Grants for Teachers

The board is pleased to offer grants in the amount of \$600/year to teachers serving ELS schools. These grants are intended to help defray costs associated with continuing education. Teachers need only submit receipts for continuing education to the board through the Secretary of Schools at shutingl@hotmail.com.

Philosophy of Education

The schools of the ELS aspire to assist families in bringing up their children "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). To this end we serve to produce students with clear understandings of both their citizenship in heaven and on earth. We want our students to know Jesus as their Savior from sin and death, and as the lens through which all of scripture is to be understood. And we want them to understand that God calls them to make use of their talents in their Christian vocation. We believe an education founded in the liberal arts is best suited to help students discover and explore their talents and how they can best be used in service to God and neighbor.

SUGGESTED ELS TEACHER SALARY SCALE

The board offers the following compensation package guidelines for consideration by ELS churches and schools.

Years of Service	ELS Bachelor of Science Salary 2019/20	Increment Increase	ELS Bachelor of Science Salary proposal 2020/21		ELS Masters Degree Salaries for 2019/20	Increment Increase	ELS Masters Degree Salaries for 2020/21	
			1%	2%			1%	2%
0	\$31,076		\$31,387	\$32,014	\$33,191		\$33,523	\$34,193
1	\$31,326	\$250	\$31,637	\$32,264	\$33,441	\$250	\$33,773	\$34,443
2	\$31,576		\$31,887	\$32,514	\$33,691		\$34,023	\$34,693
3	\$31,826		\$32,137	\$32,764	\$33,941		\$34,273	\$34,943
4	\$32,076		\$32,387	\$33,014	\$34,191		\$34,523	\$35,193
5	\$32,326		\$32,637	\$33,264	\$34,441		\$34,773	\$35,443
6	\$32,651	\$325	\$32,962	\$33,589	\$34,766	\$325	\$35,098	\$35,768
7	\$32,976		\$33,287	\$33,914	\$35,091		\$35,423	\$36,093
8	\$33,301		\$33,612	\$34,239	\$35,416		\$35,748	\$36,418
9	\$33,626		\$33,937	\$34,564	\$35,741		\$36,073	\$36,743
10	\$33,951		\$34,262	\$34,889	\$36,066		\$36,398	\$37,068
11	\$34,351	\$400	\$34,662	\$35,289	\$36,466	\$400	\$36,798	\$37,468
12	\$34,751		\$35,062	\$35,689	\$36,866		\$37,198	\$37,868
13	\$35,151		\$35,462	\$36,089	\$37,266		\$37,598	\$38,268
14	\$35,551		\$35,862	\$36,489	\$37,666		\$37,998	\$38,668
15	\$35,951		\$36,262	\$36,889	\$38,066		\$38,398	\$39,068
16	\$36,426	\$475	\$36,737	\$37,364	\$38,541	\$475	\$38,873	\$39,543
17	\$36,901		\$37,212	\$37,839	\$39,016		\$39,348	\$40,018
18	\$37,376		\$37,687	\$38,314	\$39,491		\$39,823	\$40,493
19	\$37,851		\$38,162	\$38,789	\$39,966		\$40,298	\$40,968
20	\$38,326		\$38,637	\$39,264	\$40,441		\$40,773	\$41,443
21	\$38,876	\$550	\$39,187	\$39,814	\$40,991	\$550	\$41,323	\$41,993
22	\$39,426		\$39,737	\$40,364	\$41,541		\$41,873	\$42,543
23	\$39,976		\$40,287	\$40,914	\$42,091		\$42,423	\$43,093
24	\$40,526		\$40,837	\$41,464	\$42,641		\$42,973	\$43,643
25	\$41,076		\$41,387	\$42,014	\$43,191		\$43,523	\$44,193
26	\$41,701	\$625	\$42,012	\$42,639	\$43,816	\$625	\$44,148	\$44,818
27	\$42,326		\$42,637	\$43,264	\$44,441		\$44,773	\$45,443
28	\$42,951		\$43,262	\$43,889	\$45,066		\$45,398	\$46,068
29	\$43,576		\$43,887	\$44,514	\$45,691		\$46,023	\$46,693
30	\$44,201		\$44,512	\$45,139	\$46,316		\$46,648	\$47,318

In determining the appropriate salary and benefits package for full-time ELS teachers, BfLS strongly encourages congregational representatives to account for the following considerations.

1. Duties as principal are to be remunerated at 15% of the base salary. Other duties assigned to a teacher, but not those expected because of regular congregational membership, should also be adequately remunerated.
2. Congregations are encouraged to provide financial support for the teachers' continuing education. Teachers should be encouraged to take a minimum of three credit hours of graduate or undergraduate work during each three-year period. Congregations may also wish to establish a salary incentive program to encourage teachers to take additional coursework by providing incremental increases based upon additional credits.
3. The congregation should expect that called teachers attend the ELS National Teacher Conference and local ELS/WELS teachers' conferences and should provide ways and means to do so.

4. The congregation should encourage all male teachers to attend the synod convention and become permanent advisory members to the synod. Congregations should assist these teachers by providing ways and means to attend.
5. A sick leave of five days shall be granted each year. These shall be accumulated to a maximum of fifty days. For any sick leave beyond the accumulated amount, the substitute teaching may be deducted from the salary of the teacher who is absent.
6. Personal leaves are not to exceed five days each year. The cost of substitute teaching is to be deducted from the teacher's salary for all days over five days. In the event of a death or serious illness in the immediate family, an additional leave shall be considered. The extent of this leave is to be determined by the congregational Board for Christian Education based upon distance and circumstances.
7. In addition, we recommend that teachers receive: a) housing based upon family need or a housing allowance equivalent to 135% of the HUD rental value of a three-bedroom home in their community; b) family health insurance (WELS VEBA Plan 3 or equivalent option) at the \$2700 deductible level with a congregational contribution of \$2700 to a Health Savings Account (HSA) for the teacher; and c) a pension set at 6% of the teacher's salary.

The Rev. Christopher Dale, chairman

Report to the Synod Board for Youth Outreach

Members of the board: the Rev. Bernt Tweit (Chairman), the Rev. Jeff Hendrix (Secretary), the Rev. Kyle Madson, the Rev. Tony Pittenger, Mr. Pete Bloedel, Mr. Ben Faugstad, and Mr. Chris Hoffman.

LUTHERAN YOUTH ASSOCIATION (LYA)

The 2019 LYA Convention was held at Bethany Lutheran College, July 25-28. The theme was “*ΕΝΟΣ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΧΡΕΙΑ*: One Thing Needful” (taken from the lesson of Mary and Martha – Luke 10:38-42). The Rev. Kyle Madson, Mr. Pete Bloedel, and Mr. Ben Faugstad served as directors. The convention included a keynote by the Rev. Jerry Gernander, sectionals, BLC mock classes, and a choice of excursions for either a zip-line adventure or a canoe/kayak trip.

The 2020 LYA Convention, which was to be held near Zion National Park in Utah, July 23-26 at Dixie State University, St. George, Utah has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will, God-willing, be at the same location July 22-25, 2021. The theme will remain the same: “Out of Zion” (taken from U. V. Koren’s hymn “Ye Lands to the Lord”). The Rev. Tony Pittenger and Mr. Chris Hoffman will serve as co-directors, with help from nearby pastor, the Rev. Paul Webber.

The BYO has discussed the importance of catechizing families on how to train their own children and may seek to hold “Family LYA Retreats” in the future.

PUBLICATIONS & VIDEOS

The *Young Branches* portion of the *Lutheran Sentinel* magazine, edited by the Rev. Kyle Madson and the Rev. Tony Pittenger, have made use of some old articles in 2019. In early 2020, the articles have focused on “Out of Zion,” as a way to pique interest in the upcoming Youth Convention, as well as give youth leaders a study topic to use in their local Bible Studies with youth. These articles are now transitioning to explaining the meaning of what it means to be “out of Zion” in a world that is faced so directly with the results of sin.

