

# Book of Reports and Memorials

108<sup>th</sup> Convention

of the

Evangelical Lutheran Synod

and the

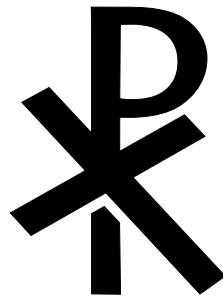
69<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of

Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.

and the

10<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of

Lutheran Schools of America, Inc.



To be held at

BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE

Mankato, Minnesota

June 15–19, 2025

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BONDAGE OF THE WILL:

“I CANNOT BY MY OWN REASON OR STRENGTH...”

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*Essayist:*

*Rev. David Jay Webber*



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# GENERAL INFORMATION

You are serving our Lord and his church as a pastor or delegate to our synod's convention. The synod convention is the legislative body of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS). It establishes, reviews, and amends the policies and the direction of ELS as we pursue our mission. You have a high privilege and a solemn responsibility.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the synod convention is

- To review the activities of the synod as conducted by its officers, boards, and committees during the previous year;
- To arrange for the future work of the synod by careful planning and proper resolutions;
- To elect a president, a vice president, and a secretary of the synod;
- To elect the boards and committees of the synod.

## YOUR ROLE

Each congregation is entitled to send two delegates to the convention. These delegates, along with the pastors serving member congregations, constitute the voting membership of the convention. You represent your congregation and the synod and should prayerfully ponder and vote on what ELS should be doing for the Lord.

## PRE-CONVENTION INFORMATION

The convention business is printed in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* (BORAM), which contains reports from all permanent boards and committees of the synod. The BORAM also may contain "memorials" which are recommendations in the form of proposed resolutions requesting action on the part of a convention and which originate from a source other than standing boards and committees. Normally memorials are submitted by a congregation. It is essential that you read the BORAM to get a picture of the synod's work. You may make notes in the BORAM as it is your copy. Remember to bring it with you to the convention.

Each delegate will need a signed copy of the *Delegate's Credentials* form. This form can be found on the back cover of the BORAM. It certifies that you were properly elected by your congregation, and it needs to be signed by the *secretary of your congregation*. **The Delegate's Credentials form cannot be mailed in advance** and cannot be presented by anyone other than the elected delegate named on the form.

## THE CONVENTION

**Upon Arrival:** All pastors and delegates need to report to the credentials table in the lobby of the Sports and Fitness Center:

- Pastors' attendance will be gathered at the Credentials Table. There will be a written register where all pastors will need to sign their own name. If you fail to sign the register, your attendance will not be reported for the convention.
- Delegates, likewise, will be asked to sign an official register. Credentials must be presented upon arrival at the convention. *Each delegate needs to present this form in person at the Credentials Desk before they can vote on the convention floor.*
- Lay members of permanent boards and committees, who are in attendance at the convention, are to report their attendance to the Credentials Committee and to sign the register. They will be regarded as advisory members having the right to speak on the floor of the convention.

**Sessions:** All sessions will be held in the Ronald J. Younge Gymnasium in the Sports and Fitness Center at Bethany Lutheran College unless otherwise announced. All registered delegates are eligible to speak and vote on every issue before the convention.

**Assignments:** Prior to the convention, all pastors and delegates are assigned to serve on a convention committee (sometimes also referred to as a floor committee). When you know your committee assignment, carefully study your committee's section in the BORAM. Committee members shall serve until the committee is dismissed.

**Voting Members:** The pastors serving member congregations who are in attendance at the convention and the properly seated delegates, who are lay voting members of the congregation and are elected by the voting membership of the congregation, constitute the voting membership of the convention. The president shall have the right to vote only to break a tie (*Bylaws*, Chapter IV).

**Elections:** An important duty of delegates is to elect synodical officers and board members. A brief biographical sketch of each nominee is included in the BORAM. Ask questions before you vote so you are as informed as possible.

**Excuses:** Any excuses for late arrival or non-attendance at the convention are to be sent to the office of the synod president prior to the opening of the convention. The Credentials Committee serves as the Excuse Committee for late arrivals and early departures.

**Alternate Delegates:** Alternate delegates replace the main delegate and *do not need to be announced on the convention floor*. Such changes are to be reported to the Convention Committee secretary.

## CONVENTION COMMITTEES

The voting members of convention *committees* shall consist of clergymen, male teachers, and male professors who are permanent members of the synod, and delegates who have been assigned to committees by the convention. Advisory members may also serve on convention committees. Others may (1) attend the committee meetings if such attendance is approved by the committee, and (2) with approval, enter into the discussion. Only those who have been elected to the convention committees by the convention shall have the right to vote during the committee deliberations.

Prior to the convention, it is the responsibility of the nominated committee members to review the report of the standing board(s) or committee(s) as contained in the *Book of Reports and Memorials*. The work that the board or committee reports should be consistent with its guidelines.

Following ratification by the convention, the committee members shall adjourn to the committee's assigned workplace under the direction of the temporary chairman, and shall elect a permanent chairman and a recording secretary.

1. The committee shall:
  - a. Read Article I.E of the Convention Guidelines so that it might fully understand its duties and responsibilities.
  - b. Review the guidelines as they are printed in the Handbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod under which the standing board or committee is operating. (For example: The convention committee on Higher Education shall review all of the guidelines for Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary).
  - c. Review the report(s) contained in the Book of Reports and Memorials and the Convention Handbook that are pertinent to its assignment. The committee may wish to schedule and interview invited resource people (for example, officers of the synod, of a permanent board or of an institution) to assist the committee in its assignment.
2. The primary work of the convention committee is to review and assess the work of the standing board or committee.
  - a. The committee shall determine the resource people it wishes to invite (standing board members, officers, memorial sponsors, etc.).
  - b. The committee should consider whether there are any discrepancies in the report insofar as the duties of the standing board are concerned and, if necessary, so report.
  - c. The committee may consider other suggestions for the standing board and make recommendations for studies or research by the Synod Review Committee or another committee. It may recommend development of guideline changes that would be reviewed at a future convention.
3. Any recommendation concerning changes in the budget of a committee to be enacted at the current convention must be submitted to the convention Committee on Finance (see Guidelines for the Planning and Coordinating Committee, Article IV.A.2.a.).

God's people are filled with gratitude to our gracious Lord at all times, as is reflected regularly in our prayers and praises. Except for special circumstances, it is not necessary to pass resolutions of thanks as our Lord already knows our thoughts and feelings in this regard. Proper acknowledgment can be put in whereas clauses of other resolutions. Floor committees should be assured that reviewing the work is essential—the number of resolutions does not make that work any more significant. Reports by standing boards and committees are there for everyone to read. Resolutions are for the purpose of having the synod put into action things that are prompted through the reports.

It is expected that the **Finance Committee** will make recommendation concerning the acceptance of the Report of the Board of Trustees, Treasurer's Report, and the Report of the Equalization Committee. The **Home Outreach Committee** and the **Elementary Education Committee** will make recommendation concerning respective salary scales for clergy and elementary school teachers. It also is expected that the **Miscellaneous Committee** will recommend the dates for the next convention.

Secretaries of **circuit pastoral conferences** are reminded to hand in their respective reports to the floor committee on the **first day of the convention**.

For ease of the convention committees, the *Book of Reports and Memorials* will be available during the convention on the synod website, [els.org/convention](http://els.org/convention).

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

The typing, printing, and distribution of all committee reports, and other floor information is to be coordinated through the Head Usher (two copies of all reports are to be given to the president and four copies to the secretary). Typists, printer, pages, and ushers are under the direction of the Head Usher.

It is important to include a list of the names of all committee members who have been present at any of the committee meetings; this list of names will be used to verify committee assignments for publication in the *Synod Report*.

The chairman and the secretary of each convention committee will prepare resolutions according to the following format. Convention typists can assist with formatting and line numbering of the report. Reports should be emailed to [elsynod@blc.edu](mailto:elsynod@blc.edu) for assistance from the typists and duplication. Capitalize the words "synod," "board," and "committee" *only* when used in a complete proper name.

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June 17, 2025  
Committee 13  
Synodical Membership

Re: BORAM (page)  
Resolution (number) : Subject

WHEREAS, T \_\_\_\_\_, and,  
WHEREAS, T \_\_\_\_\_, therefore,

A. BE IT RESOLVED, That  
\_\_\_\_\_, and,

B. BE IT RESOLVED, That  
\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman, Secretary,  
Committee members attending meetings:

**ELECTION PROCEDURE** (*General Synodical Guidelines*, Article V)

Unless stated otherwise in the Constitution, its Bylaws, or these guidelines, a simple majority (a vote of fifty percent plus one) shall determine the decision of any election. Should an election end in a tie, the chairman may vote to break the tie or he may order another vote (*Bylaws*, Chapter IV, Paragraph 2).

If there is no majority, another vote of the same nominees will be taken for as many as three additional times. If there is no majority after the fourth ballot, a motion from the floor may request that those names with less than five percent of the total vote be removed from the next ballot. If that motion is defeated, an election using the original candidates will be continued.

**THE DIFFERENCE YOU MAKE**

Please attend all joint and committee meetings and take an active part in discussions. Remember that the business conducted here establishes the work of the synod for the next year and beyond. Your input is valuable, and your vote is important. When issues are discussed and presented for a vote, consider what you feel is best for the Lord’s kingdom. May God bless your efforts.

**COURTESY PLEASE**

Please turn off cell phones while in the convention hall.

In consideration of your fellow delegates, please exit the convention hall for any conversations during the sessions.

**OTHER INFORMATION**

**On-campus check-in:** Upon arrival, you should visit the credentials desk (delegates need a completed form found on the back cover of this book) in the lobby of the gymnasium. Credentials and registration will be on Monday between 7:30 and 9:00 a.m.

**Computer access:** If you plan to use your laptop for note taking during the convention, you will need to run on battery power when you are on the convention floor. Outlets are available in the classrooms during committee meetings. Due to the size of the gymnasium, Wi-Fi is unreliable and may not be available.

**Smoking:** Smoking is not allowed in any of the buildings (including dormitories) on the BLC campus. If you choose to smoke, please do so in the designated smoking areas and properly dispose of the cigarettes.

**Meals:** Breakfast and lunch will be available beginning on Monday. You may purchase meal tickets at the cafeteria entrance.

**Expense reimbursement:** Your congregation already should have paid into the Layman’s Equalization Fund for delegates. The purpose of the fund is to help defray the transportation costs of the laymen delegates. Delegates should fill out a reimbursement form upon arrival at the convention. Clergy equalization will be announced during the convention. Thank you for keeping convention expenses to a minimum.

**TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Bethany Lutheran College Switchboard 507-344-7000  
Evangelical Lutheran Synod & Seminary Office 507-344-7354  
Convention Manager, Amanda Stahl 507-344-7346

The *Handbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod* is available at [els.org/handbook](http://els.org/handbook).

# 2025 CONVENTION PROGRAM

All events are in the Ronald J. Younge Gymnasium of the *Sports and Fitness Center* unless noted otherwise.

## SYNOD SUNDAY, JUNE 15

- 4:00 Synod Sunday Service (*Trinity Chapel*) [Honor Choir]  
Preacher: The Rev. Dan Oberer (Rosemount, Minnesota)  
Liturgist: The Rev. Andrew Burmeister (Medford, Oregon)  
*The offering has been designated for support of the Peace Lutheran (N. Mankato) preaching station established in Eagle Lake, Minnesota – fall of 2024.*
- 5:00 Dinner (*College Cafeteria*) (free will donation)
- Credentials/Roll Call will be gathered on Monday morning.
- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 6:30 | ELS Historical Society<br>(Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center) * |
|------|--|

## MONDAY, JUNE 16

- 7:30– 9:00 Credential/Roll Call  
9:00 Opening Devotion (*Trinity Chapel*)  
Chaplain: The Rev. Andrew Burmeister (Medford, Oregon)  
9:45 Organization of the Convention:  
Roll Call Report  
Credential Committee Report  
Official Opening of the Convention  
President’s Message and Report  
Adoption of the Convention Program  
Pastors’ Equalization Rules  
Welcoming of Guests  
Nominating ballot for the 2025 Committee on Nominations (printed ballot)  
Assignment of Committees  
Assignment of Work
- 11:30 Recess (*lunch served in the cafeteria*)
- 1:00 Scripture, Prayer & Hymn: The Rev. Andrew Burmeister (Medford, Oregon)  
Anniversaries observed:  
Timothy Bartels—40 years  
Mark DeGarmeaux—40 years  
Rodney Flohr—40 years  
Doyle Holbird—40 years  
Dennis Marzolf—40 years  
Donald Moldstad—40 years  
John Petersen—40 years  
Thomas Rank—40 years  
Matthew Brooks—25 years  
Matthew Crick—25 years  
Bradley Kerkow—25 years  
Shawn Stafford—25 years
- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1:30 | Bethany Auxiliary sponsored<br>Tea at the home of President &<br>Mrs. Obenberger* |
|------|---|
- 1:20 Credentials: Committee 3  
1:25 Greetings: Representatives from the *Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of Kenya* (ELDK)  
1:45 Organization of the Convention (*continued*) -  
2:00 Committee meetings (*Honsey Hall*)  
*The official list of delegates attending committee meetings is gathered by the committee secretaries. Any alternate delegate name changes are to be reported at this time.*
- 3:00 Coffee (*Honsey Hall*)
- |      |   |
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| 6:00 | Heritage of Hymns<br>(Trinity Chapel) * |
|------|---|
- 3:30 – 5:00 Committee meetings continue  
7:15 – 9:00 Committee meetings continue
- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 7:15 | Cross-stich Presentation<br>(Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center) * |
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## TUESDAY, JUNE 17

- 8:00 Committee Meetings  
9:00 Opening Devotion (*Trinity Chapel*)  
Preacher: The Rev. Colin Anderson (Suttons Bay, Michigan)  
9:40 Preliminaries:  
Minutes: Committee 5  
Credentials: Committee 3  
Program: Committee 4  
9:45 Synodical Membership & reception of new members: Committee 13  
10:00 Convention Essay: ***Bondage of the Will: I Cannot by My Own Reason or Strength***  
*The Rev. David Jay Webber - Princeton, MN*
- 11:30 Recess (*lunch served in the cafeteria*)
- 1:00 Scripture, Prayer & Hymn: (Chaplain)  
1:05 Preliminaries:  
Credentials: Committee 3  
Program: Committee 4  
1:15 Election of the 2025 Committee on Nominations [first printed ballot] †  
1:30 Board for World Outreach Presentations  
2:00 Board for World Outreach - Committee 10  
2:30 Greetings and Presentations  
3:00 *Coffee*  
3:30 Doctrine - Committee 6  
4:15 Finances: Committee 7  
4:45 Recess for the Communion Service  
5:00 Communion/Memorial Service (*Trinity Chapel*)  
Preacher: The Rev. Mark DeGarmeaux (Mankato, Minnesota)  
Liturgist: The Rev. Andrew Burmeister (Medford, Oregon)  
*The offering has been designated for support of the Peace Lutheran (N. Mankato) preaching station established in Eagle Lake, Minnesota – fall of 2024.*
- Deaths noted:  
Ione Lillegard (1938–2024)  
June Moldstad (1938–2024)  
Ardyce Bartels (1930–2024)  
Laurie Sullivan (1957–2024)

† *Subsequent ballots for the 2025 Committee on Nominations will be brought forward as and when needed.*



## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18

- 8:00 Opening Devotion (*Trinity Chapel*)  
 Preacher: The Rev. Gaylin Schmeling (Mankato, Minnesota)
- 8:45 Preliminaries:  
 Minutes: Committee 5  
 Credentials: Committee 3  
 Program: Committee 4
- 8:50 Elections: Committee 2
- 9:30 Essay and Discussion: ***Bondage of the Will: I Cannot by My Own Reason or Strength...***  
*The Rev. David Jay Webber (Princeton, Minnesota)*
- 11:00 Board for Lutheran School presentation
- 11:15 Elementary Education: Committee 11
- 11:30 Recess (*lunch served in the cafeteria*)
- 1:00 Scripture, Prayer & Honor Choir: (Chaplain)
- 1:10 Preliminaries:  
 Credentials: Committee 3  
 Program: Committee 4
- 1:15 Greetings and Presentations
- 1:25 Home Outreach Presentation
- 1:55 Home Outreach Committee 9
- 2:15 Higher Education Presentation (Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary)
- 2:30 Higher Education Presentation (Bethany Lutheran College)
- 3:00 Coffee
- 3:30 Higher Education: Committee 8
- 3:50 Parish Services - Committee 12
- 4:15 Greetings and Presentations
- 4:30 Elections: Committee 2  
*(Convention Guidelines §240 Article IX.B)*
- 5:00 Recess

5:15 Honor Choir Recital (Trinity Chapel) *
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6:30 Apologetics Conference (Trinity Chapel) *
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## THURSDAY, JUNE 19

- 8:00 Scripture, Hymn & Prayer – (*Ronald J. Younge Gymnasium*)
- 8:15 Preliminaries:  
 Minutes: Committee 5  
 Credentials: Committee 3  
 Program: Committee 4
- 8:20 Miscellaneous Committee 14
- 8:40 President’s Message and Report: Committee 1
- 9:00 Pastoral Conference Records & Resolutions: Committee 15
- 9:15 Excuses: Credentials Committee 3
- 9:30 Recess
- 10:00 Unfinished Business
- 10:15 Adjournment  
 Closing Hymn & Prayer (Chaplain)

10:30 Apologetics Conference (Trinity Chapel) *
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\* These concurrent events are not an official part of the convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

# DELEGATES

“... The Credentials Committee report, which is read by the committee’s chairman should state in substance, that, ‘Attached is the list of the names of the voting members of the convention and their alternates who have registered up until ... [indicating the hour to which is the list is corrected].’ This statement should be followed by whatever statistical summary is customary in the particular organization. ... Normally the list of delegates and alternates is not read unless a portion of it is read upon request for information. ... The report with the attached list of names should then be handed to the secretary.” [Robert’s Rules of Order, §59. Organization of a Convention of an Established Society, Adoption of Report.]

“A voting member who registers after the submission of the first report assumes his full status as soon as he has done so, if his status is not questioned.” [Robert’s Rules of Order, §59. Organization of an Established Society, Roll of Voting Members; Supplementary Reports.]

**THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF ANTICIPATED DELEGATES:**

*only the names of congregations reporting by April 22, 2025 are listed*

Ascension .....	St. Helens, OR .....	Mr. Aaron Liebelt	Norwegian Grove..	Gaylord, MN.....	Mr. Jim Flantz
Ascension .....	St. Helens, OR .....	Mr. Samuel Liebelt	Norwegian Grove..	Gaylord, MN.....	Mr. Bob Reid
Bethany .....	Port Orchard, WA .....	Mr. Ricky Pasillas	Our Savior .....	Lakeland, FL .....	Mr. Al Avant
Christ.....	Port St. Lucie, FL.....	Mr. Keith Duin	Our Savior .....	Lakeland, FL .....	Mr. Kenneth Sell
Christ.....	Port St. Lucie, FL.....	Mr. Erik Lee	Our Savior’s.....	Princeton, MN .....	Mr. Andrew Green
Divine Mercy .....	Weatherford, TX .....	Mr. Leroy Green	Our Savior’s.....	Princeton, MN .....	Mr. Randy Wise
Divine Mercy .....	Weatherford, TX .....	Mr. John Schreiber	Parkland.....	Parkland, WA .....	Mr. Todd Knutson
Faith.....	San Antonio, TX .....	Mr. Jeremiah Fern	Peace .....	Deshler, OH.....	Mr. Mike Brinkman
Faith.....	San Antonio, TX .....	Mr. Carl Jackson	Peace .....	Deshler, OH.....	Mr. Don Kleman
First Trinity .....	Marinette, WI.....	Mr. Gary Johnson	Redeeming Grace ..	Rogers, MN.....	Mr. Sterling Korstad
First Trinity .....	Marinette, WI.....	Mr. Daniel Lauth	Redeeming Grace ..	Rogers, MN.....	Mr. Ronald Menough
Good Shepherd .....	Indianola, IA .....	Mr. Loren Meyer	Reformation .....	Hillsboro, OR.....	Mr. Bill Ivers
Good Shepherd .....	Indianola, IA .....	Mr. Aaron Neely	Reformation .....	Hillsboro, OR.....	Mr. Kevin Montague
Heritage .....	Apple Valley, MN .....	Mr. Jason Eisenbeis	Resurrection .....	Winter Haven, FL .....	Mr. Dan Weaver
Heritage .....	Apple Valley, MN .....	Mr. Lyle Fahning	River Heights .....	East Grand Forks, MN .	Mr. Luke Schmidt
Holy Cross .....	Madison, WI .....	Mr. Rick Holz	Saude .....	Lawler, IA.....	Mr. Marv Eiler
Holy Cross .....	Madison, WI .....	Mr. Kermit Traska	Saude .....	Lawler, IA.....	Mr. Rick Johnson
Holy Scripture.....	Midland, MI.....	Mr. Andy DeGroat	Saved by Grace.....	Gresham, OR .....	Mr. Kirk Campbell
Jerico.....	New Hampton, IA.....	Mr. Jim Costello	Saved by Grace.....	Gresham, OR .....	Mr. Jerry Herbek
Jerico.....	New Hampton, IA.....	Mr. Neil Shaffer	Trinity.....	Brewster, MA.....	Mr. Paul Chamberlin
King of Grace.....	Golden Valley, MN.....	Mr. Tim Larson	Trinity.....	West Bend, WI .....	Mr. David Roembke
King of Grace.....	Golden Valley, MN.....	Mr. Ned Silber	Trinity.....	West Bend, WI .....	Mr. Ralph Seidensticker
Norseland.....	St. Peter, MN.....	Mr. Perry Lund			
Norseland.....	St. Peter, MN.....	Mr. John Merseth			

# CONVENTION COMMITTEES

*locations indicated are those of the congregations represented*

## 1. PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE AND REPORT

Rev. Sean Scheele ..... Waterloo, IA  
Rev. Cory Hahnke ..... Madison, WI  
Rev. John Petersen ..... Mankato, MN  
Rev. Nathan Krause ..... Cottage Grove, WI

## 2. COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

*(elected at the 2024 convention)*

*(also assigned to an additional committee)*

Rev. Tim Hartwig  
Rev. Gaylin Schmeling  
Rev. Josh Skogen  
Rev. Bernt Tweit  
Mr. Greg Costello  
Mr. Ben Faugstad  
Dr. Josh Mears  
Mr. David Sparley

## 3. CREDENTIALS

*(also assigned to an additional committee)*

Rev. Andrew Palmquist ..... Luverne, MN  
Rev. Glenn Smith ..... Forest City, IA  
Mr. James Young ..... Oconomowoc, WI

## 4. PROGRAM

*(also assigned to an additional committee)*

Rev. Mark Faugstad ..... Port St Lucie, FL  
Rev. Kenneth Mellon ..... Mankato, MN

## 5. MINUTES

*(also assigned to an additional committee)*

Rev. S Piet Van Kampen ..... Deerfield, WI  
Rev. Michael Lilienthal ..... Bellview, MN  
Mr. Silas Born ..... Mankato, MN

## 6. DOCTRINE

Rev. John Merseth\* ..... Audubon, MN  
Rev. Cody Anderson ..... Klamath Falls, OR  
Mr. Steve Beilke ..... Mankato, MN  
Rev. Joseph Burkhardt ..... Beaverton, OR  
Rev. Roger Emmons ..... Redmond, OR  
Rev. Micah Ernst ..... Eugene, MO  
Rev. Thomas Fox ..... Mankato, MN  
Rev. William Grimm ..... Portage, WI  
Rev. Gregory Haugen ..... Neenah, WI  
Rev. Herbert Huhnerkoch ..... Fort Myers, FL  
Rev. Dale Jaech ..... Taylorsville, UT  
Dr. Brian Klebig ..... Mankato, MN  
Rev. Frederic Lams ..... Hobart, IN  
Rev. David Locklair ..... Hobart, IN  
Rev. David Meyer ..... Australia  
Rev. Ronald Pederson ..... Mankato, MN

Dr. Steven Reagles ..... Mankato, MN  
Rev. Kenneth Schmidt ..... West Bend, WI  
Mr. Ben Springer ..... North Mankato, MN  
Rev. William Stehr ..... Irvine, CA  
Rev. S Piet Van Kampen ..... Deerfield, WI  
Rev. Lawrence Wentzlaff ..... Hanska, MN  
Mr. Paul Chamberlin ..... Brewster, MA  
Mr. Andy DeGroat ..... Midland, MI  
Mr. Todd Knutson ..... Parkland, WA  
Mr. Tim Larson ..... Golden Valley, MN  
Mr. Samuel Liebelt ..... St. Helens, OR  
Mr. Ralph Seidensticker ..... West Bend, WI

## 7. FINANCES

Rev. James Kassera\* ..... Weatherford, TX  
Rev. Timothy Bartels ..... Gresham, OR  
Rev. Steven Brockdorf ..... Hillsboro, OR  
Rev. Abraham Faugstad ..... Waukon, IA  
Rev. Daniel Faugstad ..... Redwood Falls, MN  
Rev. Aaron Ferkenstad ..... Golden Valley, MN  
Rev. Erik Gernander ..... Jefferson City, MO  
Rev. Jerome Gernander ..... Leander, TX  
Rev. Wayne Halvorson ..... Mankato, MN  
Pres. Timothy Hartwig ..... Mankato, MN  
Rev. Shawn Kauffeld ..... Menomonie, WI  
Mr. Allen Labitzky ..... Crystal, MN  
Rev. Matthew Lehne ..... Tacoma, WA  
Rev. Mark Marozick ..... Madison, WI  
Rev. Matthew Moldstad ..... North Mankato, MN  
Rev. Nicholas Proksch ..... Mankato, MN  
Rev. Trent Saari ..... Cottage Grove, WI  
Rev. J. Kincaid Smith ..... Mankato, MN  
Rev. Frederick Theiste ..... Eau Claire, WI  
Rev. Noah Thompson ..... East Grand Forks, MN  
Rev. David Jay Webber ..... Princeton, MN  
Rev. Thomas Zeller ..... Pleasant Hill, MO  
Mr. Craig Zibrowski ..... Mankato, MN  
Mr. Keith Duin ..... Port St. Lucie, FL  
Mr. Jeremiah Fern ..... San Antonio, TX  
Mr. Andrew Green ..... Princeton, MN  
Mr. Luke Schmidt ..... East Grand Forks, MN  
Mr. Neil Shaffer ..... New Hampton, IA  
Mr. Kermit Traska ..... Madison, WI

## 8. HIGHER EDUCATION

Rev. Kurtis Freimuth\* ..... Deshler, OH  
Rev. Nathanael Abrahamson ..... Cottage Grove, WI  
Rev. Colin Anderson ..... Suttons Bay, MI  
Dr. Adam Brasich ..... West Jordan, UT  
Rev. Timothy Buelow ..... Lake Havasu City, AZ  
Rev. Christopher Dale ..... Port St Lucie, FL  
Rev. David Emmons ..... Lombard, IL

Rev. Rodney Flohr ..... Cold Spring, MN  
 Rev. David Haeuser..... Waterloo, WI  
*Rev. Burgess Huehn ..... Eau Claire, WI*  
 Rev. Young Ha Kim ..... Las Vegas, NV  
 Rev. Kurt Kluge ..... Shawano, WI  
 Rev. Robert Lawson ..... Princeton, MN  
 Rev. Nicholas Lilienthal ..... Roseburg, OR  
 Rev. Jeffery Merseth ..... Oklee, MN  
 Rev. Andrew Palmquist ..... Luverne, MN  
 Mr. Larry Rude ..... Mankato, MN  
 Rev. Gregory Schmidt ..... Naples, FL  
 Rev. Steve Sparley..... Tacoma, WA  
 Rev. Luke Ulrich ..... Mankato, MN  
 Rev. Randy VanMehren..... Lakeland, FL  
 Rev. James Wilson..... Citronelle, AL  
 Mr. Jim Costello ..... New Hampton, IA  
 Mr. Rick Holz..... Madison, WI  
 Mr. Carl Jackson ..... San Antonio, TX  
 Mr. Aaron Liebelt..... St. Helens, OR  
 Mr. John Merseth..... St. Peter, MN  
 Mr. Ned Silber ..... Golden Valley, MN

**9. HOME OUTREACH**

Rev. Daniel Basel\* ..... Atlanta, MI  
 Rev. Mark Bartels..... Madison, WI  
 Mr. Dan Bruss ..... Pella, IA  
 Rev. Matthew Crick ..... Onalaska, WI  
 Rev. Ernest Geistfeld ..... Mankato, MN  
 Rev. Lloyd Harter..... Eau Claire, WI  
 Rev. Thomas Heyn ..... Madison, WI  
 Rev. Erich Hoeft ..... Holton, MI  
 Rev. Jacob Kempfert..... Saginaw, MI  
 Dr. Thomas Kuster ..... New Ulm, MN  
 Mr. Shu-Ting Lai ..... Port Orchard, WA  
 Rev. Gene Lilienthal..... Lengby, MN  
 Rev. Jonathan Madson ..... Vero Beach, FL  
 Rev. Donald Moldstad ..... Mankato, MN  
 Rev. Michael Muehlenhardt ..... Cottonwood, MN  
 Rev. Anthony Pittenger ..... Port Orchard, WA  
 Rev. Thomas Rank ..... Lake Mills, IA  
 Rev. Samuel Schmeling ..... Tracy, MN  
 Rev. Glenn Smith..... Forest City, IA  
 Dr. Erling Teigen..... Mankato, MN  
 Rev. Richard Warnecke ..... Kissimmee, FL  
 Rev. Paul Webber ..... Eau Claire, WI  
 Rev. Paul Zager ..... Flint, MI  
 Mr. Mike Brinkman..... Deshler, OH  
 Mr. Jerry Herbek..... Gresham, OR  
 Mr. Gary Johnson ..... Marinette, WI  
 Mr. Perry Lund ..... St. Peter, MN  
 Mr. Loren Meyer..... Indianola, IA  
 Mr. Randy Wise..... Princeton, MN

**10. WORLD OUTREACH**

Rev. Andrew Soule\* ..... Mankato, MN  
 Rev. Joseph Abrahamson ..... Vesta, MN  
 Mr. Silas Born ..... Mankato, MN  
 Rev. James Braun ..... Harwich, MA  
 Rev. Carl Busse ..... Amherst, OH  
 Rev. Erwin Ekhoff..... Minneapolis, MN  
 Rev. Craig Ferkenstad..... Mankato, MN  
 Rev. Theodore Gullixson ..... Mankato, MN  
 Rev. Jeffrey Hendrix ..... Oregon, WI  
 Rev. Bradley Homan ..... Cottage Grove, WI  
 Rev. Max Kerr ..... Midland, MI  
 Rev. Daniel Larson ..... Charles City, IA  
 Rev. Robert Lawson ..... The Dalles, OR  
 Rev. Jeffery Luplow ..... Curran, MI  
 Rev. Kenneth Mellon ..... Mankato, MN  
 Rev. Robert Otto..... Bloomer, WI  
 Rev. Mark Rogers..... Cape Girardeau, MO  
 Rev. Tosten Skaaland..... Wittenberg, WI  
 Rev. Bernt Tweit..... Crystal, MN  
 Rev. Richard Wiechmann..... Bloomington, MN  
 Mr. James Young..... Oconomowoc, WI  
 Mr. Jim Flantz..... Gaylord, MN  
 Mr. Bill Ivers ..... Hillsboro, OR  
 Mr. Daniel Lauth..... Marinette, WI  
 Mr. Erik Lee..... Port St. Lucie, FL

**11. ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

Rev. Patrick Ernst\* ..... Frankenmuth, MI  
 Rev. Darryl Bakke ..... Albert Lea, MN  
 Rev. Klebe Brumble ..... Waxahachie, TX  
 Rev. Edward Bryant ..... Washougal, WA  
 Rev. Mark DeGarmeaux..... Mankato, MN  
 Rev. Richard Fyffe..... Lake Havasu City, AZ  
 Rev. Adolph Harstad ..... North Mankato, MN  
 Dr. Daniel Hartwig..... West Bend, WI  
 Dr. Doyle Holbird ..... Eagle Lake, MN  
 Rev. Samuel Johnson..... Albert Lea, MN  
 Rev. Lee Kuhns ..... Sebring, FL  
 Rev. Phillip Lepak ..... Hopkins, MN  
 Rev. Michael Lilienthal ..... Belview, MN  
 Rev. Joshua Mayer..... Rogers, MN  
 Mr. Marvin Meyer ..... Brainerd, MN  
 Pres. Gene Pfeifer..... Mankato, MN  
 Rev. Daniel Ruiz ..... San Antonio, TX  
 Rev. Gaylin Schmeling ..... Mankato, MN  
 Dr. Michael Smith ..... Ames, IA  
 Rev. Paul Sullivan..... Waukesha, WI  
 Rev. Christian Walz..... Clara City, MN  
 Mr. Al Avant ..... Lakeland, FL  
 Mr. Rick Johnson..... Lawler, IA  
 Mr. Kevin Montague..... Hillsboro, OR  
 Mr. Aaron Neely ..... Indianola, IA  
 Mr. Ricky Pasillas..... Port Orchard, WA  
 Mr. Bob Reid ..... Gaylord, MN  
 Mr. David Roembke ..... West Bend, WI  
 Mr. John Schreiber..... Weatherford, TX

## 12. PARISH SERVICES

Rev. Peter Heyn\* ..... Green Bay, WI  
Rev. Harvey Abrahamson ..... Clintonville, WI  
Rev. Peter Bockoven ..... Mount Vernon, WA  
Rev. Andrew Burmeister ..... Medford, OR  
Rev. Robert Carter ..... Belle Plaine, MN  
Rev. Timothy Erickson ..... Dodge Center, MN  
Rev. Samuel Gullixson ..... Tacoma, WA  
Rev. Caleb Helmen ..... Thornton, IA  
Rev. Jesse Jacobsen ..... Port St Lucie, FL  
Rev. Brad Kerkow ..... North Mankato, MN  
Rev. Paul Lange ..... Oconomowoc, WI  
Rev. Boyd Longshore ..... Peyton, CO  
Rev. Matthew Luttman ..... Vero Beach, FL  
Rev. Nile Merseth ..... Somerset, WI  
Rev. Daniel Oberer ..... Rosemount, MN  
Rev. Alexander Ring ..... Port Saint Lucie, FL  
Dr. Timothy Schmeling ..... Mankato, MN  
Rev. Paul Schneider ..... Midland, MI  
Rev. Joshua Skogen ..... Scarville, IA  
Rev. Shawn Stafford ..... Janesville, MN  
Rev. Richard Tragasz ..... Siloam Springs, AR  
Rev. Benjamin Wiechmann ..... Mankato, MN  
Mr. Kirk Campbell ..... Gresham, OR  
Mr. Lyle Fahning ..... Apple Valley, MN  
Mr. Leroy Green ..... Weatherford, TX  
Mr. Don Kleman ..... Deshler, OH  
Mr. Kenneth Sell ..... Lakeland, FL

## 13. SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

*(also assigned to an additional committee)*

Dr. Adam Brasich ..... West Jordan, UT  
Rev. Gregory Haugen ..... Neenah, WI  
Rev. Martin Hoesch ..... Ames, IA  
Rev. Paul Lange ..... Oconomowoc, WI  
Mr. Ben Springer ..... North Mankato, MN

## 14. MISCELLANEOUS

Rev. Christian Eisenbeis\* ..... Marinette, WI  
Rev. Karl Anderson ..... Apple Valley, MN  
Rev. Matthew Brooks ..... Holts Summit, MO  
Rev. Michael Dale ..... Burlington, MA  
Rev. Mark Faugstad ..... Port St Lucie, FL  
Rev. Peter Faugstad ..... Lawler, IA  
Rev. Paul Fries ..... Mankato, MN  
Rev. Aaron Hamilton ..... Phoenix, AZ  
Rev. Martin Hoesch ..... Ames, IA  
Rev. Roger Holtz ..... DePere, WI  
Rev. Charles Keeler ..... Winter Haven, FL  
Rev. Bruce Leonatti ..... Irwin, PA  
Prof. Dennis Marzolf ..... Mankato, MN  
Rev. Daniel McQuality ..... Carthage, MO  
Rev. Homer Mosley ..... Olympia, WA  
Rev. Steven Petersen ..... Palm Bay, FL  
Rev. John Smith ..... Shawano, WI  
Rev. Thomas Smuda ..... Rogers City, MI  
Rev. David Thompson ..... North Mankato, MN

Rev. Larry Vinton ..... Acworth, GA  
Rev. Timothy Zenda ..... Princeton, MN  
Mr. Marv Eiler ..... Lawler, IA  
Mr. Jason Eisenbeis ..... Apple Valley, MN  
Mr. Sterling Korstad ..... Rogers, MN  
Mr. Ronald Menough ..... Rogers, MN  
Mr. Dan Weaver ..... Winter Haven, FL

## 15. PASTORAL CONFERENCE RECORDS AND RESOLUTIONS

*(also assigned to an additional committee)*

Rev. Daniel Faugstad ..... Redwood Falls, MN  
Rev. Robert Otto ..... Bloomer, WI  
Mr. Larry Rude ..... Mankato, MN

## 16. TELLERS

Vicar Skylar Hepler  
Vicar Caleb Strutz  
Vicar Caleb VonDeylen  
Rev. Matthew Lehne  
Rev. Cody Anderson  
Rev. Caleb Helmen  
Rev. Max Kerr

## 17. CHAPLAIN

Rev. Andrew Burmeister ..... Medford, OR

## 18. HEAD USHERS

Rev. Micah Ernst ..... Eugene, MO  
Rev. Christian Walz ..... Clara City, MN

## 19. PARLIAMENTARIANS

Rev. Craig Ferkenstad ..... Mankato, MN  
Dr. Brian Klebig ..... Mankato, MN

## 20. ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Rev. Samuel Gullixson ..... Tacoma, WA

## COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS—INELIGIBLES

Rev. Mark Bartels  
Mr. John Baumann  
Mr. Bill Bohning  
Mr. Dan Browning  
Mr. Kirk Campbell  
Mr. Greg Costello  
Rev. Michael Dale  
Rev. Mark E. DeGarmeaux  
Mr. Ben Faugstad  
Mr. James Flantz  
Rev. Paul Fries  
Rev. Jerome Gernander  
Mr. Shaun Grabow  
Rev. Samuel Gullixson  
Rev. Tim Hartwig  
Rev. Thomas Heyn  
Mr. Chris Hoffman

Rev. James Kassera  
Rev. Brad Kerkow  
Mr. Donald Kleman  
Mr. Todd Knutson  
Mr. Shu-Ting Lai  
Rev. Phillip Lepak  
Rev. Jonathan Madson  
Rev. Kyle Madson  
Mr. Paul Manning  
Dr. Joshua Mears  
Mr. Paul Mielbrecht  
Rev. Glenn Obenberger  
Mr. Mark Perlwitz  
Rev. John Petersen  
Rev. Alexander Ring  
Rev. Gaylin Schmeling  
Dr. Timothy Schmeling  
Rev. Josh Skogen  
Dr. Michael Smith  
Mr. David Sparley  
Rev. Steven Sparley  
Rev. Shawn Stafford  
Rev. David Thompson  
Rev. Bernt Tweit  
Mr. Philip Wels

\* denotes temporary chairman  
*Names in italics are to be received into  
membership at this convention*

# COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

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5. Minutes.....	Sports and Fitness Center
6. Doctrine.....	BORAM, page 22 BORAM, page 23 BORAM, page 80 Honsey Hall – Room 210
7. Finances .....	BORAM, page 56 BORAM, page 73 Honsey Hall – Room 311
8. Higher Education.....	BORAM, page 25 BORAM, page 28 BORAM, page 34 Honsey Hall – Room 337
9. Home Outreach .....	BORAM, page 37 BORAM, page 79 Honsey Hall – Room 214
10. World Outreach .....	BORAM, page 40 Honsey Hall – Room 313
11. Elementary Education .....	BORAM, page 48 Honsey Hall – Room 215
12. Parish Services .....	BORAM, page 51 BORAM, page 53 BORAM, page 54 Honsey Hall – Room 213
13. Synodical Membership .....	BORAM, page 16 BORAM, page 18 Honsey Hall – Room 239
14. Miscellaneous .....	BORAM, page 78 Honsey Hall – Room 212
15. Pastoral Conference Records and Resolutions.....	BORAM, page 17 BORAM, page 18 Honsey Hall – Room 237

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*Committee #1: President's Message and Report (unless noted otherwise)*

## ORDINATION AND INSTALLATIONS

Candidate of Theology Matthew Lehne was ordained and installed at Parkland Lutheran Church on June 30, 2024. He will be involved with the congregation's plan to daughter a mission congregation in Graham, Washington.

