

## WELS-ELS-LCMS Informal Discussions in Jacksonville

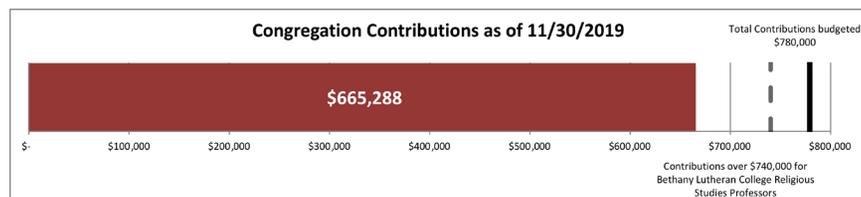
On December 9–10 representatives from WELS, ELS, and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod held the eighth annual meeting of informal discussions. Each of these meetings have been helpful in identifying where the synods agree and where differences remain. The meetings also have been helpful to increase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

This year the meetings included a focus on the doctrine of justification (emphasis on objective justification). This is an area where all three synods are in complete agreement. We also spent time discussing the doctrines of the public ministry and prayer fellowship, where some differences still remain.

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 new 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 focus on the WELS restatement on the roles of man and woman, “Male and Female in God’s World.”

## Upcoming Events

- January 13-14 – Board for Youth Outreach
- January 16 – Colloquy Committee
- January 21 – Committee for Archives and History
- January 24 – Synod Review Committee
- January 27–28 – Board for Lutheran Schools
- February 3–4 – ELS Board of Regents
- February 5–6 – Board of Trustees
- February 18 – Planning and Coordinating Committee



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# President’s Newsletter



Office of the President

John A. Moldstad

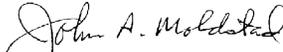
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January 2020

## Dear Members and Friends of the ELS:

Greetings to all for a good new year! During the time of the Civil War, the famous Lutheran theologian, Dr. Walther, told the members of his congregation: “Only he who has celebrated a blessed Christmas can also celebrate a happy new year. Only he who on such a day knows that he has a Savior can continue on the pilgrimage of his life” (*The Word of His Grace*, p. 209). May our 2020 journey be a very focal year (20/20 vision!) on the tremendous gift of God’s love for each of us sinners. His love in procuring salvation for us by faith in the gift of His Son is what anchors our ship on the sea of life—whether calm or turbulent the waters. “The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forever” (Psalm 121:7, 8).

  
John A. Moldstad

## Ordination

On Sunday, December 8, 2019, Candidate of Theology Patrick Ernst was ordained and installed at St. John’s Lutheran in Frankenmuth, Michigan. 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. May God bless both Patrick and his wife, Kate, in their new home!



## Installations

We pray for Lord's rich blessings upon Pastor Dan Ruiz, his wife Katie, and family. On December 8, 2019 he was installed as the new pastor at Faith Lutheran in San Antonio, Texas.



May God's grace and blessing rest upon Pastor Andrew Burmeister. He was installed on Monday, December 9, 2019, at St. Paul Lutheran in Escondido, California. Rev. Steven Sparley preached for the occasion, while Rev. David Jay Webber, visitor for Circuit 11, performed the rite of installation.



On Sunday, December 15, 2019, Rev. Trent Saari was installed as pastor of Western Koshkonong Lutheran Church in Cottage Grove, Wisconsin. 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.



After the service, the congregation served a wonderful meal. May God bless the ministry of Rev. Saari at this historic congregation.

## Pastoral Retirement Announced

We pray God's richest blessings will rest upon Rev. Charles Keeler and his wife, Evonne. Pastor Keeler has indicated a retirement date from his pastorate at Resurrection in Winter Haven, Florida, to be effective as of January 31, 2020.

## New building for King of Grace!

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 NW 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.



## Christmas Greeting

View a video Christmas greeting from our Bethany Lutheran College at [blc.edu/merry-christmas-2019/](http://blc.edu/merry-christmas-2019/). You can also view the Christmas at Bethany concert: [blc.edu/christmas-at-bethany/](http://blc.edu/christmas-at-bethany/)



## Pastor in Colloquy Program

Rev. Lee Kuhns successfully completed Part I of his pastoral colloquy on November 21. Arrangements are being made to move into Part II early in 2020. Lee is a former pastor of the AFLC (Association of Free Lutheran Congregations). He and his wife, Pam, reside in El Campo, Texas. Members of this Colloquy Committee are: President G. Schmeling, Prof. Thomas Rank, Vice President G. Obenberger, Pastor John Petersen, Mr. Greg Costello, Mr. Keith Wiederhoeft, and President J. Moldstad. Any pertinent information for the colloquy should be directed to the office of the synod president.

Have a blessed New Year!