New this year are *Young Branches Videos*, produced by the Rev. Jeff Hendrix and Stone Path Studios at BLC, available on YouTube. These videos are one way the BYO is seeking to fulfill a directive from the synod to incorporate apologetics in its work. The apologetic angle the BYO has chosen to take is one which is geared towards defending the faith and practice of the Lutheran Church to its own youth. The topic of liturgy was a natural starting point from the perspective that the question “Why do we worship the way we do?” is one of the most frequent questions youth ask their pastors. Additional videos, including one on the Means of Grace, which had been planned to be completed by the 2020 synod convention, have been postponed as well, since the videos rely on student workers from Stonepath Studios at BLC.

Additionally, a sub-committee from BYO has met with the WELS Commission on Discipleship with the goal to work together and produce videos based around the parts of the catechism. Each video costs about \$1400 to produce with student labor from BLC. As of yet, all of these videos have and are being funded by private donations, but it is hoped that the WELS Commission on Discipleship may help fund the project. Additional grants and donations are being sought by the BYO for the project.

Cling to the Cross devotion books are available as a free resource from the Bethany Bookstore for Pastors to give to their confirmands.

SUNDAY SCHOOL IN THE ELS

Recommended action for 2020 2021 synod in convention:

At its fall 2019 meeting, the BYO surveyed statistical reports from our synod on Sunday School attendance and found that over the past 20 years (1997-2017), Sunday School attendance has declined

over 51%, while Sunday Divine Service attendance has decreased only around 22% and baptisms have only decreased around 34% (see chart below).

The BYO then approved this motion: To recommend that the synod form an Ad Hoc Committee to review the viability of Sunday School within our synod and examine whether or not we can accomplish the goals of Sunday School in a different means.

	1957	1967	% Change '57-67	1977	% Change '67-77	1987	% Change '77-87	1997	% Change '87-97	2007	% Change '97-07	2017	% Change '07-17	% Change '97-17 (20-year period)
Baptized Membership	13,601	15,682	+15.30%	19,634	25.20%	21,454	+9.27%	22,098	+3.00%	19,945	-9.74%	16,829	-15.62%	-23.84%
Average Sunday Church Attendance	NA	6,953	NA	9,099	30.86%	9,220	+1.33%	9,754	+5.79%	8,901	-8.75%	7,567	-14.99%	-22.42%
Children Baptized	560	385	-31.25%	430	+11.69%	453	+5.35%	401	-11.48%	375	-6.48%	264	-29.60%	-34.16%
Sunday School Enrollment	3,404	3,959	+16.30%	3,208	-18.97%	3,098	-3.43%	2,988	-3.55%	2,133	-28.61%	1,451	-31.97%	-51.44%
VBS	NA	2,670	NA	2,545	-4.68%	2,527	-0.71%	2,803	+10.92%	2,629	-6.21%	2,149	-18.26%	-23.33%
Summer Camp	NA	319	NA	251	-21.32%	200	-20.32%	302	+51.00%	335	+10.93%	373	+11.34%	+23.51%

LYA to BLC Grant & Hugh Brooks Youth Mission Fund

An LYA to BLC grant is available for students who attend three LYA conventions and then go to Bethany Lutheran College. \$10,000 will be distributed yearly among new BLC students who meet the criteria (incoming students who have attended three out of four LYA conventions and return for the spring semester). The scholarships will apply to spring semester costs. Extra income from when convention is held at Bethany Lutheran College is to be used to fund the grant.

A reminder to members of the synod of the Hugh Brooks Youth Mission Fund which has been created to financially help ELS teens and college students participate in mission work within our fellowship. The BYO should be contacted for inquiries and applications.

Summer Camps & Area Youth Retreat Plans

- *Camp 4 Star, Washington*; held at Millersylvania State Park, Retreat Center, Olympia, Washington – Children served in 2019: 100. 2020 info: Theme: “Mission Possible” Dates: July 5-11 (ages 9-14). Full cost: \$250. Director: Timothy Scherschel. Camp4Star.com. News: Camp 4 Star started in 1959 to provide a week -long experience for youth in the area WELS/ELS churches. This year is our 61st serving as a place for kids to meet new friends, gain new experiences and have fun with fellow Christians. Camp 4 Star plans to make an official decision regarding summer 2020 on June 1.
- *Camp Indianhead, Minnesota*; held at Lutheran Island Camp, Henning, Minnesota – Children served in 2019: 121. 2020 info: Theme: “Taste and See.” Date(s) of camp(s): 7/12/20 - 7/17/20. Age groups of camp(s): 11 to 16 year-olds. Regular Cost (non-early bird price for campers): \$300. Directors: The Rev. Shawn Stafford, the Rev. Josh Mayer. Facebook.com/CampIndianheadMn. Camp news: Camp Indianhead has a new logo. The Norway Spruce (picea abies) and stave kirke stand in the background to remind us of our synodical roots that reach back to Norway. Both point toward heaven: the pine leads us to praise God as the Lord of creation, the church to praise God as the author of our salvation. In the foreground is an arrowhead. This is a sign of respect to the Native American Culture that inspired the original name "Camp Indianhead" in the camp's founding in 1952. Finally, in the center is the campfire. Just as the campfire is at the heart of our most beloved camp activities, so this campfire makes the Chi-Rho, a reminder that our Savior,

Jesus Christ is the very heart and soul of our camp. As of May 4, 2020 Camp Indianhead is still tentatively scheduled to continue as planned.

- *Camp Lor-Ray, Twin Lake, Michigan* – Children served in 2019: 125. 2020 info: Theme: “I AM.” Dates: June 28-30 (K-3rd grade); July 5-10 (4-6th); July 12-17 (7-9th). Full cost: \$180 for K-3; \$280 for 4-6 and 7-9. Superintendent: Vacant; Director: Mr. David Kenyon. CampLor-Ray.org. Camp Lor-Ray plans to make an official decision regarding summer 2020 on May 16.
- *Camp Lutherhaven, Washington*; held at Wildcat Lake, Washington – Children served in 2019: 60. 2020 info: Full cost: \$135. Directors: Alan Nesseth, Kris Nieland. Camp Lutherhaven plans to make an official decision regarding summer 2020 on May 5.
- *Camp Rise Wisconsin*; held at Camp Luwisimo, Wild Rose, Wisconsin – Children served in 2019: 67. 2020 info: Theme: “Keep It Weird.” Dates: July 5-10 (5th-10th grades). Director: The Rev. Nate Abrahamson. Camprise.org. COVID-19 Plan Update: Camp Rise is canceled for 2020. Plans are in the works for smaller retreats later in the year.
- *City Camp, Florida*; No information reported.

The BYO will grant up to \$250 per camp to be used as stipends for counselors (up to \$25 per counselor). Requests must be made by June 1 of each year to the BYO chairman with the secretary copied. The BYO also is willing to provide financial assistance for area retreats that include youth from at least two or more ELS congregations.

The Rev. Jeff Hendrix, secretary

Report to the Synod Board for Christian Service

The ELS Board for Christian Service currently consists of the following personnel: Mr. Denny Behr, ELS representative of the Lutheran Military Support Group; the Rev. Erich Hoeft, chairman of the board, Active Duty Ministry Coordinator and our board's current representative to the synod's Planning and Coordinating Committee; Mr. Daniel Neumann, Called Workers Assistance Program Coordinator, the Rev. James Kassera, the secretary for the board; and Mr. Paul Wold, Widows and Retired Workers Special Needs Coordinator and Retired Benefit Coordinator. The board met three times in the past year, with regular meetings in June, October, and February.

TERM LIFE INSURANCE

The synod carries term life insurance on all called workers "actively at work". "Actively at work" is defined in the policy as: working in the usual course of business; a minimum of thirty hours per week. Congregations, at their option, can include staff in their term coverage as well. Currently our congregations reimburse the premium costs of that term life insurance to the synod. We would like to thank the congregations of our synod for their continued financial support of this program.

Through age 64	\$50k of coverage
65 through 69	\$32.5k of coverage
70 and above	25k of coverage

HEALTH INSURANCE

The Board for Christian Service has the charge of assisting congregations in conjunction with health insurance benefits and ways of possibly saving premium dollars.