Rev. Jesse Jacobsen was installed as pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Port St. Lucie, Florida on Sunday, July 21, 2024.

Rev. Edward Bryant was installed as the ELS Congregational Counselor working for the Board for Home Outreach at the General Pastoral Conference Communion service on October 2, 2025, at King of Grace Lutheran Church, Golden Valley, Minnesota.

Rev. Samuel Johnson was installed at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Albert Lea, Minnesota on January 5, 2024. He also serves as pastor of First Shell Rock Lutheran Church in Northwood, Iowa.

The Rev. Lee Kuhns was installed as pastor at New Life Ev. Lutheran Church in Sebring, Florida on Sunday, February 16. The Rev. Wayne Schoch was the preacher, the Rev. Daniel Wagenknecht served as lector and the Rev. Mark Faugstad served as liturgist and performed the rite of installation. The congregation welcomed Pastor Kuhns and his wife Pam with the ladies of New Life providing a meal after the service.

## COLLOQUY (*Committee #13: Synodical Membership*)

On July 1, 2024 the Colloquy Committee met with the Rev. Burgess Huehn. He is currently a member of Concordia Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wisconsin (ELS). He has served as pastor in the WELS, ELS, and the CLC. He has been retired since 2011. Rev. Huehn would like the ability to help with preaching not only in his home congregation as requested by his pastor, but perhaps other churches in our fellowship. In order to do this in other congregations within our fellowship he needs to be on the ELS clergy roster. Based on our discussions with Rev. Huehn, it was determined that he is in agreement with the teachings and practices of the ELS. During our conversations we also discussed such things as his professional attitudes and ethics and his previous congregational experience.

The ELS Colloquy Committee met on August 16, 2024, for Part II of the colloquy and passed the following: "*Resolved*, that Rev. Burgess Huehn is in agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in doctrine and practice and is recommended for permanent membership in the synod at the synod's 2025 convention."

The Rev. Huehn Colloquy Committee was comprised of: Pres. G. Obenberger (chair), Vice President M. Smith (secretary), Pres. T. Hartwig, Prof. T. Rank, Mr. G. Costello, Rev. L. Ulrich and Prof. P. Lund.

## GRAND OPENING IN EAGLE LAKE

On Sunday, September 8, 2024, an outdoor, grand opening service was held in Eagle Lake, Minnesota. The congregation of Peace Lutheran, North Mankato, Minnesota, is beginning this preaching station as a daughter. Services are being held at the city hall building. A cake reception followed the grand opening service.

## ANNIVERSARY

On Saturday, August 24, 2024 the congregation of First Lutheran Church, Suttons Bay, Michigan celebrated her 150th anniversary. A festival service was held at 3:00 p.m. with four former pastors participating. ELS President Glenn Obenberger preached on Luke 19:37-44 with the theme, "Celebrate the Time of Jesus' Gracious Visitation of Eternal Peace." A catered reception was held outside at a local park pavilion at 5:00 p.m. with former pastors and vacancy pastors speaking. One hundred people attended the festival service.

## MEMBERSHIP REQUEST (*Committee #13: Synodical Membership*)

Matthew Lehne, a graduate of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, has applied for membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

## DECOMMISSIONING AND CONGREGATIONS MERGED

The Somber congregation (rural Northwood, Iowa) officially decommissioned its church building on September 8, 2024. The congregations of Lake Mills, Lime Creek, and Somber voted earlier to unite as one congregation, at the Lake Mills location. They have adopted a new constitution with the name Grace Lutheran Church. The new congregation, together with Forest City and Thompson, is served by Pastor Glenn Smith.



## CHURCH MOVING

Scarville Lutheran Church purchased the old ELCA church building in Scarville, Iowa, and moved its worship location to the newer building. The school will occupy the former church building. The final service at the historic church was conducted on April 6, 2025, at an 11:00 a.m. divine service. A dinner followed the service. The dedication of the new church building was at 2:15 p.m.

## RETIREMENTS

The Rev. Jonathan Madson retired on July 31, 2024.

After accepting a teaching position in a classical school in Minnetonka, Minnesota, Pastor Phil Lepak announced his retirement from the full-time pastoral ministry effective on September 22, 2024. He accepted a call to serve as a bi-vocational pastor at Manchester Lutheran Church, Manchester, Minnesota, on September 24, 2024.

## RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

After the 2024 convention per the request of the Doctrine Committee at its March 2024 meeting, Dr. Erling Teigen was appointed as an advisory member to the Doctrine Committee.

Rev. Craig Ferkenstad was appointed to the Synod Review Committee.

Rev. James Braun and Lance Schwartz were appointed as members of the Committee of Communication for one-year terms.

Rev. Kyle Madson has served the ELS as the content editor of the *Lutheran Sentinel* for the last nine years. At the 2024 convention he was elected to be the synod secretary. Due to these added responsibilities Kyle has had to resign as content editor of the *Lutheran Sentinel*. Rev. James Braun, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Brewster, Massachusetts, has been appointed as the next content editor. The ELS Committee for Communication has ratified this appointment.

Rev. Kyle Madson also served on the BYO for the past 12 years. Due to new demands with synod secretary work, he also resigned from his position on that board. Rev. Abraham Faugstad was appointed to that vacant position on October 2, 2024.

Since Chan Smith was elected in 2024 to the Board of Trustees, he resigned from the Board for Home Outreach effective November 7, 2024. Dean Schoop was appointed to that vacant position on the BHO on November 7, 2024.

Since Rev. Jim Braun served as chairman of the ELS/ELDK Liaison Committee (EELC) and needed to resign with new duties as the *Lutheran Sentinel* editor, Rev. Sean Scheele was appointed as chair of the EELC, and Rev. Chris Eisenbeis was added as a member.

## DEATHS (*Committee #15: Pastoral Conference Records and Resolutions*)

Ione Lillegard, wife of the late pastor and missionary Rev. David Lillegard, entered eternal glory on July 9, 2024.

June Moldstad, the widow of the Rev. John Moldstad Sr., died on July 19, 2024.

Ardyce Bartels, the widow of Rev. Harry Bartels and mother of Pastors Tim and Mark Bartels, was transferred to the Church Triumphant on October 23, 2024.

Laurie Sullivan, wife of Pastor Emeritus Paul Sullivan, entered eternal glory on Thursday, November 21, 2024.

## ANNIVERSARY IN SWEDEN

The fiftieth anniversary of the Lutheran Confessional Church in Sweden (LBK) was observed at a conference conducted on July 17–21, 2024, under the existential question: *“After 50 Years—Do We Need a Confessional Church Today?”* This jubilee celebration took place at Hjälmargården, Vingåker, Sweden. President Obenberger attended on behalf of our ELS. It was a joy to be present for this gathering comprised of pastors and members from the Lutheran Confessional Church–Sweden, Norway & Finland (LBK). Presentations were made on the six chief parts of the Small Catechism, the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Lutheran hymnbook, and the impact of Dr. Siegbert Becker (WELS) in the formation and early years of the LBK. Near the closing of the event there were six presenters, clergy and lay, who spoke on the subject: *“The Way Forward.”* Many young families with children were present for the week-long retreat/conference. This has been a long-time customary gathering, so that many of the adults reminisced about attending it in their youth. They showed themselves to be a close-knit church body, which demonstrates its love for Jesus, His word, one another and welcoming to visitors. The singing of many hymns was not only part of worship services, but also before and after every presentation. The answer to the existential question was a resounding “Yes!” While all the pastors in Norway, Sweden and Finland are bi-vocational, they continue to find interested Lutherans from the State Churches that appreciate the faithfulness of this small free church and seek to be part of the LBK. In addition to preaching in Avaldness, Norway and being well received, your president and his wife, Lisa, were shown true Christian hospitality at every turn during their trip among the members of the LBK.

## **CONSTITUTION REVISIONS** (*Committee #13: Synodical Membership*)

Bethany Lutheran Church, Ames, Iowa  
Ascension Lutheran Church, St. Helens, Oregon  
Faith Lutheran Church, Oregon, Wisconsin  
Faith Lutheran Church, San Antonio, Texas  
Grace Lutheran Church, Lake Mills, Iowa  
Christ Lutheran Church, Sutherlin, Oregon

## **ANNIVERSARIES OF ORDINATIONS** (*Committee #15: Pastoral Conference Records and Resolutions*)

Timothy Bartels—40 years  
Mark DeGarmeaux—40 years  
Rodney Flohr—40 years  
Doyle Holbird—40 years  
Dennis Marzolf—40 years  
Donald Moldstad—40 years  
John Petersen—40 years  
Thomas Rank—40 years  
Matthew Brooks—25 years  
Matthew Crick—25 years  
Bradley Kerkow—25 years  
Shawn Stafford—25 years

## **CONGREGATIONS VISITED**

Since June 2024 your president has been privileged to preach in thirteen of our ELS congregations and to make presentations in three ELS congregations; conducted three congregational meetings; preached six times in the Bethany Lutheran College Trinity Chapel, also at the LYA Convention; and visited five ELS congregations.

## **PASTORAL CONFERENCES ATTENDED**

The ELS President attended at least in part the Circuit #7 Pastor Conference, Manchester, Minnesota (Sept. 9); the ELS General Pastoral Conference, Bloomington, Minnesota (Oct. 2–4); presented at the Bethany Lutheran College Reformation Lectures (Oct. 31 & Nov. 1); “Never Confounded” Pastor’s Retreat, Houston, Texas (Feb. 18–20); West Coast Pastor Conference, Scottsdale, Arizona (Apr. 30 & May 1); Great Lakes Pastoral Conference, Shawano, Wisconsin (May. 12 & 13); Great Plains Pastoral Conference, Mankato, Minnesota (May 21).

## **CIRCUIT VISITORS** (*Committee #15: Pastoral Conference Records and Resolutions*)

Circuit Visitors (and alternates) have been overseeing call meetings in various ELS parishes throughout the past year and conducting regular visitations. The Circuit Visitor Conference was conducted September 12–13, 2024 in Eagan, Minnesota. A paper entitled “*How To Serve As An Effective Circuit Visitor*” was presented by Rev. P. Schneider. Reports were given regarding the Congregational Counselor position by Revs. Brad Kerkow and Ed Bryant; regarding the Giving Counselor position by Mr. Paul Manning; and regarding BLTS and BLC by Presidents Tim Hartwig and Gene Pfeifer respectively. Revs. Aaron Ferkenstad and Peter Faugstad gave a report requested in 2023 for revising the make-up of the 12 ELS Circuits; it resulted in the following resolution to be considered at the 2025 convention:

- WHEREAS, The current arrangement of circuits in the synod was adopted in 2002, and,  
WHEREAS, Since that time, some circuits have seen significant increases or decreases in the number of congregations, and,  
WHEREAS, The circuit visitors at their September 2024 meeting recommended revisions to the circuits, therefore,  
A. BE IT RESOLVED, That the Hobart and Lombard congregations join circuit 5, and,  
B. BE IT RESOLVED, That the Portage and Wisconsin Dells congregations join circuit 6, and,  
C. BE IT RESOLVED, That circuit 9 be divided into two circuits, with an eastern Minnesota and western Wisconsin circuit comprised of the congregations in Apple Valley, Cold Spring, Eau Claire, Farmington, Golden Valley, Menomonie, Princeton, and Rogers, and a western and southern Minnesota circuit comprised of the congregations in Belview, Clara City, Cottonwood, [Eagle Lake], Gaylord, Luverne, Mankato, North Mankato, St. Peter, and Tracy, and,  
D. BE IT RESOLVED, That all other circuit designations remain as they currently are, and,  
E. BE IT RESOLVED, That the circuits be renumbered according to geography: Circuit 1 (Florida), Circuit 2 (Massachusetts), Circuit 3 (Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania), Circuit 4 (Illinois, Indiana, southeast Wisconsin), Circuit 5 (mid-northern Wisconsin), Circuit 6 (northern Minnesota), Circuit 7 (eastern Minnesota, western Wisconsin),

Circuit 8 (western, southern Minnesota), Circuit 9 (south-central Minnesota, Iowa), Circuit 10 (Missouri, Texas), Circuit 11 (Arizona, California, Utah), Circuit 12 (Oregon, Washington), and, F. BE IT RESOLVED, That these changes go into effect with the election of circuit visitors in 2026. Pastor Emeritus status was awarded to Revs. Carl Busse and Jonathan Madson.

## **COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNICATION**

The ELS Committee for Communication did not meet as a group during 2024. Several items were discussed via email and each of the members advised the communication director individually.

## **AD HOC COMMITTEES**

### ***ELS Pastoral Support Committee***

The Pastoral Support Committee hosted the “Never Confounded” Pastoral Retreat in Houston, Texas on February 17–21, 2025. Twenty-five pastors from all experience levels and across the country took part in the retreat with the help of three additional laymen. It was an ambitious schedule of presentations designed to inform and encourage the pastors. Most definitely from the reviews, the preaching and worship services were the highlights of the week. Your president attended and it met all his expectations in that it provided an event that should have renewed and revived our pastors who attended in the work of their callings. A couple years ago we made available through generous grants from the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation the opportunities for some of our pastors to attend the LCMS associated DOXOLOGY sessions. The retreat was conducted for the same purpose, but our ELS retreat allowed the participants to engage fully in the worship aspects of the event. While not the main purpose, the retreat also served our desire to achieve a more harmonious working relationship among our ELS pastors at least among the participants but hopefully beyond through word of mouth. The retreat was truly a Gospel-centric strengthening experience, so when the convicting law in the presentations was heard, not only were the participants forgiven in the presentations, but the following offices and services spoke directly to their guilt and shame abundantly granting forgiveness, life and salvation in Jesus’ name at every turn. God be praised for giving us such an opportunity and we pray that this might be repeated for others to experience in some form in the future.

The committee members are: Revs. Samuel Gullixson (chair), Peter Faugstad, Jesse Jacobson, Mr. Mark Perlwitz, and Dr. Joshua Mears. The committee has been asked to serve another year in the hopes of arranging another retreat, perhaps also including pastors’ wives.

### ***ELS-ELDK Liaison Committee***

The pastors and congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of Kenya (ELDK) are moving forward with their mission as God blesses them, with a firm faith in Christ as the Holy Spirit preserves and strengthens that faith through the gospel and sacraments. The pastors and congregations of the ELDK have a strong fraternal bond, born from the conflicts they have endured together in their struggles to remain faithful and to withstand the attacks of their adversaries. In the midst of these challenges, they remain positive and optimistic. Independently, an ELS congregation has established a special fund, which supports educational projects in the ELDK. That fund was drawn on during the past year to help pay for a semester of education in the ELDK seminary program. In August 2024 that fund was drawn on to help pay for a day-long women’s conference, for ELDK pastors’ wives, deaconesses, and other women in the congregations. Three ELS women served as online presenters: Elisabeth Urtel, Rebecca DeGarmeaux, and Ellen Erickson. In March 2025 that fund was also drawn on to help pay for an ELDK pastors’ conference, with ELS pastors Christian Eisenbeis, Paul Webber, and Jay Webber serving as online presenters. On September 14, 2024, the ELDK and the Lutheran Churches in Mission for Christ in Kenya signed a memorandum of agreement, formally recognizing their fellowship with each other and establishing avenues of cooperation. The LCMC is a Confessional Lutheran church body based in a different region of the country which is a member-church of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference, and which has a special working relationship with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The LCMC is endorsing the ELDK’s application for membership in the CELC, for which the ELDK has asked the ELS to serve as its sponsor. The ELS president maintains communication with the ELDK, as an ELS sister church, through an ELS-Kenya Liaison Committee consisting of Revs. Sean Scheele (chairman), Jay Webber (corresponding secretary), Karl Anderson, and Christian Eisenbeis; and Mr. Chris Hoffman. Two representatives of the ELDK (President Evans Mokuia Gwachi and Pastor David Ongwaye Ombogo) are attending the 2025 convention of the ELS.

### **Regarding Res. #2, “ELS-ELDK Liaison Committee (EELC) (*Synod Report, 2024, page 69*)**

On October 2, 2024 a meeting was conducted among the following: Dan Browning (BWO chair); Tom Rank (DC chair); Erich Hoeft (BCS chair), James Braun (EELC chair) and President Obenberger. A variety of questions were discussed and all seemed satisfied with the answers. The Synod Review Committee is also recommending a slight wording change in the guidelines making clear the roles of the president, Doctrine Committee and the Board of World Outreach/administrator in regard to independent church bodies within our fellowship, see the 2025 SRC report. The minutes of this meeting were submitted to all present on October 11 and with no objections raised, on October 15 they were approved.

## AD HOC PRESIDENTIAL COUNCILS

### *Advisory Council on Secular Politics*

The Advisory Council on Secular Politics was formed to advise whenever there may be a matter that might be judged to be “political” in nature by the president, respective board, committee or institution. The committee only meets advises when a request is made. Members of the committee are Rev. Ed Bryant, Rev. Paul Fries (chair), Rev. Charles Keeler, and Rev. Thomas Kuster.

### *Presidential Harmony Advisory Council*

In 2023 the Planning and Coordinating Committee determined that the number one critical issue facing the synod was the disharmony among the ELS clergy. While it has been a concerning issue already recognized at the time of President Orvick, it was determined that because we are united in doctrine and want always to seek the unity which our Lord desires to find among us, a pastoral approach would be sought seeking improvements. Therefore, an advisory council of five ELS pastors was formed to serve the president. They are: Revs. Nathanael Abrahamson, Kurtis Freimuth, Kyle Madson, Donald Moldstad, and Paul Webber (Mr. Todd Russ, from Grace in Action, serves as an observer and advisor.). These men were chosen since, while having differing views and sensibilities (in Christian freedom) on various matters, a healthy discussion and counsel can take place that in the end could help shape and guide the entire clergy roster to enhance a more harmonious working relationship among us. Beginning in October 2024, we have been meeting monthly via zoom and have found the discussions fruitful and rewarding. Currently a roundtable podcast of a few pastors is being planned to be recorded in June 2025. If this achieves the purpose of the Advisory Council it will be made available to all the ELS clergy. Other ideas and suggestions are being considered as well. Please pray to the Lord of the Church that He would bless these efforts toward this good and godly aim of harmony among our clergy in the spirit of Col. 3:15–17.

## WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD (WELS)

The Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum met on October 21–22, 2024, on the Bethany College Campus, Mankato Minnesota. This biennial meeting consists of twelve representatives from each of our synods.

After reports given by Presidents Mark Schroeder and Glenn Obenberger on their respective synod, we heard and discussed a presentation: “The Church Sings: Hymns as Declaration, Doctrine, and Doxology” given by Rev. Mark DeGarmeaux. This was a presentation prepared for The Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education (CCLE) in summer 2024.

