

Circuit 9 Pastors' Gathering

The ELS Circuit 9 pastors, and their wives, held a Christmas gathering on January 3 at Norseland Lutheran Church.



Congregational Contributions 2015

We are pleased to report that our ELS churches submitted offerings for our synod work this past year in the amount of \$743,000. This signals the first time since 2005 that the receipts totaled over \$740,000. The previous year (2014) showed a total of \$729,000. While we did not reach the congregational contribution portion of our synodical budget in 2015 (\$760,000), we give thanks to the Lord for moving our members to respond to the needs for the Kingdom work at large as we share the Gospel of Christ with others.

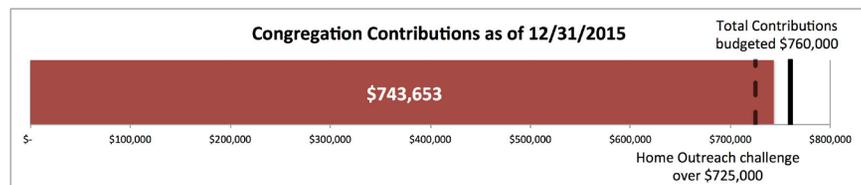
New Members

Twenty-eight new members were taken into membership on January 24 at Peace, Kissimmee, Florida. We thank God for these blessings!



Upcoming Events

- February 1-2 – Board of Regents of Bethany Lutheran College & Seminary
- February 2 – Board of Trustees
- February 3 – Synod Review Committee
- February 5-6 – Worldview Free Conference in San Antonio, Texas
- February 9 – Board for Christian Service
- February 12 – meeting of ELS and WELS with the CLC in Eau Claire, Wisconsin
- February 26 – Anniversary Offering Committee
- March 2 – Synod Review Committee
- March 14-15 – Doctrine Committee
- March 15 – Colloquy Committee
- March 30-31 – Board for World Outreach



President's Newsletter



Office of the President

John A. Moldstad

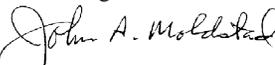
6 Browns Court Mankato, Minnesota 56001
507-344-7356 jamjr@blc.edu

February 2016

Dear Fellow Workers in Christ's Kingdom:

Soon we come together for the Wednesday evening services. We hear the summary readings from the Gospel accounts of how our Savior went to the cross. We listen closely to the homilies prepared by our pastors to touch our hearts with God's message. We sing familiar Lenten hymns pointing to our Savior's suffering for us. Through all of it, we are deeply moved to think of *what really* kept our Savior on the path to Golgotha. You've no doubt heard some speak of "the four nails"—one each for each of the hands of our Lord on the rugged wood, and one for the feet. But the fourth is what really counts. It is the *invisible nail* that really held our Redeemer, God's own Son, to Calvary's cross. Yes, as one pastor put it, "Our sins nailed him there, but love held him there." What manner of love this is! Christ does this all for me, for you, and for all. He does this so that we as sinners are forgiven of all. He does this so that, by faith in him, we are heirs of all. Oh, may we weigh deeply "nail number four" in this holy season!

Blessings in Christ,


John A. Moldstad

National Youth Convention 2016

Our Board for Youth Outreach announces that this year's synod-wide youth convention will take place at the SMU campus in Dallas, Texas. The focus for the convention will be on how we as Christians in the world live as citizens of "Two Kingdoms." Information on registration for the convention will be coming soon.



Plans for Synod Convention, June 19–23

The theme for our 2016 convention is: *Proclaim the Wonders God Has Done: Give Thanks to His Name!* Our essayist this year will be the Rev. Timothy Hartwig, pastor at Peace Lutheran, North Mankato, Minnesota. The preacher for our Synod Sunday will be the Rev. Shawn Stafford, who shepherds the Hartland/Manchester, Minnesota, parish. The Rev. Michael Muehlenhardt, English Lutheran, Cottonwood, Minnesota, has consented to serve as our chaplain. A special feature of our convention will be the kick-off for the anniversary thank-offering (ELS centennial, 2018).

Committee and Statistical Reports

The deadline for items for publication in the 2016 *Book of Reports and Memorials* is April 1. Completed reports are to be mailed to the synod's secretary. Requests for presentation time during the synod convention program must be directed to the president of the synod prior to April 15. Statistical Reporting for 2015 is due February 15. You can complete the statistical reporting form online: <http://www.els.org/statistics/>

Bethany Theatre Team Wins Award

We congratulate the theatre department at our synod's Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota, for winning the Golden Handtruck Award at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. Prof. Peter Bloedel led the group. He indicated this is the second time in six years BLC has earned this achievement.



Installation of New Pastor at Lakeland

The Rev. Randy VanMehren was installed, January 10, 2016, as pastor of Peace Lutheran Church, Lakeland, Florida, at a special 4:00 p.m. worship service. The Rev. Michael Dale conducted the liturgy. The Rev. Charles Keeler was lector. The Rev. Andrew Burmeister of Our Savior Lutheran of North Lakeland preached the sermon on 1 Corinthians 1:18–2:5 using the theme “We Preach Christ Crucified.” The Rev. Herbert Huhnerkoch, Circuit 1 visitor, conducted the rite of installation. A delicious roast beef dinner followed in the fellowship hall, compliments of the Peace Lutheran women's group.



Membership Application

Peace Lutheran of Deshler, Ohio, has applied for membership in the synod. Its application will go before the Membership Committee at this year's convention. The congregation, served by the Rev. Peter Heyn, has been classified as “independent in fellowship” for many years.

World Outreach Update – LMSI (India)

- 22,000+ members, 250+ congregations
- 14 national pastors
- 200+ (paid and unpaid) lay workers serving congregations and under training at monthly seminars
- 300 orphans cared for in 20 homes
- 410+ students enrolled in 3 schools



Part I Colloquy

On January 22, 2016, the Rev. Robert Lawson, Jr., who serves as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Escondido, California, successfully completed Part I of his colloquy. Members of the Colloquy Committee are: the Rev. G. Obenberger, the Rev. G. Schmeling, the Rev. E. Ekhoft, the Rev. E. Teigen, Ron Younge, G. Costello, and Pres. Moldstad. No date has been set yet for Part II.

Colloquy in March

On Tuesday, March 15, 2016, a Part I colloquy is scheduled for the Rev. Steven Brockdorf who serves Reformation Lutheran, Hillsboro, Oregon. Any information pertaining to this colloquy should be sent to the office of the synod president.

Just Added to webpage: Evangelism Resources

(<http://els.org/resources/evangelism>)

ELS Home Outreach Administrator, the Rev. Larry Wentzlaff reports: “Pastor Tony Pittenger from Bethany Lutheran Church in Port Orchard, Washington, recently shared an outreach/evangelism effort that has been employed by his congregation for the last few years and has been blessed with many participants. It is called ‘Power Hour.’ It involves teaching little children (preschool age) and their parents about the love of Jesus. Bethany uses this program as a recruiting tool for their Christian Day School, but it can also be used as a stand-alone outreach effort meant to build relationships while sharing the Gospel message.”