One option available to consider is the use of a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) in conjunction with your current health insurance coverage. By combining an HRA with a higher deductible insurance plan, you significantly lower your premiums while still providing large claim protection. The opportunity for savings comes about by paying for coverage of a high deductible insurance plan and then self-insuring the difference between that deductible and a lower deductible plan. Under an HRA the coverage for the employee remains the same at the lower deductible level. Small claims are paid through the HRA and funded with the premium savings of the higher deductible plan. The advantages of an HRA are evident especially in larger congregations where there is more than one full time called worker to be insured. The more called workers there are, the greater the opportunity for savings.

Another possible saving option is a Health Savings Account (HSA) which is an account created for individuals who are covered under high-deductible health plans (HDHPs) to save for medical expenses that HDHPs do not cover. Contributions are made into the account by the individual or the individual's employer and are limited by law to a maximum amount each year. The contributions are invested over time and can be used to pay for qualified medical expenses, which include most medical care such as dental, vision, and over-the-counter drugs.

There are a number of companies that will administer Health Reimbursement Accounts as well as Health Saving Accounts. The synod is currently using Averill Anderson, LLC, of West Bend, Wisconsin. If your congregation might be interested in looking at the potential savings of an HRA or HSA, feel free to contact Mark Anderson of Averill Anderson, LLC at (262) 338-8588.

WORLD NEEDS FUND

The balance of the World Needs Fund as of December 31, 2019 is \$18,977.98. Through the Mother's Day offering and other donations, the fund receives gifts from individuals and congregations. The World Needs Fund received donations totaling \$16,475.69 for the year 2019.

In 2019, the board approved disbursements of \$15,449.17 for various World relief and group/individual special needs requests.

The board thanks all the individuals and congregations who donate toward relief in these areas for their generosity and encourage them to continue to do so. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak we will postpone our annual Mother's Day World Needs Offering until Fall 2020. We praise our heavenly Father for the blessings He has showered on His people!

If anyone knows of any person or organization that the ELS Board for Christian Service can help, they should let the board know by filling out the board's application for assistance. The form is available online in PDF format at: <http://www.els.org>. Note that the rest of the board's guidelines for assistance can be found there as well.

The board follows these recommended limits on assistance, as published in the 2008 *Synod Report*:

\$0 – \$2,000	Individuals
\$5,000–10,000	Congregations and organizations
\$5,000–10,000	World Relief

Please note that the Board for Christian Service can adjust these amounts as need and situations arise.

PENSION PLAN/RETIREMENT BENEFITS

In order to address the future retirement needs of our synod's called workers, the synod has set up an IRS-compliant, third-party-administered 403(b) plan. Together with the WELS, the ELS participates in the Shepherd Plan Solution through the Hahn Financial Group, Inc. and Retirement Plan Consultants, LLC. In addition to encouraging called workers to plan for their retirements, the board strongly encourages the pastors and teachers of our synod to enroll in the Shepherd Plan.

In 2019 the synod matched congregational funding of pastors' and teachers' pensions up to \$300 for all pastors and full-time teachers and \$150 for part time teachers. Total support payments were \$36,600 for the year. Funding for 2020 will be the same.

WIDOWS' SUBSIDIES

In 2019, the amount of subsidy was \$340 per month. Total support payments for 2019 was \$26,880. The amount of subsidy will remain the same in 2020.

CALLED WORKER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CWAP)

The synod contracts with Christian Family Solutions, a church-related organization of the WELS, to offer internet-based or phone-based counseling services to the synod called workers and their immediate family members. While all information about clients is kept confidential, the board was informed that since its inception in 2010, a total of 104 cases were opened. Our total expenditures since its inception total \$67,700 of which \$12,950 was paid out in 2019.

This service is not meant to replace the circuit visitor in his capacity as counselor, but rather to supplement the circuit visitor. In fact, for most matters, the board still encourages the pastors of the ELS to make use of their circuit visitor in this area. At the same time, the board realizes that there may be some non-ministry, family-related issues that are better handled by a counselor than by a circuit visitor. Also, a circuit visitor may, after meeting with an individual, feel the need to refer him or her to a professional counselor. Now the circuit visitor can refer people in the certain knowledge that he is referring to counselors who are of the same Christian fellowship and who share a Christian, confessional Lutheran worldview.

The board would also like to encourage individual ELS congregations to examine the practical costs and benefits of the Member Assistance Program from WLCFS for their own use. Every congregation at some point will have a family in crisis or an individual who has gone through a traumatic event. For a relatively small cost, a church can offer professional, Christian counseling to all of its members. For more information, please search online at the WLCFS web site: <http://www.wlcfs.org>, or call WLCFS at 1-800-438-1772.

SUPPORTING OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL

The board maintains a list of active duty and/or deployed military personnel in need of spiritual care. Currently there are three names on the list. If you or someone you know is going to be on active duty or deployed in service overseas and would like to receive devotions, sermons, etc. please send an email to the Rev. E. Hoeft, at pastorehoeft@gmail.com.

The board, in partnership with Lutheran Military Support Group (LMSG), shares Christian fellowship and support to veterans and their families. To that end, the board has added a page to the synod's website els.org/resources/military. Also, board member Mr. D. Behr is serving as the liaison to LMSG, an ELS/WELS non-profit formed in 2015 to help support our active duty (including guard and reserves), our military veterans and their families. The current ELS members on the LMSG board are as follows: Rev. E. Hoeft serves as an Advisor to the LMSG board of directors, Rev. T. Pittenger is the Chaplain, Mrs. S. Wentzlaff is the Social Media Director, Mrs. J. Behr a communication advisor and Mr. D. Behr is the ELS Representative. Currently the LMSG is seeking congregations and individuals to help support their cause. For more information, please visit their website for LutheranMilitary.org, find them on Facebook or contact Mr. D. Behr DennyBehr@aol.com.

MILITARY MONUMENT PROJECT

The board's established ad hoc committee finished its work on a proposal for the monument. A memorial from the Board for Christian Service was made to the 2017 synod convention asking the synod to adopt the monument proposal (see *Synod Report 2017*, pp.127-128) and the memorial was passed on the synod floor. A new ad-hoc committee was appointed by President Moldstad last year, chaired by Vice President G. Obenberger and currently includes D. Behr Rev. L. Wentzlaff and R. Pederson. This committee has developed the final monument and site designs, budgets and timelines. The location is east of Division Street and west of the Edgewood Place dormitory has been agreed upon with the BLC President G. Pfeifer and his cabinet, the BLC Board of Regents and the ELS Board of Trustees. Groundbreaking occurred this past November 11, 2019, Veterans Day. Donation level details for pavers, benches and service pillars can found at els.org.

The purpose of this monument is to honor any and all veterans who have served their fellow citizens through the God-pleasing vocation of military service in the U.S. and to enhance its value and appreciation among our membership, Bethany Lutheran College's student body and the community at large.

In addition to erecting this military monument, the ELS Museum will participate with Christ in Media Institute in developing and hosting a programmable kiosk to recognize ELS veterans and provide their information for further reflection and research.

SPECIAL NEEDS SUPPORT GROUP

Board member Rev. J. Kassera along with Rev. C. Eisenbeis have approached the board to ask for help promoting a support group for families within our synod who have special need children. The project is called Three Strands. Three Strands (threestrandsels.wordpress.com) is designed to be a devotional resource and an online gathering point for special-needs families in the ELS. The Board for Christian Service encourages pastors to familiarize their congregations with this resource.

APPROVED EXPENDITURES FOR 2020 BUDGET

Widow support	32,640
Board Expenses	1,500
Called Worker Assistance Program	18,000
Pastor Retirement Support	40,000

The Rev. Erich Hoeft, chairman

Report to the Synod Committee on Worship

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Members of the committee during the past year were Mr. John Baumann, Pastor James Braun (secretary), Prof. Mark DeGarmeaux, Pastor Peter Faugstad (chairman), and Dr. Eric Harstad.

The committee held one meeting in person on October 8, 2019.

RESOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONS

The *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (ELH) contains only select psalms in the front part of the book (pp. 174-198). These psalms are formatted to be sung with the suggested psalm tones (p. 173). Now all 150 psalms are available in this format thanks to the efforts of Pastor Rob Lawson. This file was emailed to all ELS pastors in February for use in their congregations.