Then there was a review of essay from 2024 ELS convention, “Walk Circumspectly in the World God So Loves” by Rev. James Braun led by Rev. Paul Prange. Discussion followed. Then there was a review of the WELS “Instruction, encouragement, and guidance regarding God’s unchanging truths as presented in ‘Scriptural Principles of Man and Woman Roles’” led by Rev. Mike Jensen, chairman of the WELS Conference of Presidents subcommittee that worked on this document. A formal response was given by Rev. Tom Rank. Discussion followed.

Then a presentation of an essay was given “Why were early Synodical Conference pastors so concerned about Pietism?” by Rev. Donald Moldstad, a presentation originally prepared for the faculty of Bethany Lutheran College. Discussion followed.

As is customary the various shared departments met separately and gave a report from their joint discussions to a plenary session: Administration, Communications, Doctrine/Seminary, Higher Education, Home Missions, World Missions, Schools, Stewardship.

## WELS-ELS-LCMS: INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS

Twenty-four representatives from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS), and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) met on December 9–10, 2024, in Florida to continue our annual informal discussions. This meeting was the twelfth in-person meeting. Like the others, it was an opportunity to compare notes on the challenges that our synods face, and to talk about doctrinal points on which we agree and disagree—without any indication that we will come back into fellowship any time soon. The ELS representatives were Pres. G. Obenberger, VP M. Smith, DC Chairman T. Rank, and Sem. Pres. T. Hartwig.

This year the ELS had an opportunity to present its 2005 statement on the public ministry. The WELS and ELS had presentations on their respective statements on the role of women in the Church and the LCMS chronicled its history leading up to the 1969 decision to allow for women suffrage synod-wide and its subsequent implementation and development of this decision.

Plans are being made to meet again in December 2025. There was some discussion about the possibility of holding free conferences to share more fully what we have discussed in these meetings. Your president voiced some concerns that in the ELS document “Unity, Union and Unionism,” (<https://els.org/beliefs/doctrinal-statements/unity-union-and-unionism/>) while endorsing the concept of free conferences, these were normally organic in nature, grassroots endeavors and not organized by synodical administrations. A plan how best to address this was assigned to the four seminary presidents of the three synods with a report due for consideration in 2025.

While it continues to be the consensus among all the participants that these meetings will remain informal for the foreseeable future with no joint statements of agreement being produced, it is good to be reminded of the historical event that occurred in the LCMS in 1974, namely, Seminex. It especially strikes the ELS representatives that while all three synods were part of the Synodical Conference until the mid-twentieth century, a deterioration of fellowship in the LCMS can be documented already beginning in the 1930s, especially in the area of prayer fellowship. After a four-decade practice of increasing joint worship with heterodox church bodies, a goodly number of LCMS theologians were affected in their commitment to Lutheran orthodoxy especially in regard to their understanding of the Holy Scriptures. This lesson from history in regard to fellowship practices does not seem to have been learned by the LCMS in general in its recent review of the fiftieth anniversary of that tragic event with long lasting results. While not a cause, but only the fruit of this theological shift, we also take note of the 1969 change in regard to the role of women in the church as a departure from the commonly held restrictions acknowledged in the order of creation according to Scripture.

Since there are still many mutual interests and concerns coming from a confessional Lutheran position in a world that brings many challenges externally and internally, these meetings do still serve several salutary purposes. The three synods are able to share successes and failures each face, so that information and encouragements can be received by all in these informal gatherings. Whether a God-pleasing unity based on the doctrine of Christ will ever be recognized on this side of heaven, only the Lord knows, but we remain cautiously engaged with our eyes wide open.

### **INACTIVE MEMBERS**

There are no inactive ELS clergy required to seek an extension of membership on the ELS clergy roster at this time, per the Guidelines for the Clergy Roster (III. A).

### **FUTURE CONVENTION PLANS**

#### **2026 – “Our Father, by Whose Name All Fatherhood Is Known”** | Essayist: Rev. Alexander Ring

On June 7, 1526, Hans, the first of seven children, was born to Martin and Katherine Luther. Dr. Luther taught the church much about the vocation of fatherhood, by word and deed. We live in an age when fatherhood has been assaulted for decades by the changing worldviews in our western culture, which have included a well-intentioned welfare system that has often inadvertently replaced the beneficial care of fathers in the home, radical feminism, male-bashing with a commonly used pejorative expression—“testosterone toxicity,” etc. Christ’s Church has been unduly influenced by these cultural attacks. We intend in this 500th anniversary year of Dr. Luther’s beginning experience with fatherhood to reinforce what Scripture teaches on the vocation of fatherhood and the reaffirming role fatherhood plays in the home, society and the church.

This will also allow us to recognize the significant 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of our country as well. As Luther rightly taught - God instituted all forms of authority in this life as an outgrowth of parental authority. In his Large Catechism he wrote in regard to the Fourth Commandment: “So we have two kinds of fathers presented in this commandment: fathers in blood and fathers in office. Or, those who have the care of the family and those who have the care of the country.” (*Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions, CPH, 2005, p. 377*)

#### **2027 – “The Synod Needs Just Such a School”** | Essayist: Rev. Steven Sparley, who is a lifelong ELS member and an alum of BLC.

We will observe the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our beloved institution of higher learning for the synod – Bethany Lutheran College. The theme is based on this 1927 quotation by S. C. Ylvisaker as he spoke in favor of the synod purchasing Bethany Lutheran College: “The Synod needs just such a school to gather itself around.” 100 years later in our appreciation for her we still contemplate the role of Bethany Lutheran College for the ELS and ask ourselves the existential rhetorical question posed in 2018: “The college and synod are intimately united. The college gives a visibility and identity to the synod. After its purchase, it became a rallying point without which the synod may not have survived. This relationship is yet reflected in the strong sentiments held by the synod as it elects both the members of the Board of Regents and the Board of Trustees for the college. In turn, the synod gives moorings to the college. Could either exist without the other?” (*Proclaim His Wonders, by Craig Ferkenstad, 2018, p. 225*) So while BLC will commence its observance of this significant anniversary in 2026, marking how in 1926 the Association (74 individual synod members) formed and purchased the school, the synod will celebrate in 2027, marking how in 1927 it made the decision, not by an overwhelming majority, to make it the synod’s school.

*Glenn R. Obenberger, president*

# REPORT OF THE DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

*Committee #6: Doctrine*

On the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Luther's *Bondage of the Will*: "Thus God hides his eternal goodness and mercy under eternal wrath, his righteousness under iniquity. This is the highest degree of faith, to believe him merciful when he saves so few and damns so many, and to believe him righteous when by his own will he makes us necessarily damnable, so that he seems, according to Erasmus, to delight in the torments of the wretched and to be worthy of hatred rather than of love. If, then, I could by any means comprehend how this God can be merciful and just who displays so much wrath and iniquity, there would be no need of faith. As it is, since that cannot be comprehended, there is room for the exercise of faith when such things are preached and published, just as when God kills, the faith of life is exercised in death" (Luther, *Bondage of the Will*, LW 33, 62–62).

## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The committee consists of the following: Mr. Gregory Costello, Pastor Jerry Gernander, Seminary Pres. Timothy Hartwig, Dr. Timothy Schmeling, Prof. Thomas Rank, Dr. David Reagles, and the Rev. David Jay Webber. President Glenn Obenberger is an advisory member, and Vice President Michael Smith is an advisory member. Prof. Em. Erling Teigen serves as an advisory member. The committee's three meetings were devoted to the consideration of doctrinal questions and other matters referred to it by the synod convention, the synodical president, the chairman of the committee, and groups or other individuals within the synod.

The committee held regular meetings August 15, 2024; December 16, 2024; and March 10, 2025.

## WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

The committee met with representatives of the WELS Conference of Presidents Doctrine Committee in January 2025. The meeting continued a study of Luther's "Bondage of the Will" (led by Pres. Treptow of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary). Time was spent on various doctrinal issues and concerns each synod is facing. There was mutual encouragement as we work faithfully to confess Christ. We are planning on meeting annually with the representatives of the WELS.

## INFORMAL MEETING WITH THE LUTHERAN CHURCH–MISSOURI SYNOD

For the past thirteen years, representatives from the ELS and from the WELS have been holding informal discussions with representatives from the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS). The most recent meeting occurred December 4–5, 2024, in Jacksonville, Florida. There were updates from the presidents regarding their respective synods. The following items were discussed: the ministry (with presentations from the LCMS, WELS, & ELS), history of the role of women in the church in the LCMS (women's suffrage), the WELS' 2024 pastoral letter on the role of women, and the 1990 ELS statement on the roles of men and women in the church. The ELS was represented by President G. Obenberger, Vice President M. Smith, Seminary President T. Hartwig, and Doctrine Committee chairman, T. Rank.

## EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN DIOCESE OF KENYA

The ELS at the 2023 convention formally recognized and declared it is in full doctrinal fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of Kenya (ELDK). At the December 2024 meeting of the Doctrine Committee the motion was made and passed that the ELS sponsor the ELDK for membership in the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC).

## OTHER WORK

The committee continued an on-going study of the articles of the Formula of Concord. This past year we read through Articles II (Free Will), III (Righteousness of Faith), and IV (Good Works). The essay "Ceremonies that Teach; Ceremonies that Confess," was studied. Other topics included discussion of the use and value of liturgical innovations, the use of hymnody from non-Lutheran sources, and 21<sup>st</sup> century "Church Growth" methods. Plans are being made for an in-depth study of the articles of faith as presented in the Augsburg Confession as its quincentenary approaches (2030) to be published as a book. This project is led by a subcommittee: Pastor J. Gernander, Dr. T. Schmeling, Pastor J. Webber. Recommendations are welcomed for pastor and lay authors for the various articles.

The committee completed a series of articles on aspects of non-Christian worldviews that affect our pastors and congregations. The committee is working with the editor of the *Lutheran Sentinel* to provide further articles on a variety of topics.

## THEOLOGICAL TRENDS

The Doctrine Committee is to keep informed of doctrinal trends and issues within the church at large. These include issues facing Lutheran synods in America, various worldviews, Critical Theory, apologetics, topics under the LGBTQ heading, the

influence of feminism, the “church growth” movement, “contemporary worship” practices, modern gnostic influences, modern challenges to the Lutheran teaching on the two kingdoms, universalism, Christian nationalism, etc. The committee members continue to monitor and read from a variety of sources, including theological journals, magazines, periodicals, internet materials and discussions, and theological essays.

*We all believe in one true God,  
Who created earth and heaven,  
The Father, who to us in love  
Hath the right of children given.  
He both soul and body feedeth,  
All we need He doth provide us.  
He through snares and perils leadeth,  
Watching that no harm betide us.  
He careth for us day and night;  
All things are governed by His might.*

*We all believe in Jesus Christ,  
His own Son, our Lord, possessing  
An equal Godhead, throne, and might,  
Source of ev'ry grace and blessing.  
Born of Mary, virgin mother,  
By the power of the Spirit,  
Made true man, our elder Brother,  
That the lost might life inherit,  
Was crucified for sinful men  
And raised by God to life again.*

*We all confess the Holy Ghost,  
Who sweet grace and comfort giveth  
And with the Father and the Son  
In eternal glory liveth  
Who the Church, His own creation,  
Keeps in unity of spirit;  
Here forgiveness and salvation  
Daily come through Jesus' merit.  
All flesh shall rise, and we shall be  
In bliss with God eternally.*

(ELH 38)

*Prof. Thomas L. Rank, chairman  
Dr. David Reagles, secretary*

## **REPORT OF THE BOARD ON APOLOGETICS**

*Committee #6: Doctrine*

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Board members include Dr. Doyle Holbird (chairman), Prof. Shawn Stafford (vice chairman), Pastor Peter Heyn (secretary), Mr. Donald Kleman (treasurer), and Prof. Allen Quist. Pres. Glenn Obenberger serves as a non-voting advisory member. Others welcomed who attend in an unofficial capacity include Vice President Michael Smith, seminary President Timothy Hartwig, and Mr. Job Wosmek (webmaster).

### **THE CENTER FOR APOLOGETICS AND WORLDVIEWS: GOVERNANCE**

The ELS Board on Apologetics oversees the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews (CAW) and its director. CAW is a synodical endeavor that works with our congregations, seminary, college, boards, and other entities of the synod. The board and CAW

endeavor to promote the biblical understanding of evidence for the truth of Christianity and critique competing worldviews to fortify Christians in biblical truth and to prepare them to answer questions and objections—with gentleness and respect—so Christ may be shared wisely and boldly in a post-Christian culture. Rev. David Thompson serves as the director of CAW since being installed on February 4, 2024. His office located in the Milton Tweit Hall on the campus of Bethany Lutheran College.

## THE EFFORTS AND WORK OF CAW

On June 20, 2024 the Sixth Annual Apologetics and Worldview Conference was held at Bethany under the theme “Defending the Gospel of God—The Apologetics of Jesus, Paul, and the Historical Reliability of the New Testament Records.” Presentations included “*Defending the Historical Reliability of the Gospels*” (Dr. Adam Francisco), “*Understanding and Applying the Apologetics of Paul*” (Prof. Luke Thompson), and “*Understanding and Applying the Apologetics of Jesus*” (Rev. David Thompson).

On June 19 and 20 of this year, CAW will conduct the Seventh Annual Apologetics and Worldview Conference in Bethany’s Trinity Chapel. The theme is “Unsurpassed Christian Apologists.” The work of one of Christianity’s most remarkable apologists, Dr. John Warwick Montgomery (1931-2024), will be recognized, along with that of C.S. Lewis and several other early Christian apologists. They leave behind unsurpassed encouragement and wisdom for the church of today. Presentations and presenters include: “*The Legacy of John Warwick Montgomery*” (trial lawyer Craig Parton); “*The Legacy of C.S. Lewis*” (C.S. Lewis scholar and Lutheran theologian Dr. Joel Heck); and “*The Legacy of Early Christian Apologists*” (Oxford graduate and Lutheran theologian Dr. Adam Francisco). The conference is free, open to the public, and will also be livestreamed.

CAW’s **website** ([www.apologeticscenter.org](http://www.apologeticscenter.org)) includes **Resources** (papers, essays, articles, video archives, recommended books), an **Events** page (recordings of past conferences and a list of upcoming events, conferences, presentations, studies, and preaching); a **Worldview Watch** page (with links to articles, podcasts, and videos designed to help Christian parents, pastors, teachers, youth, and congregations understand the times so the truth of Christianity and Christ can be distinguished from false worldviews), and suggestions on **How Can We Assist** for congregations, youth camps/gatherings, schools, and individuals.

This last year CAW has made contributions to the Lutheran Sentinel and produced several “**Q and A Leading to Christ**” articles that have been distributed as flyers to pastors and churches (also found on the website).

CAW now produces a **Newsletter** that goes out to over 500 subscribers.

Over the last year, CAW’s director has presented, taught, lectured, and preached in numerous congregation, college and university settings, as well as youth gatherings, and other settings. He and board members continue to track cultural efforts that undermine Christian doctrine, Christian faith, and God’s created order.

## FINANCES

CAW is self-supporting and dependent upon contributions from individuals and congregations. In compliance with existing synod policies, the board and the director seek to secure funding for conferences, production of resources, office space, travel salary, etc. As of mid-November 2024, the administration of the financial account of CAW was transferred from Bethany Lutheran College to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (see below).

### **FINANCES UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF BLC (4/1/2024 thru 11/14/2024):**

Cash Balance on 4/1/2024	\$81,913.23
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Receipts 4/1/2024 through 11/14/2024:

- Contributions/Receipts:	\$14,434.00
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Disbursements 4/1/2024 through 11/14/2024:

- Salary, Wages, Taxes, WC Insurance, travel, webmaster, honoraria, video production, postage office, misc.	\$33,720.26
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- Closeout of acct. (transfer to ELS)	\$62,626.97
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Cash Balance at the end of 11/14/2024	\$ .00
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### **FINANCES UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ELS (11/15/2024 thru 2/28/2025):**

Cash Balance on 11/15/2024	\$62,626.97
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Receipts 11/15/2024 through 2/28/2025:

- Contributions/Receipts:	\$52,970.63
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Disbursements 11/15/2024 through 2/28/2025:

- Salary, Wages, Taxes, WC Insurance, travel,  
webmaster, honoraria, video production,  
postage office, misc.:

\$15,146.39

Cash Balance on Hand 2/28/2025

\$100,451.21

*The Rev. Peter Heyn, secretary*

**REPORT OF THE  
BOARD OF REGENTS  
OF BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE  
AND BETHANY LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
*Committee #8: Higher Education*

**BOARD OF REGENT MEMBERS**

Type A members of the board during fiscal 2024:

The Rev. Mark Bartels, chairman; Holy Cross Lutheran Church; Madison, WI  
The Rev. Alexander Ring, secretary; Christ Lutheran Church; Port St. Lucie, FL  
Mr. Steven DePrey, Sun Prairie, WI; Holy Cross Lutheran Church; Madison, WI  
The Rev. Erwin Ekhoﬀ; King of Grace Lutheran Church; Golden Valley, MN  
Mr. Aaron Faugstad, Washington DC; King of Grace Lutheran Church; Golden Valley, MN  
Mr. Mark Madson, Mankato MN; Mount Olive Lutheran Church; Mankato MN  
Dr. Joshua Mears, Lakeville, MN; Heritage Lutheran Church; Apple Valley MN  
Mr. David Sparley; Saved by Grace Lutheran Church; Gresham, OR  
The Rev. David Thompson, vice chairman; Mount Olive Lutheran; Mankato, MN

Type B members of the board during the past fiscal year:

The Rev. Aaron Ferkenstad; King of Grace Lutheran Church; Golden Valley MN  
Mr. Timothy Roemhildt; Mt. Olive Lutheran Church; Mankato MN  
Mr. John Scott; Grace Lutheran Church; Vero Beach FL

Voting Member – Ex officio

The Rev. Glenn Obenberger, Parkland WA, President of the ELS

Advisory Members:

Dr. Gene R. Pfeifer, Mankato, MN, President of Bethany Lutheran College.  
The Rev. Timothy Hartwig, Mankato MN, President of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

**ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOARD OF REGENTS FOR BOTH BLC AND BLTS**

The Board of Regents appointed John Scott; Grace Lutheran Church; Vero Beach, FL to his second full term as a type B member and seeks ratification of this action at the 2025 synod convention.

**ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOARD OF REGENTS FOR BLC**

***Financial Action***

- A. Approved the fiscal year 2025 budget for the college.
- B. Resolved to assign all undesignated estate gifts to BLC to the Interim Campaign Fund (90%) and the Bethany Fund (10%) effective September 1, 2024.
- C. Approved the 2025–26 tuition, housing and food, and activity fees. (Tuition - \$31,870, Housing and food - \$9,280; Activity fee - \$790; Dorm fees for Gullixson Hall - \$9,580)
- D. Refinanced an internal loan of \$1,500,000 from the Bethany Endowment Fund which was used to build the soccer field complex in 2019 with the following terms: the interest rate of the loan is 0%, and is retroactive to July 1, 2024; the bi-annual

payment of \$26,250 be applied against the principal of the loan, and the balance of the loan is payable in full on June 30, 2034.

E. Approved the 2024 Audit report from Clifton, Larson, Allen.

F. Authorized Treasurer Daniel Mundahl and Stacey Dawley to solicit RFPs from other auditing firms for the 2025 audit, and after due diligence, hire a firm.

G. Approved the faculty salary ranges for 2024–2026.

H. Approved the 2025 Annual Funding Request from the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation.

I. Resolved that the spending rate of Bethany Lutheran College for fiscal year 2025 be 6.334% for scholarships and 6.334% for operations.

### ***Academic and Enrollment Action***

A. Approved the 2024–25 President’s Annual Goals

B. Approved the 2024–25 Cabinet Annual Goals

C. Resolved as Bethany Lutheran College’s response to the PELSB standards that Bethany maintain a teacher education program that is licensable for as long as possible without compromising our Christian mission and Confessional Lutheran teachings.

