

## Peace, Lakeland

On Sunday, January 22, 2017, President Moldstad was the guest preacher for the twenty-fifth anniversary of Peace Lutheran in Lakeland, Florida. It was in 1997 when the congregation was able to move into its brand new facility. The current pastor is Pastor Randy VanMehren (pictured with his wife, Robin). Currently the congregation is the chief sponsor for a benefit being held for a wounded police officer from the community of Lakeland. The event will be held at the local civic center. We pray God continues to bless the congregation with its Gospel outreach in the south Lakeland area, even as the congregation of Our Savior is doing outreach to the north Lakeland region.



## Committee and Statistical Reports

The deadline for items for publication in the 2017 *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 2016 is due February 15. If you have not already reported, you can complete the statistical reporting form online: <<http://www.els.org/statistics/>>

## Prayers Requested

We ask the members of our synod to pray for the family of the Rev. Erwin Ekhoﬀ. Pastor Ekhoﬀ's son, Tim, was killed in a traffic accident in northern Minnesota on January 11. Tim leaves behind his dear wife, Hailie, and their two daughters Scarlet (age 3) and Camille (6 months).

## Upcoming Events

February 1 – Colloquy Committee  
February 7 – Committee for Archives and History  
February 10 – Centennial Committee  
February 13–14 – Board of Regents  
February 14 – Board of Trustees  
February 15 – Committee on Nominations  
February 15 – Board for Christian Service  
February 15 – Statistical Reports Due  
February 16 – Synod Review Committee  
February 26 – 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Grace Lutheran (Vero Beach, Florida)  
March 7 – Synod Review Committee  
March 20-21 – Doctrine Committee  
March 28 – Synod Review Committee  
April 1 – Deadline for publication in the *Book of Reports and Memorials*

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# President's Newsletter



Office of the President

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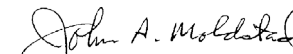
507-344-7356 [jamjr@blc.edu](mailto:jamjr@blc.edu)

February 2017

## Dear Fellow Workers in Christ's Kingdom:

Here is a comforting thought for all believers: Our requests before the throne of God are presented by the Spirit *in the way* they ought to be formulated. An ancient church father, Ambrose, gave this illustration: A little child wants to go to his father with a bouquet, so the child goes into the garden and gathers flowers. But some weeds happen to enter the bunch. When the child comes to the mother, the mother picks out the weeds and binds the flowers, and then the child's presentation to the father is superb! So too, the Holy Spirit picks away the weeds—the sins and weaknesses of our praying—and presents nothing but sweet-smelling flowers to our Heavenly Father. *We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express* (Romans 8:26). May we, through faith in our Savior Jesus, rest assured that our Heavenly Father hears all of our prayers, and may the Spirit's guarantee of our “bouquet-offerings” move us all the more to petition the Almighty as we go about our daily tasks.

Blessings in Christ,

  
John A. Moldstad

## Synod Offerings for 2016

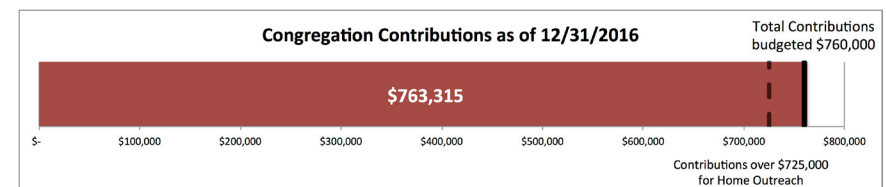
We have good news to report! We exceeded our Congregational Contribution Budget for this past year. The total from our synod congregations came to \$763,315. The adopted congregational funding budget for 2016 was \$760,000, with anything over \$725,000 going to the work of our Board for Home Outreach (cf. *Synod Report 2015*, p. 116). We rejoice and give thanks to God for the generosity of our people in supporting the Gospel work of our church body.

O Father, whence all blessings come;

O Son, Dispenser of God's store;

O Spirit, bear our offerings home;

Lord, make them Thine forevermore. (ELH 447:5)





### Home Missions Seminar

The 2017 ELS Home Missions Seminar took place at Our Savior Lutheran in Naples, Florida, on January 23–24. The Rev. Keith Free (front, right), the WELS Administrator for Home Missions, was the guest presenter.

### Centennial

During this quinentennial anniversary year of 2017, be sure to check out the many resources found on the synod's web-site <els.org/lutheran-500>. Especially note the items prepared by the ELS Committee on Worship and the link to the daily 365 Luther Quotes Calendar from Northwestern Publishing House.



### Highlights of Synod Work

During the month of January, the chairmen of the various boards and committees of the synod met together with elected members of the Planning & Coordinating Committee to establish priorities and propose a budget for 2018. These chairmen highlighted recent and current work of their respective boards:

**Doctrine Committee:** A Bible study has been produced for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the synod. There are seven segments to the study. It is prepared for use in fall 2017.

**Board of Regents:** The nursing program has been approved by the Minnesota Board of Nursing. Dr. Timothy Schmeling has been called to the seminary. A priority remains filling two vacancies in the religion department at the college. There are over 500 students at the college and 10 at the seminary.

**Board for Home Outreach:** Currently seven congregations are receiving assistance. Plans include a study of what “works” and training of pastors and missionaries. Proceeds of the Anniversary Offering will be used for (a) multi-cultural ministry, (b) vicar-in-mission, (c) new mission starts.

**Board for World Outreach:** Mission property in Peru will be turned over to the national church; a church will be constructed in Chile; a student from Korea is currently enrolled at Bethany Seminary. Administrator Tom Heyn began work last fall. The board is planning for missionary retirements.

**Board for Education:** Distributes grants from *His Truth for Our Youth* and *Lutheran Schools of America* offerings, as well as other grants as funds allow, and organizes a National Teachers’ Conference. Long-range plans include a memory work curriculum and assisting in the development of high school programs.

**Board for Youth Outreach:** LYA Convention, Youth Honor Choir, youth retreats, and summer camps are focus of work. LYA Convention plans: 2017 in Cincinnati, Ohio, with the theme “Saved though Water” (1 Peter 3:20); 2018 in Tacoma, Washington, in conjunction with the synod’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary; 2019 in Mankato, Minnesota.

**Board for Christian Service:** Continues to offer counseling for pastors and teachers and their families through Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Services. An ad hoc committee has been assigned to study the feasibility of a veterans’ memorial and plans to bring a proposal to the 2017 convention.

**Committee on Worship:** Resources for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation are available online <<http://els.org/lutheran-500/>>, and those for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the synod are being developed. Regional Reformation hymn festivals will be organized in 2017. Both a braille edition and a digital version of the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* are now available; an e-book version and an agenda and altar book are in the long-range plans. More resources: <<http://els.org/resources/worship/>>

### Anniversary Offering

We are now over the \$335,000 mark in gifts and pledges. One generous individual said, “*I surely pray more people will get involved in supporting this Anniversary Offering. Surely others can give more than I have.*” That gift and promise was over \$20,000. May we all humbly and prayerfully give generously and with thanks to our Lord. Big or small, may we use all to the glory of God. What is your plan? Go to <[els.org/offering](http://els.org/offering)> and print off the gift form and plan your gift. Call Pastor Dan Basel today at 507-469-9656 for more info. Or just go to <[els.org/donate](http://els.org/donate)> and make your gift today. Use your checking account, debit, or credit card to make a donation. If you prefer, simply mail in your check to ELS Anniversary Offering, 6 Browns Ct, Mankato, MN 56001. Thank you to all for your generous support of home missions.