The committee also sent electronic files to all ELS pastors in March when virus concerns led to the suspension of public worship. It was intended that these files might be utilized by congregation members in their homes. These included the short services for morning (Prime) and evening (Compline), the Litany, the Suffrages, and hymn texts from the ELH.

The committee encourages pastors and congregations to consider registering on the “Evangelical-Lutheran Liturgical Congregations” website: <https://www.lutheranliturgy.org/>. This website was developed as a guide to help people find confessional Lutheran congregations when they are traveling or relocating. No fellowship is expressed or implied by the congregations listed on the site. This is a useful way for Lutherans who may not know about the ELS to learn more about our synod and congregations.

ONLINE RESOURCES

The committee regularly posts worship materials on the ELS website at <https://els.org/resources/worship/>. From this page, there are links to “General Worship Resources,” “Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary Resources,” “Music for Liturgy and Hymns,” and “Report of the Committee on Evangelical Lutheran Synod Worship (2011).”

On the “General Worship Resources” page, you can find:

- *Church Year Calendar* – Historic Lectionary, Three-Year Lectionary, and Saint Days.
- *ELS Worship Essays* – A collection of essays prepared by ELS pastors and published in the theological journals of the ELS.
- *Historic Lectionary* – Materials for the ancient set of Sundays and readings in the Christian Church. A new file on this page is a Church Year calendar for 2020 produced by Pastor Jeff Hendrix.
- *Service Planner* – A link to a service planning program maintained by Pastor Jesse Jacobsen.
- *Comparison of Liturgical Services* – Prepared by Pastor Craig Ferkenstad, this chart with historical notes compares Lutheran liturgies from 1525, 1537, 1685, 1802, 1889, 1913, and 1996.
- Other links, documents, and audio material.

On the “Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary Resources” page, you can find:

- *ELH Handbook* – Author, melody, and historical information for the hymns of the ELH.
- *ELH Rite 1* – A reformatted version of the Rite 1 liturgy from the ELH, intended to be printed in booklet format (8 1/2 x 11 or larger) and reused week after week.
- *ELH Liturgy Files* – Picture files for each part of the liturgy that can be used in a service folder. The liturgy files are available in four-part harmony or melody only.
- *ELH Hymn Selection Plans* – Charts and handouts to help with hymn selection for worship.
- Other resources and background information for the ELH.

HERITAGE OF HYMNS

During last year's convention, we enjoyed a Heritage of Hymns event in the Bethany Lutheran College chapel. We celebrated the 150th anniversary of M. B. Landstad's hymnbook, which many of the founders of the Norwegian Synod brought with them from Norway.

Another Heritage of Hymns event was planned for this year's convention to commemorate Johann Walther's hymnbook of 1525 and the Babst hymnbook of 1545 (the last hymnbook approved by Martin Luther before his death). We hope to plan another such event for the 2021 convention.

WORSHIP ACCOMPANIMENT

It is ideal if congregations have capable musicians who can provide accompaniment for worship services. Where accompanists are in short supply, we encourage congregations to consider ways to promote musical training among their members. One way is for congregations to offer to cover some or all of the cost of piano or organ lessons for younger members of the congregation.

When no accompanist can be found, we recommend the use of the "Substitute Organist Service" (S.O.S.) from Church Music Solutions. S.O.S. utilizes an online interface where orders of service, hymns, preludes, offertories, and postludes can be compiled. The complete service is delivered to an iPad or other tablet, which plays the music through a speaker system or compatible organ.

The cost for S.O.S. varies by the size of the congregation. The current "hard" rates are \$45 per service for more than twelve services a year and \$65 per service for fewer than twelve services a year. But S.O.S. is willing to work with any congregation that needs to have a reduced rate in order to utilize this service (one of our congregations is given a significant reduction in price). For more information, go to <http://churchmusicsolutions.com/>.

If you would like to hear from those ELS pastors who use the service, please contact Pastor James Braun, who also has experience using S.O.S.

FUTURE PROJECTS

The committee is working on developing an ELH e-book or app that could be accessed on a desktop, laptop, or smartphone. We hope it will be ready in the next year or two. We are also working on a list of suggested resources for church choirs.

*Pastor Peter Faugstad, chairman
Pastor James Braun, secretary*

Report to the Synod Laymen's Delegates Equalization Fund Committee

The purpose of the Laymen's Delegates Equalization Fund is to help defray the transportation costs of the laymen delegates. Each congregation needs to carry out its responsibility by responding with a check to the fund, after being invoiced, so that the committee may provide the best possible service to the laymen delegates.

Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements – 2020 Convention

Cash Balance on Hand 4/1/2018		2,619.63
Receipts 4/1/2018 through 3/31/2019:		
Assessments Received	\$23,141.00	
Interest Income	<u>\$ 1.77</u>	
Total Receipts		<u>\$23,142.77</u>
Total Cash Available		\$25,762.40
Disbursements 4/1/2018 through 3/31/2019:		
Air Fares and Mileage	\$ 18,851.86	
Printing, Postage, checks, etc.	<u>\$ 77.70</u>	
Total Disbursements		<u>\$ 18,929.56</u>
Cash Balance on Hand 4/1/2019		<u>\$ 6,832.84</u>

1. Delegates that register at the convention and turn in airfare expenses and/or trip mileage are reimbursed for those expenses. (If flying please turn in airfare expenses and not round trip mileage.)
2. Delegates are encouraged to ride together, whenever possible to reduce the travel costs.
3. Mileage payments are made at the rate of \$.25 per mile for **one** round trip to any layman delegate who drives his own car or \$.40 per mile if accompanied by a second delegate or a pastor. Bus fares and shuttle services are also acceptable. Car rental costs are not reimbursed but mileage to or from the airport are reimbursable. Mileage from the point of departure are reimbursed at the lesser of the mileage rate or the cost of an airline ticket, up to a maximum of \$600.00 per delegate, as determined by the Equalization Committee.
4. The Chairman is to receive \$.25 per mile or actual expenses; whichever was less, out of the fund to cover his costs of attending the convention. (Note: If chairman was a delegate he is reimbursed according to rules for delegates.)

Mr. Keith Wiederhoeft, treasurer

Report to the Synod

Planning and Coordinating Committee

MEMBERSHIP

The Planning and Coordinating Committee consists of the three officers of the synod, the chairmen of the Board for Christian Service, the Doctrine Committee, the Board for Education, the Board for Home Outreach, the Board of Regents, the Board for World Outreach, the Committee on Worship, the Board for Youth Outreach, and three (3) laymen elected by the synod at its convention. The president and the secretary of the synod serve as the chairman and secretary of the committee. The treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod serves as an advisor.

MEETING

Since the last convention, the committee met on February 18, 2020.

BUDGET

In 2019 congregation contributions to the synod’s budget exceeded the goal of \$780,000 by \$40,000. The 2019 budget included a challenge that contributions in excess of \$740,000 be allocated to Bethany Lutheran College for the purpose of calling an additional professor in the religious studies department and/or helping to pay for the cost of adjunct professors in the religious studies department (*Synod Report*, 2018, page 154). We thank the Lord for opening the hearts of His people for the work of His kingdom on earth.

Last year the synod adopted a unified budget for 2020 of \$3,057,915 recognizing that funding for the synod’s work comes from several sources: congregation contributions, the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation, Mission Advancement Project, Helping Hands, Cross-stitch, endowments, individuals, and other sources. The congregation contribution portion of the 2020 budget is \$790,000 with congregation contribution in excess of \$760,000 being allocated to the Board for Lutheran Schools (*Synod Report*, 2019, page 126).

A unified 2021 budget of \$2,898,175 was proposed by the committee. This budget anticipated increased congregation contributions of \$820,000. Once again, this proposed budget included a challenge to the synod members, in that all contributions above \$800,000 would be allocated to Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary which will observe its 75th anniversary in 2021. The proposed budget also reflected the action of the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation transferring the synod’s 2020 request for Bethany Lutheran College away from the synod and directly to the college (see the report of the Board of Trustees: Program Funds). It is with such an understanding that the Planning and Coordinating Committee prepared to recommend a 2021 expenditure budget along with sources of anticipated income.