D. Approved the list of 2024 spring graduates, the 2024 summer graduates, and the 2024–25 the mid-year graduates.

E. Approved the request of Professor Emeritus status to Dennis Marzolf and Adrian Lo.

F. The Board of Regents resolved to request Clergy Emeritus status for Dennis Marzolf from the ELS

### ***Legacies***

Acknowledged estates received in 2024:

Anderson, Janett

Breck, Ila M.

Geisler, David

Lussky, Glenn R

Madson, Andrew

Moldstad, June E

Ring, James B.

Tjernagel, Sven

### **ACTION TAKEN BY THE BOARD OF REGENTS FOR BLTS**

A. Approved the tuition for the 2024–2025 academic year

B. Granted a sabbatical to Professor Timothy Schmeling for the Spring 2026 semester

C. Approved Joel Hansen and Matthew Lehne for graduation from the seminary with a degree of Master of Divinity and declared both eligible for calls into the ELS.

### ***Legacies***

Acknowledged estates received in 2024:

Madson, Andrew

Wehrenberg, Eunice

### **CONCLUSION**

We are truly thankful to the Lord for the leadership and dedication of the entire college administration, faculty and staff through challenging times, as the Lord continues to bless us. Likewise, praise the Lord that the seminary has remained faithful to its purpose.

We ask all of the members of our synod to keep Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary in your prayers and to support the work of our dear college and seminary.

*The Rev. Mark Bartels, Chairman  
The Rev. Alexander Ring, Secretary*

**BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE, INC.**  
**Mankato, Minnesota**  
Consolidating Statement of Activities  
Year Ended June 30, 2024

	<b>Without Donor Restrictions</b>	<b>With Donor Restrictions</b>	<b>2024 Total</b>	<b>2023 Total</b>
<b>REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT</b>				
Tuition and fees, net of scholarships	10,017,531	-	10,017,531	8,710,098
Government grants	507,728	-	507,728	1,125,870
Contributions	3,419,418	4,348,134	7,767,552	7,527,623
Investment income	598,448	1,729,331	2,327,779	717,446
Investment gains (losses)	(427,660)	3,188,239	2,760,579	2,710,183
Gains (losses) on beneficial interest in funds held in trust	-	17,155	17,155	9,791
Gain (loss) on beneficial interest in perpetual trust	-	89,144	89,144	(199,948)
Mineral rights royalties	238,850	-	238,850	338,083
Other sources	2,404,877	-	2,404,877	1,891,726
Auxiliary services	3,896,032	-	3,896,032	3,713,456
Adjustment of actuarial liability	(96,830)	-	(96,830)	(122,156)
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	9,570,272	(9,570,272)	-	-
Total revenues, gains and other support	<b>30,128,666</b>	<b>(198,269)</b>	<b>29,930,397</b>	<b>26,422,172</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Program expenses				
Instruction	8,542,995	-	8,542,995	9,322,782
Academic Support	1,376,295	-	1,376,295	812,829
Student services	7,364,137	-	7,364,137	5,676,071
Auxiliary	3,556,689	-	3,556,689	3,029,635
Support expenses				
Institutional Support	4,357,233	-	4,357,233	4,062,561
Allocable expenses				
Operation and maintenance of plant	2,279,903	-	2,279,903	1,969,385
Depreciation	2,955,260	-	2,955,260	2,532,805
Interest	625,387	-	625,387	626,659
Less: Allocated expenses	(5,860,550)	-	(5,860,550)	(5,128,849)
Contributions receivable written-off	83,845	-	83,845	52,300
Total expenses	<b>25,281,194</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>25,281,194</b>	<b>22,956,178</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>4,847,472</b>	<b>(198,269)</b>	<b>4,649,203</b>	<b>3,465,994</b>
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	36,598,721	51,734,252	88,332,973	84,866,979
<b>NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR</b>	<b>41,446,193</b>	<b>51,535,983</b>	<b>92,982,176</b>	<b>88,332,973</b>

# REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE

*Committee #8: Higher Education*

## BOARD OF REGENTS

Bethany Lutheran College (Bethany) appreciates the time and expertise provided through the Board of Regents. For a list of members and board actions on behalf of the college, please see the Board of Regents report submitted to the synod by Chairman Rev. Mark Bartels.

## THE FACULTY AND STAFF

Bethany Lutheran College and Theological Seminary are thankful that the Lord continues to provide talented and committed men and women who embrace the mission of the college and seminary and serve as faculty and staff. We praise God for sending us these dedicated workers. During a special service on February 11, 2025, the college observed the following anniversaries:

## BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE ANNIVERSARIES OBSERVED 2025

Nicholas Cook – Director of International Partnerships .....	10 years
Carrie Pfeifer – Professor, Education.....	10 years
Gene Pfeifer – President .....	10 years
Wanda Hull – Housekeeping Technician .....	15 years
Emily Kimball – Assistant Professor, Theatre .....	15 years
Jacob Krier – Director of Alumni Relations .....	15 years
Stacey Dawley – Director of Finance and Business Affairs.....	20 years
Robert Hanna – Professor, English .....	20 years
Patrick Hull – Director of Facilities.....	20 years
Jennifer Kom – Professor, Psychology .....	20 years
Donald Moldstad – Director of Campus Spiritual Life .....	20 years
Chad Heins – Associate Professor, Biology.....	25 years
Daniel Mundahl – Sr. Vice President of Finance and Administration.....	25 years
David Norris – Director of Visual Media .....	25 years
Tiffany Young Klockziem – Professor, Health and Human Performance .....	25 years
Mark DeGarmeaux – Professor, Languages; Chapel Organist .....	30 years
Gina Moldstad – Admissions Data Specialist .....	30 years
Lance Schwartz – Chief Communication Officer.....	35 years

In August 2024, the following new faculty and professional staff were installed during the opening service: Angela Dabu, Head Coach, Softball; Michell DeKruif, Head Coach, Golf; Stephanie Heidorn, Assistant Professor, Media Arts; Michael Janes, Head Coach, Tennis; Ryan Nichols, Head Coach, Women's Soccer; Lucas Seehafer, Assistant Professor, Exercise Science; Leanne Stob, Assistant Professor, Physics/STEM and Elisabeth Stuckey, Associate Professor, Nursing.

## GRADUATES

In December 2023, 33 students graduated, in May 2024, 85 students graduated, and in the summer of 2024, 1 student graduated for a total of 119 students receiving the baccalaureate degree as part of the 25<sup>th</sup> four-year graduating class. These graduates represented 29 of the 33 majors.

Additionally, the second cohort of 13 students graduated receiving their Masters of Arts degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling in the spring and summer of 2024.

## ENROLLMENT

### 10-year Bethany Fall Report on Attendance Statistics

	FA2015	FA2016	FA2017	FA2018	FA2019
FT Undergraduate	490	514	523	593	591
Graduate					
FTE	500	537	566	641	641
All Enrolled	529	588	655	743	742
# of FT ELS	79	87	90	88	81

	FA2020	FA2021	FA2022	FA2023	FA2024
FT Undergraduate	633	651	632	671	665
Graduate		15	35	48	41
FTE	679	710	721	777	769
All Enrolled	772	800	832	905	900
# of FT ELS	81	67	68	76	70

Unlike significant enrollment declines that have been experienced at most colleges and universities across the U.S., we thank our gracious God for blessing Bethany the past two academic years with our largest full-time undergraduate enrollment (671 and 665 respectively) and the largest number of total enrolled students in the college's history (905 and 900). Over the past decade enrollment has grown by 70%—an amazing blessing from our almighty God! This past fall we were again blessed with an incoming class above 200 undergraduates (202), with an additional 20 students beginning in January of 2025. That being said, we are beginning to experience enrollment challenges similar to most colleges and universities across the country. For example, while we were blessed with 203 first-year students in the fall of 2024, our goal was to enroll 215. Furthermore, the Board of Regents adopted budget for the current academic year was based on full-time enrollment growing by 10 students. The enrollment challenges being experienced in higher education are described later in this section of the report.

The fall of 2024 student body included a record 134 full-time international undergraduate students from 29 countries. The countries with the largest enrollments were from Ethiopia, Vietnam, Spain, Albania, Congo, Canada, and Portugal. Recently, Bethany began sending representatives to Vietnam and Ethiopia to encourage families who have an appreciation for the conservative values of a Christian college to consider Bethany. We thank the Lord for blessing the outcomes of these trips through additional students.

As Bethany has experienced enrollment growth over the past decade, some may wonder about the strategies for such growth. Over the years, several have proven successful. These include increased promotion of Bethany in the Lutheran high schools across the country and in our ELS congregations, enrollment growth through the addition of several new majors, outreach to international students, and maximizing the college's co-curricular and athletic rosters.

Secular universities have now emerged from Covid and competition for domestic students is fierce. As more colleges and universities continue to move away from the Bible's teachings and Christian family values, what's resonating at Bethany is that the college has remained faithful to its mission to proclaim the "One Thing Needful." Certainly, the Lord has fulfilled His promise in Isaiah 55:11 for His word to not return empty, as over 250 full-time undergraduate students from a confessional Lutheran background attended Bethany in fall 2024. In your congregations, please continue to do everything possible in word and action to promote Bethany among your members, and especially among your families with school-aged children. It is only at a college like Bethany where students will receive a Christ-centered experience in higher education as preparation for a life of purpose and meaning.

While the Lord has indeed blessed Bethany with many souls that may daily be engaged on campus with their Savior, Jesus, challenges to enrollment growth are increasing. These challenges include a shrinking pool of high school graduates in the Upper Midwest. In the next decade it is projected that the number of high school graduates may decline by as many as 15%. An additional challenge is the societal perception that a 4-year degree isn't worth the investment of time or cost. In Minnesota, for example, the percentage of high school graduates choosing to attend college since 2019 has dropped from 66% to 58%. A related factor is that those students and families choosing to attend college are very concerned about affordability in the cost of attendance. While the Minnesota North Star Promise Grant resulting in the promise of free tuition for lower income Minnesota families is a blessing to these families, the grant only applies to those choosing to attend Minnesota public colleges and universities—thus excluding Bethany. The result is that families are incentivized to choose a public school over a Bethany education. A final noteworthy challenge to future enrollment at Bethany is the fact that for the past two decades the ELS and all confessional Lutheran church bodies have been experiencing a steady decline in the number of young people in their congregations. Despite these and other challenges, our regents, administration, faculty, and staff continue to pledge to our church body the full use of their God-given gifts and talents to continue to promote our Christ-centered liberal arts education at

Bethany—an education we believe is essential to the ELS. We pray the Lord will continue to bless our efforts to engage even more students with their Savior, Jesus.

## ADMISSIONS

It is a statement of fact that the government has a way of collecting information on K–12 students and sharing that information with public colleges and universities for the purpose of student recruitment. Bethany does not benefit from public institution information sharing. Instead, Bethany relies upon and treasures the student information we receive from congregations.

Regarding Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) student recruitment to Bethany, the following information was pulled in February of 2024.

- ELS students often graduate in fewer semesters than the average student, with several graduating each year in December. For example, while there were 70 full-time ELS undergrad students at Bethany in Fall 2024, there were 63 ELS students attending Bethany in the second semester of the 2024–25 academic year.
- 150 ELS high school students were estimated to graduate in 2025. This is up by one from last year's number of 149. Of the 150 reported ELS high school students graduating in 2025, the admissions office has received information on 134 students, but email addresses have been received for only 78. It is difficult to attempt to recruit these students without email contact information, thus making our pool of ELS students much smaller.
- For this rising high school senior class that will graduate in the spring of 2026, the admissions office has received information on 122 students (out of 146 reported ELS students), with email addresses included for 70 of these students.

Thank you for making improvements in collecting the information of the youth in your congregations. While the overall number of students at ELS congregations has decreased, Bethany is receiving more actionable contact information. Again, thank you for sharing your students' information and for connecting them with Bethany!

In the second semester of the 2024–25 academic year, Bethany's graduate program in Clinical Mental Health Counseling is serving 38 full and part-time students, 9 of which were new full-time students who started in fall 2024. As the program moves toward full accreditation, Counseling graduates from Bethany remain in very high demand. If you know of an individual with interest in developing skills as a Christian counselor, please invite them to watch the video at [blc.edu/cmhc](http://blc.edu/cmhc), and contact us at [gradschool@blc.edu](mailto:gradschool@blc.edu) or 507-344-7302.

Numerous Lutheran high schools and ELS grade school groups visited Bethany within the last year. Bethany desires that all ELS 6th to 8th grade groups have a visit rotation, every two to three years. A travel grant is available to help with costs. Contact [admissions@blc.edu](mailto:admissions@blc.edu) to make arrangements.

A full set of Bethany promotional videos is available for you to watch and to share with your parents and students. Bethany's YouTube playlists (<https://www.youtube.com/@bethanylutheran>) include an explore tab with videos on affordability, faith in college, virtual tour, and various vocations. Additional playlists include a section on the arts, sports, important events, and student reels.

Perhaps the Lord will bless you with the opportunity to talk with a parent about the college decision-making process. Sometimes parents are confused about what their role entails. While parents may acknowledge that young adults have some freedom to make a decision on their college choice, parents still play an important and influential role in the college decision-making process and may need your encouragement to speak up.

Please encourage parents to place young people at the foot of the cross. While parents cannot make children believe something, they can stand firm in bringing them to God's Word. In the college decision making process, this means that parents can strongly influence their child to visit Bethany. (Monday–Friday during the college school year is the best time to visit.) Big schools may dominate the media and the process for choosing a college, but parents can insist on a visit to Bethany where students will be engaged with their Savior, Jesus. Invite parents you know to talk to you about how their child explores colleges and have them schedule a visit to Bethany [blc.edu/visit](http://blc.edu/visit). Thank you for your thoughtfulness in doing this.

## ENGAGING STUDENTS WITH JESUS

In addition to the required thirteen credits of Religious Studies coursework as part of students' general education studies, they are also provided numerous opportunities to grow in their knowledge of Christ through daily chapel, weekly vespers, and Bible studies. Each year we sponsor numerous spiritual life events for our students, such as an Apologetics and Worldview Conference and the *In-Depth* guest speaker series. Many also attend the annual B.W. Teigen Reformation Lectures held on our campus each October. Prof. Tom Rank also offers a monthly "Theology Thursday" where students are invited to come and discuss current important theological topics in society.

In this academic year, thirteen students and one staff member voluntarily attended adult confirmation classes taught by Chaplain Moldstad. Two of them joined Peace Lutheran Church in North Mankato, Minnesota. Another student requested to be baptized following a freshman religion course. Three BLC students also took instruction at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Mankato, and have joined the church, one who had come to Bethany for athletics from the Netherlands.

Attendance at daily chapel, our evening vespers, and bible studies has increased heavily throughout this past academic year.

We are very grateful for those who have given gifts to support the purchase of a Bible for each of our incoming freshmen who desire one. We especially wish to note the generosity of BLC alumnus, Richard McGinnis. In addition, each year our incoming first-year international students receive a special orientation to our chapel program.

In 2024, six weddings were held in Trinity Chapel. Chaplain Moldstad provides pre-marital counseling for many of these couples. Students made great use of spiritual counseling services through the chaplain's office, as well as with other ordained faculty members. The college also provides three free counseling sessions through Christian Family Solutions, which has an office on campus.

In 2024–25 six guest speakers were part of the In-Depth Series, featuring subjects on evangelism, apologetics, church history, and the realm of science and our faith. In addition, a guest speaker of our fellowship spoke to a crowd of nearly 100 students on the challenges and opportunities of living by faith in the business community.

The student-run organization named STORM (Serving Through Outreach and Mission) meets almost weekly to promote mission work in our ELS/WELS fellowship, as well as other humanitarian projects. A pro-life student group is also active on campus led by Dr. Jennifer Kom.

The Great Commission is carried out on Bethany's campus in many ways, such as seeking the lost, reclaiming those who have wandered from Christ, and strengthening those who already have learned to love Him and the things of His Kingdom.

## **GALVANIZING THE FACULTY**

Prior to the memorials pertaining to Bethany's approach to a confessional Lutheran liberal arts education that were brought forward at the 2024 ELS convention, the faculty engaged in the study of key fidelity factors that make our Lutheran institution distinctive. A paper written by Dr. Bernard Bull, president of Concordia University, Nebraska, was the basis of a discussion and exercise with which our faculty, staff, administration, and Board of Regents were engaged. The activity was to benchmark Bethany against a number of key markers that make a Lutheran college distinctively confessional Lutheran. Factors ranged from measuring the confession of leadership, faculty, and students, to assessing curriculum and alignment of our work to the mission of the college. This exercise provided stakeholders the opportunity to engage in meaningful and fruitful discussion. These conversations continue among our faculty and staff today.

Additionally, the faculty has been working throughout the 2024–25 academic year defining "The Confessional Lutheran, Liberal Arts College." They have participated in year-long discussions as an indirect outcome of the memorials, and we are eager to provide an update on the year-long process with which the faculty was engaged. The ongoing discussions enabled the faculty to dive into topics related to:

- Confessional Lutheran teaching and learning
- A historical look at the liberal arts
- A recent history of the liberal arts at Bethany, including re-examination of a faculty document entitled "Our Common Understanding"
- The future of the liberal arts, including outside factors, challenging higher education institutions today

These discussions have also led to the development of a series of podcast episodes for our constituency entitled "The Liberal Arts at Bethany—Past, Present, and Future." The episodes can be found on the Bethany website.

Through these combined efforts, a renewed sense of unity is emerging among our faculty, leading to better interdisciplinary opportunities, and more meaningful opportunities to serve our students.

## **PROGRAMMING**

Over the past academic year, a focus was made on exploring new programming opportunities for the college. A new Program Taskforce has explored opportunities for new programs. A number of interesting opportunities exist, both in undergraduate and graduate that will be further examined in the future.

This past year has been focused on investing in our current programming, particularly in nursing. This year we have seen a boost in enrollment from transfer students, and our numbers indicate an increase in new students coming from high schools. We look forward to continuing to invest in this program, while at the same time exploring opportunities in other areas, such as Engineering, as a number of Lutheran high schools have added engineering programs to their high school curriculums. Bethany needs to continue to show these students that our program is a natural extension of their programs in high school, with the added bonus of studying all content through the lens of God's Word.

## **STAFFING**

This year has seen some new faces added to our full-time faculty:

- Business Administration: We are thrilled to have Isaiah (Zay) Koepsell serving in our Business Administration program. Zay is a 2022 alum of the college returning to Bethany after time in the banking industry.
- Media Arts: Stephanie Heidorn, also an alum of Bethany, is serving in both our Media Arts and Graphic Design departments. Stephanie was active in a number of key groups on Bethany's campus as a student, including Stone Path

Studios, where she oversaw the operations of the organization as a student leader. Her leadership has continued while on faculty, as she oversees a number of key courses in the Media Arts department.

- **Exercise Science:** In 2023, Lucas Seehafer joined the Bethany faculty on a one-year term. With some changes in that department, he has agreed to join us full time. Lucas is also a Bethany grad, and is active in our Exercise Science program. Lucas' extensive background as a Doctor of Physical Therapy and doctoral student in Kinesiology is impactful to our students on a daily basis. In free time, Lucas also helps with our athletic teams in areas of strength and conditioning.
- **Physics:** Leann Stob is serving Bethany as an instructor of Physics, as well as serving as our key promotion coordinator for our Math/Science division. She comes to us from St. Croix Lutheran High School where she was the lead teacher for their STEM program. Leann's work in physics has been impactful, as many of these students go on to the engineering major.

## **CAMPUS SPACE**

In the summer of 2025, a number of changes are taking place on the upper level of Honsey Hall as video cameras are being added to the nursing labs. The use of cameras in instruction have become a high-fidelity necessity. The ability for students to practice their skills and then to analyze their work through video playback critiqued by nursing faculty has become a standard assessment tool in the pre-nursing field. Additionally, in order to plan for growth to the program, three additional training beds are being added in another classroom. This will enable both the junior and senior cohorts to practice simultaneously. We look forward to a growing number of nursing graduates in the coming years eager to serve our community.

## **BETHANY NATIONALLY RANKED FOR THE SIXTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR**

For the sixth consecutive year, *U.S. News and World Report* has ranked Bethany Lutheran College as a top National Liberal Arts College for graduates' social mobility—the ability of its alumni to move up in socioeconomic status following their college graduation. In 2025, Bethany is ranked number 25 in the United States among national liberal arts colleges and number 2 in Minnesota. The rankings were released in September 2024. The high ranking indicates that Bethany is doing an excellent job educating students from a variety of academic and socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, the college has moved up in overall ranking by *U.S. News* at number 147 in the nation for overall performance. The ranking as a best national liberal arts college is indicative of the college's twenty-plus year development as a baccalaureate degree-granting institution, its growth in reputation in the region, and a tribute to the thousands of 4-year alumni of the college who are carrying out productive and fulfilling lives in their homes, churches, workplaces, and communities.

## **RESIDENTIAL LIFE ON CAMPUS**

Bethany continues to be blessed with on-campus housing facilities operating at or near capacity. The number of students living on campus in the fall of 2024 was 429, the second highest fall residential number in the college's history. By comparison, in fall 2023 we served a record 440 residents. To provide perspective, the average fall housing number from 2012-2017 was 354, while the past seven years has averaged 418.

This past academic year concluded the third year of Bethany requiring only first-year students to live on campus, a change made to accommodate our growing enrollment amid limited space. Even with this change, 65% of our student body lived on campus during the 2024–25 academic year, a percentage similar to what the college had traditionally seen under the former two-year requirement (the average percent of students living on campus under the two-year requirement was 67.6%, with a range of 62% to 72%).

The Student Affairs division monitors both policy and facility usage to best meet the needs of today's college student and Bethany's growing on-campus student population. They also maintain a list of future renovations for consideration along with anticipated timelines for implementation. During the summer of 2024, the college invested in an Anderson Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floor facelift that included significant remodeling of the group bathrooms, replacing the corridor flooring, and adding fresh paint colors to the halls. Residential students are surveyed annually with the intent of collecting information related to satisfaction with living accommodations, staffing, and the identification of other residential needs. Another set of renovations to our residential halls is set for the summer of 2025.

## **RETENTION**

The college pays focused attention on retaining the students it recruited. Over the past ten years, Bethany's first-year retention rates have averaged 76.5% (with a median of 78% and a range spanning from 70% to 87%). This past year, the percentage of first-year students who started in the fall of 2023 and returned in the fall of 2024 was 72%.

The college is closely monitoring any potential impact that Minnesota's North Star Promise may have on student retention. This program provides for Minnesota students, who financially qualify, to attend any Minnesota public institution at no cost for tuition. To date, our analysis of students who left Bethany between the fall 2024 to spring 2025 semester revealed that the North Star Promise did not have a measured or direct impact on students' decisions to return to Bethany for spring 2025. We continue to monitor this new program for potential negative effects on retention.



While classes are in session, the Student Success Committee meets weekly to identify individual students who may be missing classes, receiving poor grades, or experiencing other challenges standing in the way of their college success. An online form called *Bethany Cares* is available to the campus community allowing anyone to submit a concern for the well-being of any Bethany student.

Bethany administers several survey instruments to collect information intending to enhance student retention and success. Before arrival on campus, all new students complete a survey called the *College Student Inventory* which provides data to help the college serve the needs of each incoming class. All new students enrolled in Freshman Seminar courses complete a survey during the fall semester inquiring on their adjustment to college, perceptions of Bethany now that they are here, and how their realized experiences at Bethany have aligned with their expectations. Feedback from these instruments have been overwhelmingly positive, and specific action items extracted from the data have been implemented in areas such as freshman seminar instruction and new student orientation programming.

## **BETHANY GRADUATION RATES**

Bethany's focus on retention has positively influenced increased graduation rates. Four-year graduation rates (with the exception of two anomalies during COVID-19 due to 5<sup>th</sup> year athletic extensions granted by the NCAA) have steadily increasing from a previous 12-year average of 42% toward 50%. Bethany's current four-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at Bethany in fall of 2020 and graduating in 2024 was 48%.

## **BETHANY FINANCES**

In fiscal year 2023–24, Bethany's statement of activities (without donor restrictions) indicated the college had a profit of \$384,702. This is in part due to investment rate returns. Bethany's annual operating budget ended the fiscal year with a positive balance of \$322,654. The auxiliary enterprise and the graduate program fund had a positive balance as well of \$347,648. Keep in mind the college has \$2,955,260 of depreciation expense it has to cover with revenues, gains and other support.

Looking ahead to the 2024–25 fiscal year ending on June 30, 2025, the college is currently projecting a negative balance in the operating and auxiliary enterprise fund, while the graduate program is expected to break even. The negative balance in the auxiliary enterprise fund is due to the loss of the KTV program income, and the spending down of the KTV fund balance. A projected loss in the annual operating budget is likely to be due to a loss in funding for the Minnesota State Grant, fewer students enrolled last fall than budgeted, and increased cost incurred in our self-insured health care program resulting in the need to place additional cash in the health insurance fund balance.

The college has developed a five-year budget forecast model to indicated the steps needed to achieve a balanced budget each year. The forecast includes a five-strategy approach as follows:

1. Ongoing year over year enrollment growth of full-time undergraduate students;
2. Increased net tuition revenue per student by \$1,000 per year;
3. Increased fundraising for the Bethany Fund by \$50,000 per year;
4. Annual operating support from the ELS at \$275,000 per year;
5. An increase in annual base support from the Marvin M. Schwan Foundation of \$200,000 per year.

Based on current information, not all of these strategies are working. While increased net tuition revenue and increased Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation support are currently fulfilling their goals, challenges exist in growing enrollment, meeting Bethany Fund expectations, and achieving ELS support benchmarks. As annual operating budgets continue to be monitored and adjusted, use of additional investment funds and other cost containment measures may need to be implemented to achieve annually balanced budgets.

The need for increased and ongoing financial support from Bethany constituents and the ELS is perhaps more important now than ever before. With an anticipated decline in enrollment due to fewer high school graduates, free college tuition at public institutions, and less interest among college-aged students enrolling in higher education, the financial sustainability of Bethany may be challenged. To ensure the central mission of the college may endure until Christ's return, financial support of Bethany's mission is critical today. Such support will continue to enable the college to fulfill its charge to proclaim the "One Thing Needful" to students today and in the generations to come. May God continue to shower blessings and resources upon Bethany Lutheran College so we may continue to carry out this vital mission.

## **PHYSICAL PLANT**

Anderson Hall was the main area of maintenance focus this past year with upgrades to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floor bathrooms and hallway flooring (\$143,000). Annually, Bethany spends \$370,000 to \$400,000 on general repairs and maintenance around the campus. During the summer of 2025, Bethany received a grant to remodel and update the nursing lab to meet new teaching standards and accommodate an increase in enrollment within the nursing program.

## GRANTS

Financial support from a variety of grants continues to aid the mission of the college. Bethany again received a generous grant from the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation to enhance our student services, programmatic offerings, and physical facilities. In total, Bethany received from the Schwan Foundation \$2,982,500 in CY2024. We are thankful for the foundation's generous support.

Bethany is also grateful for the continued support of Thrivent Financial. During calendar year 2024, the college received \$8,159 as a result of the Thrivent Choice Program, down from the previous year. In this program, Thrivent members direct funds to organizations and charities of their choosing.

The National Bethany Auxiliary has been a consistent and important supporter of the college for nearly 92 years. Members of the Bethany Auxiliary from throughout the Upper Midwest met on the Bethany campus on September 23, 2024, and \$13,500 in new project funding was selected for support. We are grateful for this consistent support from the auxiliary. The projects chosen for support in 2024 were the following:

### Standing Projects

Dorothy Theiste Scholarship Fund - \$3,000

Music and Choir Room Chairs Fund - \$2,400

### New Projects

Media Arts / photography digital cameras - \$2,000

Media Arts / Lightbridge reflector kit - \$1,800

Student Affairs / security cameras - \$1,500 + \$1,000 contingency

Student Affairs / Teqball table game - \$2,000

Visual Arts / magazine printing - \$800

The auxiliary meets annually the fourth Monday in September. Their next meeting on the Bethany campus is scheduled for September 22, 2025.

In 2024, the Bethany Education Department was awarded two grants, one from the Sauer Family Foundation in the amount of \$25,000, and one from The Minneapolis Foundation to fund the Literacy Clinic on campus. Through the clinic, children from the Mankato area community come to the Bethany campus to receive one-to-one reading intervention instruction free of charge from trained Bethany students who serve as literacy coaches. Bethany professor Dr. Carrie Pfeifer serves as the fundraiser, coordinator, and trainer for the program. This past semester the program served 65 children.

## CONCLUSION

Based on this annual report, I believe you will agree with me that while challenges exist, our gracious Lord continues to richly bless Bethany Lutheran College. We as faculty, staff, and administration are humbled by your prayers to our gracious God on behalf of the college, and for the generous financial support, testimony, and words of encouragement received from alumni and constituents. We are grateful to have the opportunity to provide a Christ-centered, confessional Lutheran liberal arts experience in higher education so that our students may be provided the foundation needed as they develop their God-given gifts and abilities for productive and fulfilling lives in their families, churches, workplaces, and communities.

*Dr. Gene R. Pfeifer, President*

# REPORT OF BETHANY LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*Committee #8: Higher Education*

In the 1975 report to convention, Dean Milton Otto wrote, "Through the tender mercies of God your seminary had another good year. There were sixteen full-time students enrolled, two of whom were off-campus serving as vicars. In addition, a part-time student was in attendance for a semester and a half. The health and morale of the students was very good during the past year. The young men seemed to take their work seriously and give promise of becoming conscientious pastors" (*Synod Report, 1975, p. 74*). Fifty years later, apart from the numerical differences, that same report could be given.

God continues to be faithful by providing men to train for sending out into the harvest field. God continues to stir in men's hearts a desire to reach the lost and dying with the life-giving Word of the Gospel. God continues to cause His people to pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send out labors into the harvest field.

## BOARD OF REGENTS

The Board of Regents is responsible for overseeing and governing the operations of the seminary. The members of the board are listed in their report. The president of the seminary submits a report to each meeting of the board.

## FACULTY

The following professors taught in the seminary during the 2024–25 school year: Brian Klebig, Nicholas Proksch, Gaylin Schmeling, Timothy Schmeling, and Timothy Hartwig. Prof. Proksch leads our New Testament studies and teaches homiletics, hermeneutics, and other practical courses. Dr. T. Schmeling directs our Old Testament studies and teaches symbolics, church history, homiletics, and other practical courses. Dr. Klebig teaches communication, and Pres. em. G. Schmeling taught courses on church history and hymnody and liturgics. President Hartwig taught pastoral theology, dogmatics, and other practical courses. In addition Craig Ferkenstad and Michael Smith served as adjunct faculty during the fall semester.

## ENROLLMENT

There were nine students enrolled at the seminary in the 2024–25 academic year. It breaks down as follows: 1 junior, 3 middlers, 2 seniors, and 3 vicars.

## VICARS

Skyler Hepler served as vicar at Our Savior and Resurrection Lutheran Churches, Lakeland/Winter Haven, Florida.  
Caleb Strutz served as vicar at Peace Lutheran Church, North Mankato/Eagle Lake, Minnesota.  
Caleb VonDeylen served as vicar at Divine Mercy Lutheran Church, Weatherford, Texas.

## RECRUITMENT

Seminary open houses are held in the fall and spring each year. These events are open to all but the students at Bethany Lutheran College are the focal point. This year our guest presenters were Pastor John Peterson and Pastor Paul Meitner. About 15 potential students attended each event.

The following is a table of expected first year enrollment. This is a tabulation of men that are in the process of meeting the entrance requirements or have indicated their intent to do so and the earliest year that they could enter seminary.

Year	2025 Projection	2024 Projection
2025	5	4
2026	4	5
2027	2	1
2028	1	
2029	1	

## ACTIVITIES

**Bjarne Wollan Teigen Reformation Lectures:** The 2024 Bjarne Wollan Teigen Reformation Lectures were held October 31–November 1, 2024. The theme was “The Fiftieth Anniversary of Seminex”: 1. The LCMS Perspective—Pres. Matthew Harrison, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, St. Louis, Missouri; 2. The WELS Perspective—Dr. Mark Braun, Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; 3. The ELS Perspective—Pres. Glenn Obenberger, Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Mankato, Minnesota.

**Mission and Ministry:** An invitation was extended to our students to attend the annual Mission and Ministry Seminar at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin, on February 5–6, 2025. The seminar was extremely informative for our students. The last two years the visit has been extended by a day to allow BLTS student to attend WLS classes for the day. This has allowed for greater interaction between the student bodies.

**Child Abuse Workshop:** On March 14–15, 2025, Victor Vieth presented to the students, faculty, and ELS pastors, both in-person and online, on how to respond to child abuse.

**Senior Recognition Dinner:** This event was held on the evening of April 28, 2025. This is always a pleasant and relaxing evening for the students and staff.

**Vicar Workshop:** Our annual vicar workshop was held on Wednesday, May 7, 2025. The returning vicars reported on certain phases of their vicarages. President Glenn Obenberger spoke to the student body concerning the pastor and his relationship to the synod. President Hartwig spoke to the student body concerning the various responsibilities of a vicar. Brief presentations were also given on our synod’s retirement plan, insurance plan, and deferred giving.

**Commencement Service:** The seminary commencement service was held on Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. in Trinity Chapel. The Rev. Marc VonDeylen served as the preacher, and Pres. Timothy Hartwig served as liturgist. The following graduated

from the seminary with a Master of Divinity degree: Skyler Hepler, Caleb Strutz, and Caleb VonDeylen. The vicar assigned at this service was Peter Estrem.

### **LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY**

The *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* is a continuation of the *Clergy Bulletin* (1941–1960). The purpose of the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, as was the purpose of the *Clergy Bulletin*, is to provide a testimony of the theological position of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and to promote the academic growth of her clergy roster by providing scholarly articles rooted in the inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The subscription price is \$25.00 per year and can be obtained by writing to Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, 6 Browns Court, Mankato, MN 56001. If you would prefer to receive the *LSQ* in PDF format, rather than a printed copy, please contact the seminary office. Past issues of the *LSQ* are to be found on the Bethany Seminary website, [www.blts.edu/lsq](http://www.blts.edu/lsq).

### **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Individuals and members of the ELS ladies' organizations have given support to the Seminary Fund, Scholarship Fund, and Student Support Fund. This has been a wonderful blessing for our students. Thank you for all your help.

Legacies received during the past fiscal year are noted in the report of the ELS Board of Regents.

### **SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS**

The Scholarship Endowment Funds continue to be a blessing to the seminary students. Several scholarship funds have been set up in memory of individuals and the annual dividends are used to help students with their tuition costs. The students are most appreciative of this financial assistance as they pursue their theological education. It is our concern that no one desiring to study for the ministry be denied a theological education for lack of funds. The present Scholarship Endowment Funds are:

Rev. Theodore and Melvina Aaber; Merle Aasen; Otto and Dorothy Abrams; Herman and Evelyn Anderson; Joey and Trisha Anderson; Keith G. Anderson; John, Ethel and Rodney Arends; Robert, Flora and Charlotte F. Becker; Howard and Marion Benzing; Edmund Bolstad; Kenneth and Audrey Bolstad; Gregory C. and Susan D. Bovid; Bruss Family; Nora Buffington; Larry and Jane Carlovsky; Arthur O. Carlsen; Glenn and Dorothy Collins; Mabel Dahlgren; Allen and Susan Daniels; Davis-Nelson; Robert and Betty Diesing; Rev. Martin J. Doepel; Roger and Lois Dohrmann; Stuart Dorr; John Dukleth Memorial; Isabelle Ebmeier; Keith and Claudia Eisberg; George and Dorothy Feil; Ole Martin Fjar; Friends of Seminary; Good Shepherd; Howard and Jeanette (Hovland) Gulbrandson; Donald and Opal Hackbarth; Albert S. Hammer; Paul and Cordia Hasz; Hoiland Family; Lyle and Debby Hoverson; Lenwick and Glenna Hoyord; Roger and JoAnn Keske; Brian Koch; Ewald and Verda Kohlmeyer; Jens, Jerome and Laverne Kvam; Ernest W. Larsen; Albin Levorson; George O. Lillegard; Harold and Ellen Loe; Lorentz Book; Gwenn and Sigfred Lysne; Juul B. Madson Memorial Fund for Excellence in New Testament Greek; Norman A. Madson Sr.; Lyle and Rosella Manthe; Rev. William and Jean McMurdie; Clarence E. and June Labb Miller; Rev. John A. Moldstad, Jr.; Moldstad/Fick Family; Joe and Peggy Moll; Julius F. Mundschenk; Rev. Richard and Hazel Newgard; George Nygaard; Arleta M. Olson; Ordal; George and Ruth Orvick; Rev. Milton H. Otto; Kenneth and Violet Peter; Lenora Peters; Pres. Wilhelm and Naomi Petersen; Emil and Martha Peterson; Timothy and Gail Peterson; Richard and Florence Rado; Chauncey and Enanda Reinertson; Roland and Lois Reinholtz; Richland Lutheran Church; Merrill and Dorothy Rope; Ronald and Gay Rose; Herbert, Linette, and Grace Sahnaw; Edna May Scherzer-Getz; Eugene and Bertha Schiller; Gaylin and Rebecca Schmeling; John and DeLores Seime; LeRoy and Patricia Simonson; Robert and Madelyn Soule; St. Mark's Lutheran Memorial; Rev. Alhert and Clara Strand; Thomas Stueck; Calhoun and Jean Sumrall; Timothy and Nancy Thiele; Gerald and Gwen Tjernagel; Rev. Milton E. and Delphine Sonstegard Tweit Student Support; Jim and Juanita Walberg; Walker-Schneider; William and Eunice Wehrenberg; Gerhard and Lois Weseloh; Patty Jo Weseloh; Whipple; Wayne and Esther Wiechmann; James and Carol Williams.

There is also a general Scholarship Fund to which individuals and organizations donate during the year and which is also used to render assistance to students in need.

### **SEMINARY ENDOWMENT FUND**

A Seminary Endowment Fund has been established to be used for seminary needs. We want this fund to grow over the years and therefore we encourage our people to remember it. A bequest would certainly be an appropriate way to perpetuate the work of the seminary as it carries out its task of training pastors to proclaim the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

*The Rev. Timothy Hartwig, president*

# REPORT OF THE BOARD FOR HOME OUTREACH

*Committee #9: Home Outreach*

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD**

The following members comprise the board: Rev. Ben Wiechmann, Chairman\*; Rev. Samuel Gullixson, Vice Chairman and Chaplain; Rev. Luke Ulrich, Secretary; Rev. Timothy Erickson, Cross Cultural Ministry Coordinator; Rev. Aaron Hamilton, Missionary Care Coordinator; Mr. Mark Perlwitz, Site Selection Coordinator; Mr. Dean Shoop, Financial Coordinator\*\*; Mr. Jeremy Merseth, Property Management Coordinator\*; and Mr. Neil Shaffer, Outreach Strategy and Resource Coordinator. Rev. Brad Kerkow serves as the Evangelism and Missions Counselor (EMC) for the board and synod. Mrs. Myrna Meunier serves as an advisory member to the board. Rev. Ed Bryant serves as the Congregational Counselor (CC) for the board and synod

\* - also serve on the Board of Trustees / Board for Home Outreach Subcommittee.

## **FAITHFUL SERVICE**

We give heartfelt thanks to Rev. Aaron Hamilton and Mr. Chan Smith for their dedicated service on the Board for Home Outreach. Since his election in 2012, Rev. Hamilton has been a tremendous blessing to the board and the synod, bringing a servant's heart, deep care for home missionaries, and a passion for equipping others to share Jesus. Though he has chosen not to stand for reelection this year, we are deeply grateful for his wisdom and leadership throughout his tenure. Likewise, we extend our sincere gratitude to Mr. Smith, who faithfully served as a Type B member from 2013 through 2024. His dedication, wisdom, and fervent love for the Gospel have significantly strengthened mission efforts. While we will miss his expertise on the BHO, we are grateful that he continues to serve the synod on the Board of Trustees. We thank God for their faithful service.

