

Regent Appointee to be Ratified

Mr. John Scott, the chairman of the Board of Elders at our Grace Lutheran in Vero Beach, Florida, has been appointed by the ELS Board of Regents to serve as a Type B member. He is filling the remainder of a vacated term, and will join the board in an advisory-only capacity until the 2021 convention ratifies the appointment with the normal voting privileges.

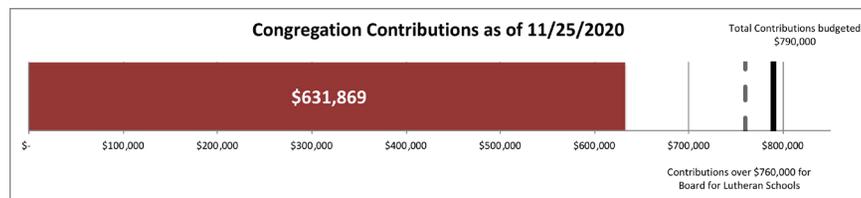
Pastors Marking Retirements

Rev. Erwin Ekhoﬀ preached his farewell sermon at King of Grace Lutheran in Golden Valley, Minnesota, on November 22. The members expressed gratitude for his faithful service of 38 years at the congregation (44, ministry total) at a reception that followed. Pastor Ekhoﬀ's retirement is effective on December 31, 2020.

Rev. Ron Pederson also has announced his retirement from the ministry (effective on December 31, 2020) at the joint parish of King of Grace, Waukon, Iowa, and Trinity, Calmar, Iowa. His dedicated parish work has spanned 25 years in Iowa and in Michigan.

Note From Our Synod Business Administrator

Mr. Keith Wiederhoeft reports that through November 25, 2020, we have received \$631,869 toward our \$790,000 congregational contribution portion of the budget. This means that through the month of December we are hoping that our congregations are able to contribute \$158,131 to enable us to meet our projected expenditures for the year. Congregations will be allowed to remit their gifts for 2020 up until January 9, 2021. Congregations have been sent special year-end envelopes to be used in the next couple weeks to encourage budgetary gifts.



Upcoming Events

- December 1 – Informal meeting of ELS/WELS with the LCMS (online) (postponed)
- December 7–8 – Doctrine Committee
- January 19 – Board for Youth Outreach
- January 25–26 – Board for Lutheran Schools

President's Newsletter



Office of the President

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December 2020

Dear Members and Friends of the ELS:

Martin Luther once said: "The true Christian religion is incarnational and thus does not begin at the top, as all other religions do; it begins at the bottom. You must run directly to the manger and the mother's womb, embrace the Infant and the Virgin's Child in your arms and look at Him—born, being nursed, growing up, going about in human society, teaching, dying, rising again, ascending above all the heavens, and having authority over all things." Isn't it truly amazing that our Lord God became flesh in the person of the lowly Christ-child at the manger! But this is not just a fact to bring awe to our feeble minds. It is not simply a truth to signal a sharp differentiation between the religion that counts and all others which lead to destruction. Rather, it is an actual event of history that is very personal for each and every sinner to behold! You see, this holy Babe of Bethlehem was and is your and my Savior who came in the flesh to work out every aspect of our eternal salvation so that by trust in His merits alone we shall—upon our earthly departure—enjoy life with our Savior in unending bliss!

Have the hardships of 2020 brought you to a low? Do your worries, fears and acknowledgement of sin weigh heavy? Then, recall how the Lord God entered our world *at the bottom*—a stable for a delivery room!—so that we might be lifted high above and beyond everything evil! This *must* follow, for that Infant came at the appointed time and lived and died and rose in order to obtain the gift we need most of all: the forgiveness of all sin! ... Enjoy this Christmas present, for it is a lasting treasure!

Blessings in Christ,

John A. Moldstad

Christmas at Bethany

This year enjoy Christmas at Bethany at home. Bethany presents a new version of our beloved Christmas concert that you can enjoy, not just for one day, but for years to come. We will be premiering a video concert on Sunday, December 6 at 1:30pm. The video will remain available after the premier. Find the video and program at blc.edu/christmas. We are grateful that we can still present the comforting Christmas Gospel message through song and share with you the musical talents of our students. Please tune in and enjoy the concert!



Installation

On All Saints Sunday, November 1, 2020, Rev. Andrew Burmeister was installed as pastor of Our Savior Lutheran in Bishop, California. Rev. Joseph Abrahamson of Clara City, Minnesota, preached for the service, while Rev. David J. Webber, visitor for Circuit 11, performed the rite of installation. Rev. Paul Webber from West Jordan, Utah, participated in the laying on of hands. We pray that the Lord's blessings rest upon Pastor Burmeister and his wife Bonnie as they take up residence in central California. May the gospel ministry be extolled at Our Savior and in the community of Bishop.



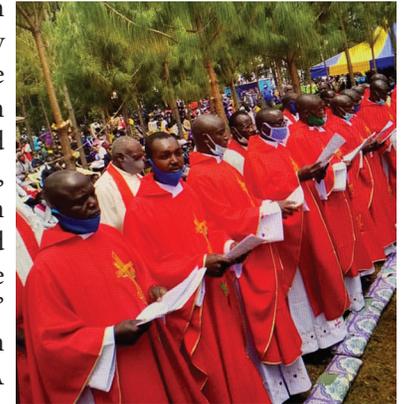
New Pastor at West Bend, Wisconsin

On Sunday, November 8, 2020, the installation of Pastor Daniel Hartwig occurred at Trinity Lutheran in rural West Bend, Wisconsin. Rev. Christian Eisenbeis preached the sermon, while Rev. Bernt Tweit (alternate visitor) performed the rite of installation. Other ELS pastors participating were: Rev. Nathan Krause, Rev. Thomas Heyn, and Rev. Dennis Lemke (WELS). We pray God's blessings be upon Pastor Hartwig and wife Sarah and family, and upon the congregation at Trinity!



Seminary graduation in Kenya

The first graduating class of Lutheran Theological Seminary of the newly formed Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of Kenya (ELDK) was celebrated on Sunday, November 22, 2020. Rev. David Ombogo, one of the leaders in the ELDK, stated: "Thanks be to God from whom all blessings proceed. Graduation and ordination of these men eventually came to pass. Thank you for your prayers!" On that Sunday in Nyamira, sixteen men were ordained as Lutheran pastors. A number of pastors from the ELS over the last two years helped with online training, including especially Rev. David Jay Webber and Rev. Joseph Abrahamson; others who have assisted are: Rev. Paul Webber, Rev. Jerry Gernander, Rev. James Braun, Rev. Theodore Gullixson, Rev. Andrew Soule, Rev. Thomas Rank, and Rev. Steven Sparley. A letter of greeting from Pres. Moldstad was read at the ceremony; Rev. Thomas Heyn, our Board for World Outreach (BWO) administrator, also sent greetings. Another official greeting was extended from Rev. Mark Onunda, the president of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ–Kenya, a church body which was taken into fellowship with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) in 2019. Earlier this year the ELDK officially registered as a separate church body, breaking their ties with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya (ELCK). Our ELS Doctrine Committee is recommending to our 2021 synod convention full doctrinal fellowship with the ELDK. In June, Pastor Heyn reported: "This past year, the BWO has also been involved as the official liaison of the ELS with pastors of the former Nyamira diocese of the ELCK." Tentatively, a rescheduled trip of three ELS representatives is being scheduled for March 2021—travel permitting.



Bethany Seminary Anniversary Fund

During this school year, we asked members, schools, and friends to consider raising funds for the seminary's anniversary. It is so very important to educate pastors for our future! In thanks to the Lord for pouring out His blessings upon our seminary, the seminary has established a seventy-fifth anniversary fund for the support of the seminary. Can you contribute for this important cause? Contributions can be sent directly to Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, 6 Browns Ct, Mankato MN 56001.