The cancellation of the 2020 convention means that the synod will not be able to act on the proposed budget. In order to have an operating budget for 2021 that is in conformity with previous synodical action, the synod’s Board of Trustees passed the following, “The adopted 2020 budget of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod [will] serve as the budget for the calendar year 2021 or until the convention adopts a different budget.” The committee presents the following budget information.

Anticipated Income:	2019	2020 & 2021	2021 proposed
Congregations - Budget	780,000	790,000	820,000
Congregations - Non Budget	15,360	15,000	10,400
Individual gifts	\$161,720	\$155,825	\$207,500
Organization Giving	40,360	35,000	37,575
Schwan Foundation	440,000	440,000	340,000
Missions Advancement Project	371,750	380,000	363,700
Endowment Funding	389,095	438,373	395,847

Registration/Fees	50,000	50,000	50,000
Subscriptions	25,000	30,000	30,000
Helping Hands/Faith Mission Society	36,000	18,000	16,200
Cross-stitch	25,000	10,000	10,000
Investments	74,500	61,765	35,500
Publication Sales	14,750	9,750	9,750
Salary Reimbursement	25,000	26,000	26,000
Reserves	627,273	576,851	521,552
Misc.	42,333	21,351	24,151
Total anticipated income	\$3,118,141	\$3,057,915	\$2,898,175

Anticipated Expenditures:	2019	2020 & 2021	2021
Bethany Lutheran College	\$265,000	\$225,000	\$50,000
Bethany Lutheran Seminary	31,500	31,500	31,500
Board for Home Outreach	8719,925	681,694	720,358
Board for World Outreach	1,147,026	1,157,550	1,095,190
Board for Youth Outreach	79,700	79,700	79,700
Board for Education	99,600	74,600	69,250
Communications/Lutheran Sentinel	39,691	40,475	60,475
Christian Service	47,200	52,140	52,140
Synod Fund	688,499	715,256	739,562
Total anticipated expenditures	\$3,118,141	\$3,057,915	\$2,898,175

PLANNING

At last year's convention, the committee reported its plans to bring a strategic plan to the 2020 convention with detailed objectives, assignments and completion dates. The planning portion of this year's meeting again was led by the synod's Evangelism–Missions Counselor, the Rev. Larry Wentzlaff. The committee here presents a 2020–2025 strategic plan for adoption at the next convention.

Tell of Jesus and His love.

“Go home to your people, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how He had mercy on you.”

(Mark 5:19)

1. Every Congregation, in Christian love, enhance their focus on reaching the lost.
2. Equip the next generation through Christ-centered education.
3. Develop and disseminate evangelism resources for home and world outreach.
- 4 Establish and support synod missions at home and abroad.
5. Endeavor to increase the efficiency and productivity by our synod's boards.

The detail of the objectives and goals follows:

Tell of Jesus and His Love.		
“Go home to your people, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how He had mercy on you.” (Mark 5:19)		
GOALS	OBJECTIVES	COMPLETION

1. Every Congregation, in Christian love, enhance their focus on reaching the lost.		
a. Every congregation and pastor pursuing excellence in preaching and teaching, applying Law and Gospel appropriate to each text. Circuit Visitors*	Circuit Visitors define excellence in preaching and teaching and develops critique form.	2022
	Circuit Visitors promote sermon critiques throughout the synod and every congregation receives at least one visitation.	2022
b. Every congregation pursuing excellence in worship. Committee on Worship*	Worship Committee sending out periodically “Excellence in Worship” notes.	2022
	Worship Committee encouraging excellence in worship music, including the promotion of, and possible grants for, the use of the “Substitute Organist Service” from Church Music Solutions.	2025
	Worship Committee offering workshops for ELS congregations and pastors to encourage ways to enhance the presentation of liturgical worship in a constant effort to achieve excellence in this vital part of congregational life. (Point of reference: 2011 “Report of the Committee on Evangelical Lutheran Synod Worship”).	2025
c. Every congregation praying for missions at home and abroad. President* Communication Director†	One prayer per month.	2020
d. Every congregation growing in Christian stewardship.		
i. Localized projects that circuits can adopt and support.	List ideas under “resources” on synod website.	2022
ii. Synod-wide database of laity talents and skills.	Create this via Giving Counselor’s Office.	2024

<p>iii. Clearinghouse of ideas for equipping members for kingdom service.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Giving Counselor* Board for Home Outreach* President† Communication Director^</p>	Add to webpage.	2024
<p>e. Every congregation developing a plan for outreach to the whole community.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Board for Home Outreach*</p>	Each circuit make this a focus.	2025
<p>f. Every congregation seeking service opportunities in the community.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Board for Home Outreach* Board for Christian Service†</p>	Discover the local niche (e.g. Jesus Cares Ministry, Care Facility Ministry).	2025
<p>g. Encourage congregations to make their Bible studies and devotions available online.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Communication Director* President†</p>	Some of these can be put out on our synod web site; others, locally.	2025

2. Equip the next generation through Christ-centered education.		
<p>a. Support congregations in the development of schools.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Board for Lutheran Schools* Board of Trustees† Board for Home Outreach†</p>	Target certain congregations for development of a school.	2024
<p>b. Develop strategies to reach our unchurched school families.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Board for Lutheran Schools* Board for Home Outreach†</p>	Use of the Harvest Strategy (WELS).	2024
<p>c. Help instill a Christian worldview among our membership and the succeeding generations.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">President* Board for Youth Outreach* Doctrine Committee† Ad Hoc Committee on Apologetics^ Board of Regents^</p>	Implementing a “center” for college, seminary, and synod at BLC campus. Enhancing the use of apologetics at our annual LYA conventions.	2023
<p>d. Position the ELS to take advantage in states that offer school choice.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Board for Lutheran Schools*</p>	Florida is a model for this concept (Step Up Program).	2025
<p>e. Work with home schooling groups.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Board for Lutheran Schools*</p>	Support an annual event; give ideas on curricular matters.	2020

3. Develop and disseminate evangelism resources for home and world outreach.		
a. Develop a strategy for effective communication from the synod and to the world. President of the Synod* Communication Director† Committee for Communication^	“Learn About Jesus” communication rejuvenated.	2021
b. Educate the members of ELS in their roles in evangelism and outreach. Board for Home Outreach*	Accept invitations to present at parishes.	2020–25
c. Produce evangelism and apologetic resources. Board for Home Outreach* Doctrine Committee† Board for World Outreach^	Look both to the Doctrine Committee and Board for Home Outreach for producing materials in their specific purviews.	2020–25
d. Produce materials to assist in making a clear confession of Christian truth in a post-Christian culture. See structure for 2 c, above	Disseminate selected materials through the BLC chaplain’s office and Religion Department.	2022

4. Establish and support synod missions at home and abroad.		
Board for Home Outreach* Board for World Outreach*	i. BHO begin six new missions/ministries in a five-year span. ii. BWO, per the guidelines, locate and establish world mission field(s) (<i>Synod Report 2019</i> , page 101 Resolution 8).	2020–25

5. Endeavor to increase the efficiency and productivity by our synod’s boards.		
a. Make use of Ministry Leadership Institute (MLI) for specific boards/entities (e.g. Board for World Outreach, Board for Home Outreach, Board for Lutheran Schools, Board for Youth Outreach).	Initiate as boards see fit and assess its effectiveness.	2020–25
b. Continually consult the guidelines of the <i>ELS Handbook</i> , respectively.	At each opening session following convention, note the guidelines.	2020–25

Key: * Primary Responsibility,
† Secondary Responsibility
^ Tertiary Responsibility

For the Monitoring and Reporting of Goals and Objectives, each board chair, committee chair, or individual that has been assigned work will report on the progress of their assigned work for the previous year at the annual Planning and Coordinating Committee meeting.