## **APPOINTMENT OF TYPE B MEMBER**

The board has appointed Mr. Jeremy Merseth as a type B member. The board seeks ratification of this appointment at the 2025 synod convention.

## **UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITIES, LIMITED MEANS TO PURSUE THEM**

In a world that is increasingly turning away from God's word and His truth, the opportunities to tell of Jesus and His love are growing. There is an urgent need to reach the lost with the saving message of the gospel. With sufficient resources, we could expand our mission efforts by planting new exploratory missions, establishing outreach schools in states with school choice, and funding daughter congregations and mission campuses across the country. The potential for growth and outreach is immense, yet we recognize that while the opportunities to share the gospel are virtually unlimited, financial resources are not.

Earlier this year, the Board of Trustees made the difficult decision to reallocate the budgeted \$240,000 of congregational contributions meant for the Board for Home Outreach towards other areas. In addition, the proposed budget for the first six months of 2026 includes \$2,500 in congregational contributions for the work of the board. In the short term, the board has been able to rely on reserve funds and outside granting partners to bridge the funding gap and continue supporting the mission efforts previously approved at last year's convention. We acknowledge the necessity of the Board of Trustees' decision and remain committed to being good stewards of the funds entrusted to us.

However, strategic planning becomes increasingly challenging when funding is uncertain. The BHO's reserve funds are essential for sustaining and ensuring the viability of our growing, yet still-subsidized, mission congregations. Thoughtful budget planning, financial transparency, and clear communication about decisions that impact our work are essential in helping our board steward the resources entrusted to us effectively. We remain committed to advancing the gospel, trusting in God's provision, and working together to ensure the continued growth and strength of our mission efforts.

## **EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS COUNSELOR**

Rev. Brad Kerkow continues to be a tremendous blessing to the congregations of our synod through his dedicated service as the Evangelism and Missions Counselor. His unique talents in sharing the Gospel, strategic planning, inspiring others, and providing wise counsel have been indispensable. With a heart for outreach and a deep commitment to the Great Commission, he has equipped, encouraged, and counseled our home missionaries as well as the established congregations of our synod to spread the message of salvation with clarity and love. His leadership and guidance have strengthened the mission efforts of the ELS and we are truly grateful for his faithful service.

Rev. Kerkow continues to serve in support of every ELS congregation. If you could use assistance with strategic planning, evangelism, or outreach ideas, please contact Rev. Kerkow.

## CONGREGATIONAL COUNSELOR

At the 2023 convention, the BHO was directed to “charge the EMC to work with existing boards and personnel, especially the circuit visitors and alternate visitors to focus church visitations on those congregation most in need of and likely to benefit from such counseling and visitations.”

Recognizing the importance and breadth of this work, and in consultation with the WELS Congregational Counseling Coordinator, Rev. Jonathan Hein, the BHO secured grant funding from the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation to call Rev. Ed Bryant to serve part-time in this way.

Rev. Bryant has been serving as our Congregational Counselor since August 2024, working directly with ELS congregations at critical mass. Utilizing the tools and programs developed by Rev. Hein and adapted for our synod, he is assisting congregations in discerning a path forward—whether through redevelopment, merger, closure, or perseverance in reduced circumstances. We thank God for providing both the funding and the servant for this vital ministry. For more information about his work, please feel free to reach out to Rev. Bryant.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONGREGATIONS

A major aspect of the Board for Home Outreach's work is equipping existing congregations to share the gospel effectively. To support this work, the board provides a variety of resources and tools designed to help congregations engage their communities with the message of Christ. Additionally, financial assistance is currently available for select outreach initiatives, enabling congregations to expand their evangelism efforts. We encourage congregations to take advantage of these opportunities and partner with the BHO in spreading the Good News.

### *Do You Have a Pastor*

- Instead of asking the common outreach question, “Do you have a church?” it might be better to ask “Do you have a pastor?” Many delinquent church members will answer “yes” to “Do you have a church?” but ask them the name of their pastor and they often will not know.
- The emphasis is on the benefits of having a spiritual shepherd in today's world. Life consists of different domains: Physical, mental, family, occupation, spiritual, financial, etc. For our medical health we don't go it alone, but seek out the consistent care of a family GP. For physical or financial advice we seek out the guidance and care of an expert in that field. So why go it alone when it comes to our spiritual health? There are dangerous consequences for neglecting this life domain (spiritual), both temporally and eternally.
- Brochures, door hangers and videos with this messaging are available. The goal is to have church members share these materials with their neighbors and friends. For more information, please reach out to our EMC, Rev. Brad Kerkow

### *Everyone Outreach*

- Everyone Outreach is a program developed by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) designed to help congregations build a culture of outreach. Through an interactive, workshop-based approach, Everyone Outreach encourages and equips church members to see outreach as a natural part of their everyday lives. Rather than focusing on specific evangelism programs, the initiative fosters an outreach mindset, helping congregations identify and overcome barriers to sharing the Gospel. By engaging in self-reflection and strategic planning, participants discover how they can actively and intentionally reach their communities with the message of Jesus. This initiative empowers entire congregations to embrace their role in the Great Commission, ensuring that outreach is not just an activity for a few but a shared mission for all.
- This program has been well received at congregations such as Parkland Lutheran Church, Washington; Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Mankato; Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Lake Havasu City; and Peace Lutheran Church, North Mankato.
- The BHO is offering a subsidy to host an Everyone Outreach workshop in your congregation. For more information, please reach out to our EMC, Rev. Brad Kerkow

### *Collaboration with Board for Lutheran Schools*

- The BHO, in conjunction with the Board for Lutheran Schools, has developed a Harvest Strategy designed to connect school families with the Gospel. Recognizing the unique evangelism opportunities within our Lutheran schools, this initiative provides congregations with intentional strategies and resources to engage school parents and families in the life of the church. Additionally, the BHO and BLS are actively exploring opportunities to establish new Lutheran schools in states with school choice programs, with a particular emphasis on outreach to the broader community.

### *Online Resources*

- There are several outreach and evangelism resources accessible through the ELS website. These resources are intended to equip congregations with effective tools for sharing the Gospel within their communities.

### ***Good News For You – Spanish Edition***

- An abridged version of the devotional, *Good News for You*, has been produced in Spanish. You can pick some up free of charge to share with those who would find them useful.

## **HOME MISSION UPDATES**

**Divine Mercy Lutheran Church, Weatherford, Texas:** The Rev. James Kassera serves Divine Mercy. After many years of work, the congregation has been enjoying the blessing of their new building which was dedicated on August 14, 2022. In 2023 they improved their outdoor space adding a large picnic pavilion and playground. They are prayerfully hoping to sell a portion of their excess land in the near future, a step that could significantly reduce or even completely eliminate their current debt. The congregation numbers 68 baptized members.

**Hope Lutheran Church, Leander, Texas:** The Rev. Jerome Gernander has been serving Hope since June of 2022. The congregation recently worked with Grace in Action to form a cohesive strategy to reach out to their community as they continue to proclaim the Gospel. The congregation numbers 100 baptized members.

**Hope Lutheran Church, Farmington, Minnesota:** Hope is served by the Rev. Dan Oberer, who is gifted in creating new outreach ideas, especially with the local community. For example, in September 2024 Hope hosted “Hope Family Fest.” Over 40 volunteers from the congregation helped serve over 200 visitors from the community who enjoyed the day’s events. The congregation numbers 153 baptized members.

**Living Water Lutheran Church, San Angelo, Texas:** In April 2024, Rev. Peter Heyn, who had been serving as pastor of Living Water, accepted a call to Christ the King Lutheran Church in Green Bay, Wisconsin. The Board for Home Outreach has limited funds and, endeavoring to be good stewards, ended subsidy to Living Water in August, 2024. This was after extending subsidy by over a year and providing over double the original subsidy estimate. We entrust the congregation to God’s care and pray for His continued blessings on their ministry and outreach efforts.

**Grace Lutheran Church, Redmond, Oregon:** Praise the Lord! Due to more being added to their number and growing financial support from within their congregation, Grace no longer requires operational support for their ministry. We pray for God’s continued blessings on Pastor Roger Emmons’ work and on the whole congregation as they proclaim His Word!

**King of Grace Lutheran Church, Waukon, Iowa** The BHO is providing subsidy assistance for a total of three years to this congregation. Rev. Abraham Faugstad serves as their pastor. The congregation numbers 48 baptized members.

**Parkland Lutheran Church, Tacoma, Washington:** In response to the BHO’s encouragement in 2023, Parkland proposed a partnership with the board to open a second campus of their congregation in an area that they have identified as one that is ripe with mission potential. While other efforts have taken precedence currently, the congregation still desires to start work in the area south of Tacoma in the near future.

**Peace, Eagle Lake, Minnesota:** Also in response to the Board for Home Outreach’s encouragement in 2023, Peace Lutheran Church in North Mankato, Minnesota, began exploring the possibility of establishing a daughter congregation in Eagle Lake. By God’s grace, the first service was held on September 8, 2024. The group currently meets at City Hall, with an average Sunday attendance of 62. The BHO is in the process of calling an exploratory missionary to serve the congregation. Once incorporated as an independent entity separate from Peace Lutheran, North Mankato, the congregation will become a full home mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

## **SALARY SCALE FOR HOME MISSIONARIES**

The board has decided to continue using the WELS Compensation Guidelines, including all benefits, for the Home Missionary Total Compensation Package (The compensation calculator can be found at <https://cwcompcalc.wels.net>). Base Salary uses Column G of the WELS Compensation Salary Matrix and no additional compensation for “Additional Responsibilities” identified by the calculator.

In addition, car allowance is paid per mile for actual miles driven based on the Internal Revenue Service business rate. The WELS VEBA Plan 3 High Deductible Health Care Plan (HDHCP) will be provided. An annual contribution to a Health Savings Account in the amount equivalent to the medical deductible for Plan 3 (Individual plan) will be provided to the called worker to partially offset the costs of the HDHCP. Vacation time allotted: 0-5 years: 2 Sundays plus 20 days; 6-15 years: 3 Sundays plus 25 days; 16+ years: 4 Sundays plus 30 days.

While this specifically pertains to our Home Missionaries, the board understands that many congregations use this as guidance in deciding on compensation for their own pastors. If any congregations have questions on how to use the WELS Compensation Guidelines, the BHO has prepared additional resources to help. Please reach out to any member of the board and they can provide you with these resources.

## SUBSIDIES AND PROJECTS

	2023	2024	2025
	Actual	Actual	Projection
Divine Mercy - Weatherford TX	\$ 156,667	\$ 156,667	\$ 156,000
Grace - Redmond OR	\$ 24,000	\$ 6,000	\$ -
Grace Lincoln IL	\$ 4,574	\$ -	\$ -
Hope - Farmington MN	\$ 38,667	\$ 38,000	\$ 19,000
Hope - Leander TX	\$ 144,000	\$ 144,000	\$ 144,000
King of Grace - Waukon IA	\$ 22,167	\$ 18,667	\$ 12,000
Living Water - San Angelo TX	\$ 115,667	\$ 62,988	\$ -
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	\$ 505,742	\$ 426,322	\$ 331,000
Eagle Lake MN		\$ 24,278	\$ 75,000
Parkland WA		\$ 22,500	\$ -
Peace Devotions	\$ 18,200	\$ 18,947	\$ 18,000
Vicar in Mission		\$ 20,355	\$ 40,000

### THANK YOU

We thank God that He has caused various individuals, congregations, and other organizations to continue to contribute funding for our home outreach efforts. This includes special direct gifts from individuals, the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation, The Bolick Foundation, estates, earned and accumulated interest, and home outreach reserve funds.

Please pray that the Lord of the harvest will continue to send out laborers and that they would have many opportunities to proclaim Jesus as the Savior of sinners.

*The Rev. Ben Wiechmann, chairman*

## REPORT OF THE BOARD FOR WORLD OUTREACH

*Committee #10: World Outreach*

*“And [pray] for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ... that ... I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” (Ephesians 6:19–20)*

Paul asked that the Ephesian Christians pray for his gospel outreach ministry. To this day, many Christian missionaries and pastors request the same prayer. The Board for World Outreach (BWO) of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod asks our members to do the same.

The BWO is that arm of the synod which oversees, assists, and supports the synod’s world outreach efforts. It directly supports and assists with Gospel outreach in eight different fields in four parts of the world: South America, Asia, Australia, and Europe. As these fields grow, we rejoice to see them embrace biblical Lutheran theology and to share their faith in situations that are often difficult, and perhaps even dangerous. We pray that God continues to bless these fields as we, and they, continue to make known the name of Jesus throughout the world.

### BOARD ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL

The BWO consists of nine members, each member serving on one or more of four committees. The South America committee is responsible for ELS-supported work in Peru and Chile. The members of this committee are Pastors Timothy Bartels and Daniel Ruiz and Mr. Enrique Carhuayo. The Asia committee is responsible for ELS-supported work in India and Korea. The members of this committee are Pastor Steven Sparley, Mr. Daniel Browning, chairman of the BWO, Mr. Justin Marthaler and Pastor Jacob Kempfert. The Europe committee is responsible for ELS-supported work in Czechia, Latvia and the Gift of Life program in Ukraine. The members of this committee are Pastors John Petersen and Mr. Matthew Lukasek. The Australia committee is new this year. Pastors Timothy Bartels and Mr. Justin Marthaler serve on this committee. The Rev. Thomas Heyn serves as BWO administrator. We thank Mrs. Myrna Meunier, the ELS treasurer, for her invaluable work in overseeing the finances of the board and getting the many transfers to the fields that are required each month.



The BWO meets in plenary session in Mankato several times a year. The board and/or committees also meet online multiple times per year as needed. The board continues to develop a goal-setting and long-range planning process to review our work and to plan for the future.

## COMMUNICATIONS AND FUNDRAISING

To promote our synod's world outreach efforts, we distribute two publications. *Mission News* focuses on mission work in South America (Peru and Chile) and Asia (India and South Korea). *Thoughts of Faith Newsletter* covers work being done in Europe (Czechia, Latvia, and the Gift of Life program in Ukraine.) We especially encourage the pastors of our synod to assure these newsletters are distributed in their congregations and we thank you for your help in promoting our world outreach work. The BWO promotes world mission outreach also through articles in the *Lutheran Sentinel*. We continue to look for more ways to inform ELS members of the work being done in the various foreign fields. We especially thank Karen Madson for her engaging layouts of the *Mission News* and *Thoughts of Faith* newsletters.

Cross-stitch is a network of various ELS women's organizations. Regional rallies are held, usually in the fall, where the women of our congregations meet for worship, fellowship, and presentations to learn what their support is accomplishing in world and home missions. It has been especially helpful in supporting programs that care for orphans as well as programs that support education for young women, where, in some countries, their education is often neglected. We thank Mary Born for her help in keeping the work in our mission fields before the eyes of the various women's mission organizations. The work of Cross-stitch is being restructured for 2025 and beyond; details to follow.

More information on these and other programs can be found at [tof.org](http://tof.org) (Thoughts of Faith) and [els.org/world-outreach/](http://els.org/world-outreach/). You can also find updates at [facebook.com/ELSWorldOutreach](https://facebook.com/ELSWorldOutreach).

## THANK YOU

During the past year many individual donors, congregations, and foundations have provided much needed support for our ELS world outreach efforts. Special grants have been given by the Marvin. M. Schwan Charitable Foundation as well as the Antioch Foundation and the Niles Foundation. We thank all donors for their generous gifts to assist in reaching out to our world with the precious word of God.

May God continue to grant his blessings on our efforts to share the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world so that many may be blessed and share in the salvation won by Jesus.

*The Rev. Thomas A. Heyn, administrator--ELS Board for World Outreach*

## SOUTH AMERICA COMMITTEE

### *Peru*

The apostle Paul writes, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of heaven" (Acts 14:22). Developments in our South America field have brought home Paul's words to our South American brothers and sisters.

*Pastor Fidel Convercio.* This past October the Rev. Fidel Convercio fell asleep in Jesus and received his baptismal inheritance. He spent many years studying to be a pastor under missionaries Jim Olson, Tim Erickson, and others. His dedication to be a pastor is truly a wonderful example of what Paul writes to Timothy, "If a man desires the position of bishop he desires a good work" (1 Tim 3:1) We thank God for the service that the Rev. Convercio gave to the mountain churches. We express our condolences to his widow, Dora, and thank her for her support to her husband over the years. Blessed be his memory!

*Churches:* The churches are members of the Sínodo Evangélico Luterano del Peru [SELP]. There are six churches in the city of Lima. Lima is a city of more than ten million. The minimum wage is equivalent to \$125 US/month. Many employers do not even provide minimum wage. Most Lima residents, including members of our Peruvian churches, as a result, live day by day.

There is another church some six hours north in the port city of Chimbote. The Chimbote church is unique among the Sínodo Evangélico Luterano del Peru [SELP] in that it has several members who have or are retired from professional careers.

Some ten hours by car is a church in the Andes at Cajamarca. The Cajamarca church would like to purchase property and build. Property costs have increased because Cajamarca is a World Heritage site. The church needs to put together a viable plan for outreach, as well as what it can contribute financially for property and a building before the ELS commits funds to assist.

There are a few mountain churches in another area of the Andes in and near Huaráz. The churches had been served by the sainted Rev. Convercio. Now that he is gone, the mountain churches are asking for pastoral services.

There are three jungle community churches. They are served by jungle seminarians or pastors. Typically, the whole community is connected to the church. The communities have many children.

*Schools:* There are two schools operated by the SELP. One is called Martín Lutero and is in Lima. It is a K-6th grade school. The school underwent a staffing transition a few years ago. The result has been a positive blessing. It has done well enough that new students have had to be turned away. In order to address the increasing demand, the Peruvian leadership made plans to add

a third story to the school. Those plans have hit roadblocks along the way due to government regulations delaying the addition of the third story. Regulations require meeting building code before adding on. To complicate matters, the school is facing increasing government demands. The government is now saying that parents *do not* have to pay tuition. As a result, many parents *are not* paying tuition. Without tuition, the school will not be able to keep its doors open. To further complicate matters, criminal gangs of immigrants from a nearby country are committing extortion. They are threatening the lives of SELP leaders unless they pay for “protection.”

The other school is located in the jungle community of Louis Terry. It is a K–12 school. Because it is far removed from Lima, it has not fallen under the same troubles as Martín Lutero has. However, children in the jungle communities are often undernourished. The government requires the community school to provide sufficient nourishment. If the school cannot provide nourishment, the government will assume control of the school. The Peruvian leadership is providing the necessary nourishment through gifts given to the SELP from ELS donors, including Cross-stitch. We thank them for their support.

*Pastors:* Five pastors serve in Lima. One pastor serves the churches at the coastal city of Chimbote and the Andes congregation at Cajamarca. Three pastors serve the three jungle community churches. All of the pastors get some wages from ELS support. The average wage support is roughly \$200 US/month. The Rev. Segundo Gutiérrez is president of the Sínodo Evangélico Luterano del Peru [SELP].

*Vicars:* There are three vicars. One of the vicars is in poor health. The other two serve when and where the Peruvian leadership asks them to serve.

*Seminaries:* The SELP has a seminary building in Lima. There is concern that there have been no seminary students studying at the Lima seminary for a number of years (see challenges below). The SELP has seminary students in the jungle. There are as many as ten that gather for studies. They travel from the jungle communities by foot, crude river boats, and bus into the jungle city of Tarapoto where the SELP maintains property and a chapel. The Rev. Segundo Gutiérrez and the Rev. Andres Robles serve as seminary professors for the jungle students.

### **Challenges:**

Who controls the water? A few years ago, a generous donor worked with a humanitarian organization to install clean water in Louis Terry. The water is supposed to be administered by the community. However, the community chieftain believes that he has the authority to administer the water and do it through his son. Unfortunately, it has caused tension in the Louis Terry community.

The Peruvian clergy roster is aging. There is an urgent need to train future pastors and to ordain the vicars. There is a possibility of connecting with Academia Cristo students in Lima and Peru. Perhaps connecting with some of them may connect the Peruvians with potential seminary students.

Keeping the schools open. Humanly speaking the future of the Peruvian Synod lies in the schools. The schools are key to the future of Peru to form the next generation of Lutheran Christians—and from that next generation to raise up good church leaders and potential seminary candidates. The increased pressure from the government, effectively attempting to shut down the schools, makes this a critical challenge.

Connecting with the mountain churches. There has been a disconnect between the Peruvian Synod and the churches in the mountains. With the passing of Pastor Fidel Convecio, the mountain churches are without pastoral services. Efforts are being made to reconnect and provide such services to the mountain churches.

### *Parochial Report*

Churches	Baptized total	Communicants total	Baptized this year	Confirmed this year	2 Parochial Schools
			Child/Adult	Child/Adult	Primary/Secondary
11	275	118	27/18	4/2	114/23

<i>Financial Report—2024</i>	Inflow	Outflow
1. Synod and Jungle		
a. Synod	\$61,100	22,150.51
b. Jungle	57,140	17,089.33
c. Total Synod/Jungle	118,240	5,061.17
2. Seminary and Mission		
a. Seminary	24,700	6,197.68
b. Mission	24,000	6,046.91

c. Total Seminary/Mission	48,700	12,244.60
3. TOTAL	\$166,940	\$17,305.77

**Chile**

*Churches:* There are two churches in Chile, *Familia de Dios*, in Santiago and four hours south of Santiago, *Unidos Por La Fe*, in Linares. The Santiago church is doing well under the leadership of the Rev. Mario Gálvez. It is located in an easy-to-access block near public transportation. The Rev. Gálvez, his wife, Milly, and volunteer church workers offer outreach activities to connect participants to the gospel and gather them into catechism classes and church membership.

The Linares church has suffered, sad to say, due to power struggles. As a result, the church has retained one faithful member and a few prospects. The Rev. Gálvez has been working to restart the congregation. If efforts to restart it do not bear fruit, the property will be sold and sales proceeds will go toward opening a preaching station in the greater Santiago urban area. In that case, the Rev. Gálvez will continue to serve the one member and few prospects by monthly visits and by providing virtual services.

*Clergy:* There is one pastor in Chile, the Rev. Gálvez. He has a joint call from the Iglesia Cristiana de la Reforma Luterana Confesional de la República de Chile [ICRL] and the Board for World Outreach. His salary is paid by the ELS. The joint call tasks him with serving the churches, training future workers, and reaching out to Academia Cristo students in Chile. He also serves as the president of the ICRL.

*Seminary student:* The Rev. Gálvez has a seminary student named Pedro. Dedication is something that has been lacking among past seminary students. Pedro is a dedicated student and church worker. He has been installed as a seminary worker to assist Pastor Mario and to gain experience as he trains to be a pastor.

*Church workers:* Three women, Nellie, Juana and Auria, are in training as evangelists. Two of them were Academia Cristo students, who were put in contact with the Rev. Gálvez. They now study solely under him. Their roles as evangelists will be to reach out to women and children.

*Parochial Report:*

Churches	Baptized total	Communicants total	Baptized this year	Confirmed this year
			Child/Adult	Child/Adult
2	48	20	6/2	3/0

<i>Financial Report, 2024</i>	Inflow	Outflow
	\$58,648.43	\$57,596.90

*Summary:* The South America Committee is thankful for the support and prayers of the ELS for our Peruvian and Chilean brothers and sisters as they labor—sometimes in challenging circumstances—to bring the Gospel to people redeemed by our Savior, Jesus.

*The Rev. Tim Bartels, chairman—South America Committee*

**ASIA COMMITTEE**

**India**

The Lutheran Mission of Salvation–India (LMSI) a partner of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) is primarily funded through the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation as well as a substantial number of individual donors. We are also grateful to the Women’s Mission Societies in the various circuits of the ELS, who have taken a special interest in the orphanages, widows’ homes, and schools of the LMSI for years and continue to do so. The church also is supported by the offerings of its congregation members in India.

The LMSI consists of three districts: Hyderabad in southcentral India, Rajahmundry to the east near the Bay of Bengal, and Jabalpur in central India. The language of those in the Hyderabad district (Telangana State) and the Rajahmundry district (Andhra Pradesh State) is Telugu, and of those in the much smaller Jabalpur district (Madhya Pradesh State) Hindi.

As of the beginning of 2025, the LMSI numbered 25,714 members: 12,420 in the Rajahmundry district, 11,394 in the Hyderabad district, and 2,900 in the Jabalpur district. The congregations are served by 27 ordained pastors, 198 Gospel Workers, and 80 Bible Women. Gospel Workers are men in various stages of theological training, the most advanced of which undergo seminary level training and form the next group eligible for ordination. This year 20 of these men have entered seminary training, which is of necessity conducted on a part-time basis since the men also work at other jobs. The training lasts five years—or possibly more, depending on the time each candidate can devote to his studies. Limitation in the number of seminarians is in large part due to limitation of funding. The Bible Women serve more than 300 children in the 19 orphanages of the LMSI and in door-to-door outreach visitation, especially in the villages, since it would not be appropriate in the culture for a man to do so.

Each district holds monthly workshops for ongoing training of both Gospel Workers and Bible Women. The lessons are for the most part practical, and include catechetical training, hymns, liturgy, and gospel proclamation. It is also beneficial for the ordained pastors who teach them to have the opportunity to improve their teaching skills. It is hoped that in the near future the pastors of the LMSI will be able to meet annually for a general pastoral conference somewhat like ours here as well as in quarterly district conferences. Possible funding for such conferences is being investigated.

The LMSI operates three Christian day schools, first through the equivalent of our tenth grade, where, in addition to their regular academic studies, students daily learn about their Savior Jesus Christ and study the Small Catechism. The largest of these schools is in Rajahmundry and is housed in the same building as Grace and Truth Lutheran Church, the flagship congregation of the Rajahmundry District. There are more than 400 students enrolled in the three schools, many of whom come from non-member families.

The expansion of the St. Peter Church on the west side of Hyderabad was dedicated on January 18, 2024. The new sanctuary on the third floor is much larger than the old one and has made it possible to begin the conversion of the former sanctuary space on the second floor into residential, classroom, and meeting space. This will be the site for the seminary, both for their classrooms and for their lodging when the seminary is in session as well as the residence for the pastor of the St. Peter congregation. St. Peter is being developed as the flagship congregation of the Hyderabad District.

The president of the Hyderabad district is Pastor Solomon Mamidi and of the Rajahmundry district Pastor Kalyan Gollapalli. Mr. Vijay Sidney administers the smaller Jabalpur district. Rev. Thomas Heyn, the BWO Administrator, and one of the four members of the Asia Committee visit India annually to review with the presidents and pastors the work of the mission as a whole and set goals for outreach and worker training, discuss and prioritize capital projects, and deal with any difficult issues that arise. One of the thornier issues in recent years is the increasing scrutiny of all non-historic Indian religions by the Indian government and their relationship to foreign church bodies and organizations. Many new and complicated rules have been added.

Significant complications have arisen in the orphanages (children's homes). New regulations by the government have called for the homes to upgrade their facilities both to meet existing rules and in anticipation of new rules. Also, food prices have risen sharply, especially when it comes to protein items, which are so important for growing children. New sources of support for the children's homes would be very much appreciated.

By the grace of God, the LMSI continues to grow even as the level of funding provided by the ELS has been declining. This often makes for difficult decisions! The board is very grateful to the many who have donated and continue to donate to work in India. You are making a difference, an eternal difference, in the lives of your brothers and sisters in Christ in India, who are very grateful for the support and prayers you provide.

### ***Korea***

The BWO continues to watch for developments and, especially, opportunities to proclaim the gospel in the countries of east Asia. Seoul Lutheran Church on the east side of the South Korean capital has been the base of our efforts there. The congregation's outreach efforts are primarily directed toward Korean nationals on the east side of Seoul. Greater Seoul has a population of 26 million. The congregation's pastor is Dr. Sung Gyo (Sam) Choi. Dr. Choi was instrumental in hosting the convention of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) in May of 2023, which brought together in Seoul churches of our fellowship from all over the world.

Pastor Cui Jinfeng, known to many in our synod from his years at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary as David Choi, took up his duties in Seoul three and a half years ago, starting his work assisting Dr. Choi at Seoul Lutheran Church. Now, however, he is focused on a new effort in the center of the city, named Great Light Lutheran Church, located in space provided by the International Fellowship of Christian Athletes. The location is immediately adjacent to Seoul's central train station, from which also emanates all the subway system routes throughout the city. It is an excellent location.

The "Language Café" started by Pastor Choi more than a year ago has led to the creation of an active Bible study group and adult instruction for those who soon will become communicant members of the church. The participants in these groups are both ex-patriot ethnic Koreans from China and Korean nationals with a strong interest in perfecting their English skills. At present he serves about 20 people, with new people being added every month. He is helped in this by Mr. Doug Tabor, an American working with Friends Network. Pastor David Choi has also developed many contacts with Korean Christian exiles from China and has a close relationship with Pastor Young Chul Choi, himself an exile from China who works with a number of Chinese speaking ethnic Korean Christian congregations in the central part of Seoul. Young Chul Choi is currently taking advanced theological instruction with a view to colloquizing into the Lutheran ministry. Other exiled Chinese Koreans on the west side of Seoul have also been located and contacted. They too are interested in Lutheran Law/Gospel ministry.

Pastors Sam Choi, David Choi, and Jae Woong Kim, who is recently retired, meet monthly as a pastoral conference for mutual support, continued study, and prayer. They are currently studying the book of Ephesians. It is hoped that some of the Chinese exile leaders noted above will be able to join them in the future for some of their study.

Rev. Heyn and one of the four members of the BWO Asia Committee meet annually in country with the three Korean pastors to review the work of the church and mission in South Korea and, we pray, beyond.

The members of the BWO continue to pray for the people and pastors of the South Korean church, our brothers and sisters in Christ, as they worship the Triune God with us and go about the work of bringing the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ to more and more people.

*The Rev. Steven R. Sparley, chairman—Asia Committee*

## **EUROPE COMMITTEE**

At the time of this report, there are hopeful indications of a possible peace agreement and ending of the war in Ukraine. But for now, we continue to pray that God would protect those who are suffering from their neighbor's aggression, and that He would soon bring about peace for both sides in the conflict, so that the killings and bombings and missile attacks and armed combat may soon come to an end.

Thoughts of Faith, which is now also called the Europe Committee of the ELS Board for World Outreach, had its beginning in the late 1970s, when former ELS pastor, the late Rev. John Shep, began gospel radio broadcasts to the people of Ukraine. When the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990s, the Lord opened the way for Thoughts of Faith to begin mission work, not only in Ukraine, but also in the Czech Republic and in Latvia.

In these uncertain and dangerous times both in Europe and around the world, we give thanks to God that we are able to assist in serving the people of those countries with the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. We thank Him also for the faithful help provided by many supporters in our Evangelical Lutheran Synod. In particular, we give our gracious Lord thanks and praise for the continued generous funding provided by the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation.

### ***Czechia***

The Board for World Outreach continues to assist in the work of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and Martin Luther School in the city of Pilsen, Czech Republic. The worship attendance is now very low, with often under ten gathering for Sunday services. Pastor Martin Vrsecky conducts the worship just one Sunday per month owing to his very busy schedule as the chief financial officer and director of Martin Luther School. On the other Sundays, the members are encouraged to gather for a Bible study together. On those Sundays when the children of Martin Luther School sing choir selections, the attendance is usually between 60–80. We thank God that families hear His Word on those occasions.

In July, a week of Vacation Bible School was held, being assisted by faculty and students from Luther Preparatory School in Watertown, Wisconsin. On the Sunday following the VBS, the worship service was joined by several of the children and their families.

Despite the difficulties faced by the congregation, the school continues to grow and at this time numbers around 350 students from Kindergarten through ninth grade. The students attend weekly chapel services which are geared to the different age groups among the student body. The children in all of the grades take weekly religion classes, learning of Jesus Christ and His salvation.

The church and school are blessed to be located in a landmark building which survived the bombing of Pilsen during WWII. It was renovated over 25 years ago, and from time-to-time certain repairs and improvements are carried out, particularly in the school portion of the building.

During the past year, the Europe Committee of the Board for World Outreach has been exploring various options which may have an impact on the future of our mission work in Pilsen. In the meantime, we request prayers for God's continued guidance and blessing for the Czech mission, that according to His will, the church and school may be sustained and thrive as they share the Good News of Jesus Christ and the salvation He has won for the whole world, including the people of the Czech Republic.

### ***Latvia***

The Confessional Lutheran Church of Latvia (CLCL), is made up of pastors and congregants who want to remain fully faithful to the doctrines of Holy Scripture, as taught by the historic, confessional Lutheran Church. Its formation began in the early 1990s, when Bethany Lutheran College professors Erling Teigen and the sainted Mark Harstad made frequent trips to Latvia for the purpose of lecturing and preaching, conducting seminary level classes and speaking at retreats, especially among college age students who were eager to learn more about the Lutheran Confessions. As a result of their work and contacts, several pastors serving in the large national church decided to gather for the purpose of fellowship and the publishing of a newsletter, featuring theological articles.

Today, the CLCL consists of six congregations served by seven pastors. Five of the clergymen are serving in bi-vocational ministries, receiving a small stipend from the BWO through general or Latvia directed donations.

Pastor Ilars Plume serves as the full-time pastor for the congregation in the town of Kekava. And, Pastor Uldis Fandejevs serves the church in Ozolneicki, another suburb of the capital city of Riga. Both congregations worship in very attractive church buildings which were constructed within the past 20 years with the generous assistance of American friends and supporters.

The CLCL also has a congregation which worships in the Old Town neighborhood in Riga. Served by Pastors Gundars Bakulis and Ugis Sildegs, it enjoys a steady attendance, and draws some students from the nearby university. Both pastors are bi-vocational—Pastor Bakulis is a surgeon, and Pastor Sildegs has been overseeing the *Latvian Lutheran*, a well-regarded online

theological journal. A major project for Dr. Sildegs over the past few years has been the production of a new Latvian language hymn book. God willing, it will serve our church body and probably other Latvian churches, for many years to come. Currently, Dr. Sildegs, together with Pastor Plume, is playing an important role in the theological training of future Latvian pastors.

The congregation in the city of Jelgava has been working for a couple years on the renovation of their old and rather decrepit building, and by God's grace, they have transformed it into an attractive and vibrant worship space. Under the leadership of their pastor, Ivo Sildegs, the congregation is continuing to work on remodeling projects, and having received a generous gift from a Latvian-American businessman during the past year, it is now in a better position to reach out to their neighbors with the precious word of life. They too are very thankful for the support that has been received from various Thoughts of Faith donors.

A plan remains in place to begin an apologetics and outreach center in Old Town Riga, not far from the nearby university, with the hope that they may attract students and share the Gospel with them. In the meantime, the pastors and the members of the CLCL have been diligent in identifying potential candidates to serve in the pastoral ministry. Pastor Plume wrote in a recent correspondence:

*Student training is going well. Juris and Krisjanis are working diligently, Kārlis and Jedijah cannot fully devote themselves to theological studies due to their heavy secular workload. Currently, we are studying Greek and an introduction to the New Testament, where we have an excellent assistant, Holger Weiss (from the Lutheran seminary in Leipzig, Germany). Later, we will read Acts under his guidance, and currently I am preparing materials and, together with Ugis, Uldis and the students, we are studying I John in Greek. Allen Sorum, plans to give lectures on the use of Bible stories in preaching, and Peter Schlich, will give lectures on Christ in the Old Testament in August. And then we will have September, when our dear friends Thomas Heyn and John Petersen will visit us again and we will study homiletics together. It's our prayer that the Lord will bless these classes, and that the students may be led to serve as part of the next generation of CLCL pastors.*

Despite the troubles Satan places in the way, and the threats and the dangers of the current war in Ukraine expanding to other places, the committee remains optimistic about the future for our fellow congregations in Europe. It requests prayers and support for these pastors and church members living in the changing economies and cultures of the Czech Republic and Latvia.

*The Rev. John Petersen, chairman—Europe Committee*

## **UKRAINE, THE INTERNATIONAL CHARITABLE FUND “GIFT OF LIFE”**

In November 2024, after more than 20 years of faithful service to God and the people of Ukraine, Nicholas and Kerry Laper concluded their dedicated mission and returned to the United States. We are deeply grateful for their years of service, during which they faithfully fulfilled the Great Commission, comforted the brokenhearted, supported the needy, and built a strong foundation for our ministry.

The role of director of Gift of Life Ukraine was assumed by Dmytro Maksymenko. Dmytro holds an MBA, a Master of Theology, and a Bachelor's degree in Accounting and Auditing. With extensive experience in international humanitarian work, inter-church relations, and cross-cultural management, he brings a new vision to continue and expand the ministry's mission in Ukraine.

### ***The Situation in Ukraine***

The war in Ukraine rages on, causing widespread devastation and suffering. In 2024, the country's energy infrastructure was nearly destroyed due to constant missile and drone attacks. Long-lasting power outages, often up to 12 hours a day, became common across all regions. This situation severely impacted hospitals, schools, and public services. The economic crisis deepened, with millions of internally displaced people (IDPs) struggling to find work and survive on minimal social benefits. Many families lost their homes and loved ones, and the psychological toll on the population continues to grow. In these dark times, Gift of Life Ukraine serves as a beacon of hope, providing physical, emotional, and spiritual support to those in need.

### ***Medical Clinic on Wheels (MCOW)***

In 2024, the Medical Clinic on Wheels visited 13 locations, including three new villages. The medical bus provided free consultations and treatment to 3,900 patients, while the dental bus served 4,545 people, including many children and elderly individuals. Beyond medical care, the clinic's mission is rooted in evangelism. Children received Bible-themed coloring books, prayer booklets, and encouraging cards with Bible verses. Adults were offered the Word of God, the Small Catechism, and other Lutheran literature.

Thanks to financial support from partners, the clinic's infrastructure was significantly improved. New uniforms for doctors were purchased, advanced dental cleaning equipment was installed, and existing dental tools were repaired. These improvements enhanced the quality of care and allowed the team to serve patients more effectively. The Clinic on Wheels remains one of the most impactful ministries of Gift of Life, bringing both physical healing and the hope of Christ to those in need.

### ***Ukrainian Crisis Fund Support***

In response to the severe energy crisis, the Ukrainian Crisis Fund provided crucial support to ensure uninterrupted operations at the Gift of Life office and Life Centers in Ternopil, Kremenets, and Kyiv. With funds from the Crisis Fund, portable power stations were purchased, allowing staff to maintain office equipment, access the internet for online Bible lessons, and provide lighting with solar-powered devices.

Additionally, funds were used to purchase grocery vouchers for internally displaced people, elderly individuals, and disabled persons, especially those who actively participated in Bible classes and educational programs at the Life Centers. This support not only met physical needs but also helped build deeper relationships with those seeking spiritual renewal.

### ***Lutheran Pro-Life Centers***

In 2024, Gift of Life's Pro-Life Centers continued to serve pregnant women in crisis, young mothers, and families. A total of 347 Bible classes were held, attended by 2,593 people, including 1,533 first-time participants. Through 189 pro-life presentations conducted in schools, medical institutions, and Life Centers, the message of the sanctity of life reached 4,801 people.

The Life Centers also offered 384 practical programs, such as the School of Motherhood, School of Fatherhood, Partnership Birth Preparation, and Fitness for Pregnant Women. These programs supported 2,687 participants, providing them with essential knowledge and skills for parenting and family life. