

3 February, 2021

Dear Joslyn, members of John's family, brothers and sisters in the ELS,

As I wrote in our synod's Together e-newsletter, we were shocked and saddened, as you were, at the news of John's sudden and unexpected death. Yet, our times are in God's hands. That's where John was at all times, living by faith in his Savior and dying in that same faith in his living Lord.

John was my colleague. He served as the ELS synod president for the entire time I have served as WELS president. We worked on many different issues and projects together, some of them easy and pleasant, some of them more difficult. But in all of our dealings, John was not only a fine and faithful theologian and church leader, he was also a humble Christian gentleman. I marveled at his evangelical spirit and at his pastor's heart.

I am also honored and blessed to say that John was not just a colleague but my friend. We've known each other since college days, but we've gotten to know each other well in recent years. He was someone I could confide in, speak honestly to, and trust implicitly. His sense of humor was second to none (in spite of a few occasional groans they caused at the ELS conventions). We enjoyed many happy hours together, and for that I will always be grateful.

Now, we thank God that the new life given John at his baptism and nourished throughout his life by the gospel, is fully and perfectly his. The sure hope in what he had seen only through faith is now a perfect reality that he sees with his own eyes at his Savior's side. We are thankful for all that God graciously accomplished through John's life as a husband, father, grandfather, and pastor. And we praise God that John has now heard the words of his Savior, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Yours in Christ,

WELS President Mark Schroeder