The Rev. John Moldstad, chairman
The Rev. Craig Ferkenstad, secretary

Report to the Synod Board of Trustees

MEMBERSHIP

During the past year, the Board of Trustees consisted of nine trustees: Mr. Dennis Behr, Mr. David Ewert, the Rev. Craig Ferkenstad, the Rev. Phillip Lepak, the Rev. Jonathan Madson, Mr. Paul Mielbrecht, the Rev. John A. Moldstad, the Rev. Paul Schneider, and Mr. Brian Sorenson who was appointed for one year to complete the term of Mr. Norman Hartigan who resigned from the board in November. The Rev. Glenn Obenberger serves as an advisory member to the board. The Rev. Keith Boheim represents the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation as an advisory consultant.

The president of the synod, the Rev. John A. Moldstad, and the secretary of the synod, the Rev. Craig Ferkenstad, also serve as the chairman and secretary of the Board of Trustees.

MEETINGS

The Board of Trustees has met since the last convention for regular quarterly meetings on August 6, November 12, 2019 and February 5–6, 2020. The board also conducted an electronic polling on April 2 and a video conference on April 13. The February meeting was held Texas allowing the board the opportunity to visit synod-owned property.

Members serving on the Board of Regents-Board of Trustees Subcommittee are Mr. David Ewert, the Rev. Jonathan Madson, and Mr. Paul Mielbrecht. Members serving on the Board of Trustees-Home Outreach Subcommittee are Mr. Dennis Behr, Mr. David Ewert, and the Rev. Phil Lepak. Members serving on the Board of Trustees-World Outreach Subcommittee are the Rev. Jonathan Madson and the Rev. Paul Schneider.

SYNOD CONVENTION/MEETINGS

On April 13, the Board of Trustees took the unprecedented action of cancelling the 2020 convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the 2020 annual meetings of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. and the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc. The board took such action under the ELS Articles of Incorporation which entrust “the general management and control of all the secular business and temporal affairs of said corporation” to the Board of Trustees. The board passed the following additional resolutions:

Be It Resolved, That all elected/appointed board and committee members will have one year added-on to their existing terms.

Be It Resolved, That the office of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation be elected for a three-year term at the 2021 convention.

Be It Resolved, That ratification of all membership requests be held in abeyance until the 2021 convention.

Be It Resolved, That the adopted 2020 budget of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod serve as the budget for the calendar year 2021 or until the convention adopts a different budget.

Be It Resolved, That the 2021 convention/meetings be held Sunday–Thursday, June 20–24, 2021.

STAFF

The Giving Counselor, the Rev. Daniel Basel, and the Business Administrator, Mr. Keith Wiederhoeft, serve under the direction of the board and report regularly. Mr. Keith Wiederhoeft also is appointed by the board as the treasurer of the synod. The Communication Director reports directly to the synod’s president. The Evangelism-Missions Counselor is accountable to the Board for Home Outreach and the World Outreach Administrator is accountable to the Board for World Outreach.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

As the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the board is entrusted with the “general management and control of this corporation” between meetings of the synod (ELS *Articles of Incorporation*, Article VIII) and is especially concerned about the physical properties and fiscal responsibilities of the synod.

PROPERTIES

The board serves as custodians of the synod’s property and is responsible for any financial obligations of the synod. During this past year, Redeemer Lutheran Church (Scottsdale, Arizona) repaid its loan to the synod and the title to the property has been transferred to the congregation.

In the world mission field, a four-year loan for \$100,000 at 0% interest was extended to the Board for Home Outreach for the purchase of land for the Dios Es Mi Fortaleza congregation in Chimbote, Peru.

The board is awaiting a request from the Board for Home Outreach for construction in Weatherford, Texas.

Archives and Museum

The Committee for Archives and History functions under the direction of the Board of Trustees, who elects members to the committee. The committee oversees the work of the Synod Archives, the Ottesen Museum, and the ELS Historical Society. The committee members include: the Rev. John Petersen (chairman), the Rev. Shawn Stafford (secretary), the Rev. Craig Ferkenstad, the Rev. Theodore Gullixson, and the Rev. Mike Muhlenhardt. The committee thanks Mr. Sigurd Lee, whose service to the committee ended this past year. He joined the committee in 1987, and during his thirty-two years of service, he was an integral part of the development of the ELS archives and museum. His personal knowledge of the history of the synod and college and his desire to communicate it to the members of the synod was a great asset to the committee. The committee met in September 2019 and January 2020 and regularly hears reports from ELS Archivist Theodore Gullixson and Ottesen Museum Director Rebecca DeGarmeaux.

Report from the Synod Archivist

From January through June 16, the Archivist was serving a vacancy in Lombard, Illinois. After the installation of movable shelving in November 2018, The Rev. Craig Ferkenstad and Teresa Ferkenstad worked on re-organizing the boxes of files. This project resulted in added space for both books and documents. Rev. Ferkenstad also developed a searchable finding aid index for these collections.

On May 14, 2019, the ELS Archives co-sponsored an Archives Seminar at Bethany Lutheran College. The presenters were Susan Willems (WELS Archivist), Shelly Harrison (Blue Earth County Historical Society), Prof. Jeff Jensen (Gustavus Adolphus College archives), and Prof. David Reagles (BLC history professor). Twenty people attended this seminar, from Bethany Lutheran College, the synod, the Committee for Archives and History, and ELS Historical Society. In the afternoon, the participants visited the BLC Archives, the Ottesen Museum, and the ELS Archives.

From July through December 2019, the archivists worked on the following projects: binding several years of the *Lutheran Sentinel*, *Synod Reports*, and *Oak Leaves*; re-ordering collections of Norwegian Synod and ELS *Synod Reports*; creating a collection of ELS publications; beginning a collection of materials from ELS laypeople; cataloging of individual pastors' collections; and reorganizing the archives office. In December, the Bethany Lutheran College custodians re-waxed the floor of the archives work room.

One BLC student and two BLTS students have used the ELS Archives for research. The Archivist made presentations to the General Pastoral Conference and to the students of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary on the work of the ELS Archives and the importance of keeping records.

Report from the Ottesen Museum Director

This has been a busy year for the ELS Ottesen Museum. New displays have been created to tell the story of the ELS and its history. This includes a Veterans’ display and a display on George Lillegard’s second missionary tour to China. The Museum’s Director of Programming has had the opportunity to give presentations on the Elisabeth Koren and Linka Preus diaries as well as encouraging congregations in preserving their own history. The Christmas Open House featured the history and meanings of Chrismons. In all there have been over 175 visitors in the last year.

The museum has been blessed with several significant donations in the past year. More and more members and friends of the ELS are entrusting synodically relevant artifacts to the museum. Some of the items are small, making them easy to display and store. Others are large, using precious display and storage space. There is a continued effort to make good use of the current space and also think ahead to future needs.

The museum thanks the synod for its support and prays that it is a blessing to the synod.

FINANCES

The Board of Trustees oversees the operation of the synodical finances and budget.

Congregation Funding

We are pleased to report that during this past year, our congregations submitted offerings for the work of the synod in excess of \$820,000. Congregation contribution in excess of \$740,000 were allocated to Bethany Lutheran College for the purpose of calling an additional professor in the religious studies department and/or helping to pay for the cost of adjunct professors in the religious studies department (*Synod Report*, 2018, page 154).

Paycheck Protection Program

On April 13, the synod was informed that it received approval for \$121, 200 through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act as application had been made by the treasurer of the synod.

Missions Advancement Project, Inc.

The Missions Advancement Project (M.A.P.) is an entity of the Board of Trustees of the ELS to provide financial support for the synod with its Board of Directors appointed by the Board of Trustees. Current members are the Rev Michael Muehlenhardt (chairman), Mr. David Ewert (treasurer), Mr. Marlin Goebel, the Rev. John Petersen, Mr. Ronald Younge.

For the year 2020, MAP made a funding request of \$380,000 to the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation. Approval has been received for the following:

Peru & Chile	\$ 18,620
Chile	17,380
India/LMSI	146,000
MAP - administrative	30,000
Thoughts of Faith:	
Gift of Life	118,000
Czech Republic	10,000
Latvia	15,000
Total	\$355,000

Program Funds

The synod is dependent upon the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation for maintenance of its programs, and continues to be grateful to the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation for its level of general support.

The Board of Trustees requested \$440,000 from the Foundation to supplement the 2020 budget adopted at last year’s convention. In January, the synod was informed that it will receive only \$360,000 in

supplemental funds. Legal requirements for the Schwan Foundation require “that 1/3 of the Foundation grants must go to a beneficiary or beneficiaries for whom that represent at least 10% of the organization’s public support.” In order to assist with this regulation, the Schwan Foundation “made the decision to increase the funding to Bethany by \$100,000 while decreasing the ELS by that amount.” This will have a minimal effect on the remainder of the synod’s adopted budget but, while maintaining the synod’s same level of financial commitment to the college, the college’s portion of the synod budget will appear deflated due to this action of the Schwan Foundation.

Special Project Grants

Special Project Grants are awarded by the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation for special projects. Application for such grants are made to the synod’s Board for Trustees for review and recommendation and are awarded upon approval of the Foundation.

For 2019, the following projects received approval and funding:

Training leaders for strategic planning	\$4,000	Board for Home Outreach
Amazon Paranari pre-school	\$12,000	Board for World Outreach
LMSI seminary classroom upgrades	\$5,000	Board for World Outreach

Project Funds

Beginning this past year, the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation has reduced the total amount of funds available as Special Project Grants while making allowance for Project Funds which represent new larger programs which were initiated for the first time. Application is also made to the synod’s Board for Trustees for review and recommendation with a more stringent qualification level on behalf of the Foundation.

For 2019, the synod’s Board of Trustees recommended a \$100,000 Program Fund request as a matching grant on behalf of the ELS Military Monument Committee. The request by declined by the Foundation.

For 2020, the Foundation has approved a grant to \$38,855 for the ELS Pastors/Teachers Spanish Language training in Puebla, Mexico.

Expenditures

Audited numbers were not available at the time of this report but the "actual expenditures" will be included in the Consolidated Financial Statement of the synod audit and the Supplemental information presented during the synod convention.

Wills and Estates

The synod gratefully acknowledges the receipt of proceeds from the following estates during the period March 1, 2019 - February 29, 2020:

Martin A. Robinson Estate Trust (Annual Payout)	\$29,500.00
Robert Hall	\$10,000.00
Evelyn Jensema (CGA residual)	\$ 1,580.60
Ellsworth Butt (CGA residual)	\$ 7,709.52
Paul Madson	\$95,752.34
Orla Petersen (Anniversary Offering)	\$ 8,725.77

Estates received by the college or the seminary are acknowledged in the report of the Board of Regents.

STEWARDSHIP

The Giving Counselor, under the direction of the Board of Trustees and supervision of the synod’s president, works on behalf of our synod and its churches to teach and promote Christian giving. This giving includes both current and deferred gifts for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and its affiliated missions and ministries including Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. The following is a report submitted by the ELS Giving Counselor, the Rev. Dan Basel:

Congregations have continued to host Pastor Dan Basel enabling him to speak or preach at eighteen

congregations in 2019 as well as having seminars and Bible Studies on estate planning. In addition to individual visits he also encourages Christian giving and shares material on stewardship and planned giving at pastoral conferences, mission rallies and synod convention. He also provides planned giving and stewardship materials. Many of our churches are gracious enough to display these planning materials for the benefit of their members. Up-to-date materials are always available should there be a need to replenish these resources in your church.

While the partnering of stewardship teaching and planned giving may seem unique to some, these two are intricately connected. As gospel-motivated Christian stewards, many of our people are givers and give in accord with the gifts their Lord has entrusted to them. That is why, beside teaching Biblical stewardship, the counselor provides materials that can help individuals and families plan and put into place Christ-centered wills and living trusts that can lead to significant support for gospel ministry. The ELS Foundation then oversees other giving instruments like charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts.

Our most significant gifts often are given upon our passing to the church triumphant and this is where we can be generous beyond what we were able to do during our life-times. Please remember and remind others that the kingdom of grace still needs your help.

Part of any comprehensive stewardship program is providing the Biblical foundation for stewardship as well as practical suggestions for tax-efficient gifts. Important changes to the tax code compel us to reevaluate how gifts are made and how they are designated on a regular basis. In 2019 there were some significant changes to the rules for seniors and IRA options. While the age for required minimum distributions rose to 72, those who attained the age of 70 ½ can still give from their IRA and avoid additional taxable income while removing income they have earned by still placing it into their IRA. That's right, for those 70 ½ and older who still have "earned income" they can now contribute to an IRA as well as give from their IRA with some limitations. Qualified distributions, especially if they count toward required distributions, are a dollar-for-dollar reduction in taxable income.

This shows us that education in this area of giving is truly needed and worthwhile for all our churches to consider and the giving counselor remains available to assist in this work. Get in touch with the giving counselor if you want to learn more. In addition, some of our churches are still struggling with how to "acknowledge" these types of gifts. A typical receipt is not sufficient to meet the IRS requirements. The giving counselor supplies a template for churches to use when receiving and lawfully acknowledging such gifts.

At the other end of the age spectrum are our younger and preretirement-aged donors who in many cases do not even use traditional checks for their giving. Many donors today are using various electronic options. Some have significant means and may give in significantly different ways. This is where we need to be diligent in what is called donor stewardship. It starts by teaching Biblical stewardship at all levels and through the gospel motivating those members to give generously in accord with our Lord's gifts to them. Useful tools and strategies for giving include donor advised funds, strategic bunching of offerings and/or making gifts of appreciated property including stocks and securities. As with all Christian givers, your members love to know that their gifts make a difference in support of Gospel ministry whether to our synod or our congregations. Celebrate these gifts, in appropriate ways, even as Paul celebrated the generosity of the Macedonians (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

We thank our pastors and congregational leaders for emphasizing giving to missions through their synodical offerings. Our college, seminary, Christian education, foreign missions and home missions have all been blessed through these gifts.

A vital part of our stewardship in our churches is keeping members up to date on our synodical giving. Our synod's administrator, Keith Wiederhoeft, continues to help by providing monthly emailed reports to our pastors on congregational giving. He does a great job challenging all of us to meet our agreed upon goals. In addition, our synod's *President's Newsletter* also includes financial updates and reports.

End-Of-Year Offering envelopes and synodical giving Sundays were promoted for the end of the year in 2019 and many of our pastors and their congregations participated. We thank them for their help and efforts.

Our congregations gave generously in support of missions and Christian education this past year and even surpassed our budget for the fourth year in a row. Congregations gave \$821,888.83 to exceed our \$780,000 budget. With a base budget of \$740,000, that means an additional \$81,889 for Bethany Lutheran College's religion department to help provide staffing to educate our BLC students further in the Christian faith. Praise the Lord for his people and their generosity in sharing our Lord's gifts to help!

In addition, we thank the individuals as well as organizational donors of our ELS who gave nearly \$300,000 to ELS ministries. There was a wonderful increase in offerings for world missions and the general needs of the synod this past year. In addition, donors, including organizational donors, from across the country gave over \$271,000 to Thoughts of Faith.

Perhaps the most dramatic change that has been slowly gaining in popularity is the Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs). We have also seen a growing number of gifts from Donor Advised Funds as stewards continue to look for ways to be "tax-wise" in their giving.

Gifts and pledges or other deferred gifts continue to come in for the "Proclaim the Wonders God Has Done" Anniversary Offering. All such gifts in 2020 will be designated simply for home missions in accord with the offering's purpose. There were \$41,977.47 in individual and congregational gifts to the offering this past year (mostly in January 2019), one booked estate gift came in this past year as well. This brings our running total for the end of 2019 (actual gifts given to-date), \$668,600. On top of that, deferred gifts in hand are adjusted to \$206,000. That brings our offering total to \$874,600 not including \$90,000 that was raised for home missions above the base budget for fiscal years 2015–2017. All pledges have been paid or have been adjusted according to the donor's gifts or wishes.

What can we do to help our church continue its vital mission to preach the gospel to all of creation? (Mark 16:15). We certainly need to teach a mission mind-set, and yet we also need to develop a "giving culture" among our members. It would be a worthwhile goal to have it be a rare thing for members who pass with any kind of estates who haven't designated our Lord's church in their estate plans in some way.

So please promote Christian Giving and do rejoice in the Lord when gifts are given to help your local and synodical missions and ministries thrive. With celebration in mind, we celebrate the fact that a total of \$327,220.45 in additional estate gifts were reported this year for our seminary and synod. Praise be to God!

A special thanks to all the pastors and congregations of our synod who continue to extend invitations or accepted offers to preach and talk about planned giving in their churches and with their members.

Note that gifts of lodging and meals are a great help to the giving counselor's work and are always appreciated.

Thanks to all our members and pastors for all your gifts and other encouragement to our missions and missionaries, as well as your help in support to the other ministries of your church and synod.

Supplemental information in view of the act passed in response to the effects of the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic. Other rules may apply as well. Please consult a tax professional. Special incentives have been included in the act to help charities/churches in the crisis.

1. Loans to help keep our called workers and other workers supported through the lockdown or Payroll Protection Program (PPP). If workers are maintained these loans can become grants.
2. On top of the standard deductions for your 2020 income taxes, (Standard deductions are \$12,400 - individuals and \$24,800 - couples) the bill allows each household to deduct their first \$300 to most charities straight from their income over and above standard deductions.
3. If you are a generous donor or have lower income you may have run into limits on deductions due to their being over 60% of our AGI. In 2020 you can deduct up to 100% of your AGI (adjusted gross income) when giving to qualified charities.
4. The CARES Act also provides for an enhanced deduction for qualified contributions made by C corporations. Prior to the act, a C corporation's charitable contribution deduction generally was limited to 10% of its taxable income. Under the new law, a C corporation is now entitled to deduct qualified contributions of up to 25% of its taxable income, reduced by the amount of any other charitable contributions for which a charitable deduction is allowed.

5. These enhanced gifting deductions are only in effect for gifts given in the calendar year 2020.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD FOUNDATION, INC.**

As the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation, Inc., the assets of the ELS Foundation are managed and controlled by the board (*Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation*, Article II.A). The president, vice president, secretary and treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod serve as the officers of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation. The annual meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation is held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation Investment Committee consists of four members elected to two-year terms by the Board of Trustees. During this past year, the committee has consisted of: Mr. David Ewert, , Mr. Mark Olsen, the Rev. Paul Schneider, and Mr. Jeff Younge. The committee meets concurrently with the quarterly meetings of the Board of Trustees to consider and make recommendations regarding the investment of the synod’s assets and the use of the income from those investments. In November, the trustees adopted the recommendation to move the fund management for the Foundation to the Royal Bank of Canada (Minneapolis).

The rate of return for all investments for the calendar year 2019 was 21.33%. As of April 30, 2020 the Foundation had decreased (-10.23%). For the year 2020, the distribution percentage from the endowments will be 3.5% of a three year rolling average of 2016-17-18. An accounting is found in the “Financial Statements and Supplementary information.”

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE, INC.**

The annual meeting of the Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. is held concurrently with the annual meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. At this meeting, BLC, Inc. elects the “Evangelical Lutheran Synod Board of Regents” and also the “Board of Trustees of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.”

As the Board of Trustees of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., the trustees “govern Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary with respect to the property. All other matters of trusteeship and governance are assigned to the Board of Regents” (Guidelines for the Board of Trustees of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., Article III, Preamble). The two boards attempt to conduct one face-to-face meeting each year with for the purpose of joint planning and communication. Such a meeting was held on November 12, 2019. The trustees also receive reports from the college and seminary at each meeting.

In November, the Board of Trustees approved the refinancing of the college’s loan with a reduction of the interest rate. This reduction in debt payments then allowed the college to refill the loan by adding \$5 million to the college’s loan while maintaining the same debt payment level. These funds must be used for capital purposes: field house/wellness center, revitalizing of existing facilities, and/or deferred maintenance projects. The Board of Trustees gave approval to this loan in February.

The Board of Trustees also gave unanimous approval for the college to apply for a Paycheck Protection Program loan (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act—CARES). On April 10, such a loan was approved for \$1,836,120.45.

In the past year, the baseball field has been moved to moved to Franklin Rogers Park and the turf soccer field, lights, grandstand, and parking lots have been completed. While the college continues to raise funds for a potential student activity center, and the trustees have given approval of the concept, no construction request has been made to the trustees (*Synod Report*, 2019, pages 76, 121).

The synod’s financial commitment to the college remains at the same level for this year even though the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation has dictated a different manner of providing such financial support to the college. In addition, the Board of Trustees on behalf of the synod, is assisting the college by providing an additional \$75,000 annually for a four year period (2018–2021). These funds are taken from the synod’s general reserves.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
LUTHERAN SCHOOLS OF AMERICA, INC.**

Membership in the Lutheran Schools of America (LSA), Inc. is identical to membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The sole duty of the Board of Trustees is to manage the Lutheran Schools of America Fund. The day-by-day operations managed by the Board for Lutheran Schools. This year's convention also serves as the annual meeting of the Lutheran Schools of America.

*The Rev. John Moldstad, chairman
The Rev. Craig Ferkenstad, secretary*

Report to the Synod

Synod Review Committee

The members of the Synod Review Committee are the Rev. Piet Van Kampen, chairman; the Rev. Theodore Gullixson, secretary; Mr. Karl Bloedel; the Rev. Craig Ferkenstad; and Mr. Herman Harstad. President John Moldstad attended the meetings. The committee members met four times since the last convention. The committee thanks the Lord for protecting the life of Karl Bloedel from a heart attack.

In addition to the items below, the committee also considered proposed guidelines for pastor and teacher assignment committees and the status of Thoughts of Faith, Inc. The Synod Review Committee only reviews issues that have been assigned to it by the synod convention, the Board of Trustees, or the synod president.

1. Section 121: Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter IV: Conventions:

To further clarify the status of pastors emeriti at synod convention (assigned by Pres. Moldstad):

Paragraph 2

- b) Pastors emeriti are not to be elected as lay delegates.
- b) Those who are on the ELS Clergy Roster are ordinarily not to be elected as lay delegates.
 - 1) Pastors emeriti serving as lay delegates shall receive lay delegate equalization.
 - 2) Those on the ELS Clergy Roster may not be elected to lay positions on synod boards or committees.
- c) A quorum, a majority of the voting members, shall be necessary for conducting business.
- d) The president shall have the right to vote only to break a tie.

2. Distinction between a Doctrinal Statement and a Position Statement

The following addition is given in answer to Resolution #4, *Synod Report*, 2019, page 132 (*assigned by the 2019 Synod Convention*):

Add to Sec. 250, Article I:

E. The definitions of the terms:

1. Position Statement—A statement on a topic over which there is no internal controversy, adopted by the synod, that summarizes biblical teachings to provide a clear confession to the outside world. [see Section 250: Guidelines for Adopting Doctrinal Statements, Article I, D.] Such statements may be used in colloquies and for other official actions.

2. Doctrinal Statement—A statement adopted by the synod in response to a controversy in the synod which summarizes for the congregations of the synod biblical teaching that provides a clear confession of what Scripture teaches. [see Section 250: Guidelines for Adopting Doctrinal Statements]. Such statements shall be used in colloquies and for other official actions.

The Rev. Theodore Gullixson, secretary

Memorial

Definition of “Lay Delegate”

WHEREAS, The Bylaws state, “The pastors serving member congregations who are in attendance at the convention and the properly seated delegates constitute the voting membership of the convention”

[Bylaws, Chapter IV, Paragraph 2], and,

WHEREAS, The “properly seated delegates” are those who are described in the Articles of Incorporation, Article VII, namely, “lay delegates,” and,

WHEREAS, “Lay delegates” is not elsewhere defined, therefore,

A. BE IT RESOLVED, That “lay delegate” be defined as “a voting member of a congregation of this synod who is not a called pastor of that congregation,” and,

B. BE IT RESOLVED, That the Bylaws (Section 121), Chapter IV, Paragraph 2, line b) read, “Pastors emeriti serving as lay delegates are to be included in laymen’s equalization.”

*King of Grace Lutheran Church
Golden Valley, Minnesota*