

Board Resignations

On September 5, 2020, Mr. Timothy Thiele of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, submitted his resignation from the ELS Board of Regents for personal reasons. We sincerely thank Tim for his many years of service at two different time periods as a regent. He also has served as the chair of the seminary committee. Since he is a type B member, an appointment will not be made at this time. The regents will be bringing forth a name for fulfilling the one-year unexpired term at the upcoming 2021 convention.

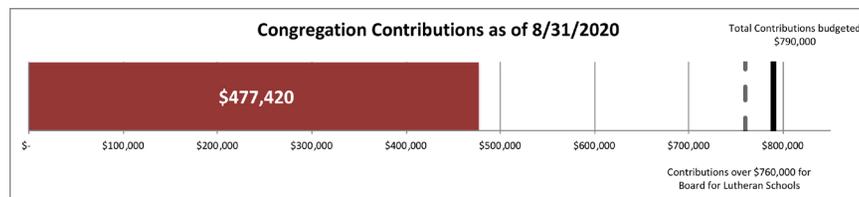
Rev. Matthew Behmer has resigned from the Board for World Outreach as a result of his accepting the call to serve as a missionary trainer under the WELS Board for World Missions. We thank Matt for his work as secretary of the board and serving as chairman of the South American subcommittee. Accepting the appointment in order to fill the vacated position is Rev. Daniel Ruiz of San Antonio, Texas.

Estate Gift for Synod Work

Our giving counselor, Rev. Dan Basel, has informed us that a gift from an estate was received from one of our congregations on the west coast. The entities receiving benefits from this estate are the local congregation (\$100,000); Bethany Lutheran College (\$132,100); Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary (\$132,100); and the ELS (\$132,100, to be divided between the Board for Home Outreach and Board for World Outreach). We are grateful for people who consider making special gifts like this in support of our synodical work.

Upcoming Events

- October 5–6 – Board for Lutheran Schools (online)
- October 17 – Committee on Worship
- October 19–20 – Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum (WELS/ELS) in Mankato
- October 27–28 – Board for World Outreach
- November 5–6 – Board for Home Outreach
- November 9–10 – ELS Board of Regents
- November 10 – Board of Trustees



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President's Newsletter



Office of the President

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October 2020

Dear Members and Friends of the ELS:

Do you find yourself somewhat less *joyful* than you used to be? Forced changes on our daily routines over fears of health can take a heavy toll. But let us all recall a valuable letter composed within an unusual writing chamber. The apostle Paul's freedoms had been forcefully removed in his Roman prison cell, but he wrote on the virtue of **being joyfully patient**. "*Rejoice in the Lord always,*" he says. "*I will say it again: Rejoice!*" Paul had learned the truth of Psalm 37: "*Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.*" Paul knew that the reason he could be patient was because "*the Lord is near.*" The second coming of the Lord, while not happening in Paul's day nor yet in ours, was/is always a source of *joy*. Christ will come again at the appropriate time and all believers will have joy above all joy! And even now at this moment Christ is near. He is intimately present with us in Word and sacrament offering freely every day what we need most—his gracious forgiveness of our sins! No doubt about it, we as believers have every reason to wait patiently and exuberantly!

Blessings in Christ,

John A. Moldstad

Church Building Plans in Weatherford, Texas

On Tuesday, September 29, the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Board for Home Outreach voted to move forward with a \$1.4 million proposal to erect a new sanctuary for Divine Mercy Lutheran, to be located to the west of Fort Worth on Interstate 20. We anticipate the project to get underway shortly. The congregation is served by Rev. James Kassera. Please keep pastor and family and congregation in your prayers.

Death of LMSI President



“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord” (Revelation 14:13). With great sorrow, we announce that Pastor G.J. Ananda Raju was taken to be with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in heaven on August 29. He was diagnosed with COVID-19 a few days earlier, along with his whole family. Pastor Ananda was the president of the Rajahmundry district of the Lutheran Mission of Salvation–India, parish pastor, and seminary professor, as well as a frequent speaker at mission rallies in the United States. He will be sorely missed, but we know that Jesus has kept His promise and taken Pastor Ananda to the heavenly home prepared for him. “Indeed, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, then in the same way we also believe that God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 4:14).

Pastor Ananda Raju’s funeral was held on August 30. Following the funeral, Pastor Ananda’s wife, Florence, together with her sons Pastor Kalyan Gollapalli and Pastor Sagar and his wife, traveled by car from Rajahmundry to Hyderabad (about a seven hour trip) to receive hospital treatment in a Hyderabad hospital. Pastor Solomon Mamidi helped them to secure hard-to-find space at a nearby hospital. All of them had Stage 4 COVID, which is what Pastor Ananda had when he was hospitalized and subsequently passed away. We ask for your continued prayers for the family and our sister church body, the Lutheran Mission of Salvation–India.

Prayers Requested for our Oregon Members

In September many of the members from our southern Oregon churches needed to evacuate because of the devastating wildfires. Pastor Ed Bryant and wife Deb were among the evacuees from the Medford area. On September 16, Pastor Bryant wrote: “It wasn’t until a day or two ago that we found out that about 2,300 dwellings were lost. Earlier estimates were about 600. This explains why thousands of people overwhelmed the first Evacuation Point, so that another Evacuation Point had to be opened thirty miles away. Those who could not stay with friends or family quickly filled up the hotel rooms as much as 100 miles away. Other fires in the region meant that those rooms were full as well. Thousands of families are now trying to find a place to live... Our church members were not directly affected very much. One member lost his home. In addition to that the extended family of an Our Savior (Grants Pass) member lost his home, and friends of a Faith (Medford) family lost their home... Pray that all Christians will show forth the hope that we have, whatever has happened to them, and will have opportunities to share this hope with others. Pray that people will find places to live, and that those who are traumatized will be rescued from their despair.”



Bethany Lutheran College Fall Enrollment

Bethany Lutheran College’s enrollment for fall 2020 has set an all-time high. Combining recent, consecutive years of large first-year classes with a historically-high retention of upper-class students, Bethany’s full-time, traditional enrollment now stands at 633 students.

In addition to the traditional, on-campus programs, Bethany also offers online college courses for high school students. This fall, 133 high school students are taking courses through Bethany’s Dual Credit and Post-Secondary Enrollment Option programs. Both programs allow qualified students to earn high school and college course credit simultaneously. Bethany has also focused recruitment efforts on increasing international student enrollment. Bethany’s international student enrollment includes 92 students from 26 countries. **All of these factors combined pushed the total number of students enrolled at Bethany to a new record of 778.**

The Center for Apologetics and Worldview Studies

Following a 2019 synod resolution authorizing the establishment of an apologetics center, the *ad hoc* ELS Apologetics Committee appointed Dr. Ryan MacPherson of Bethany Lutheran College to serve a two-year term as director. Dr. MacPherson will continue to teach with a reduced load at the college while leading the center in sponsoring conferences, producing publications, and partnering with synod boards for outreach and evangelism. The launching of the apologetics center has been made possible by an anonymous three-year, \$10,000/year donation coupled with matching challenge that was fully met this past year. For video archives of prior conferences and plans for coming events, visit www.blc.edu/apologetics.

Bethany Seminary Anniversary Fund

Children in schools throughout our Evangelical Lutheran Synod may be surprised to learn that their pastor has a college degree and four additional years of schooling—that seems like a lot to a child in second or sixth grade! Yet some of these Lutheran elementary school children want to someday become pastors themselves. Will you also contribute to the seminary anniversary fund to educate these future pastors? Contributions can be sent directly to Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, 6 Browns Ct, Mankato MN 56001.

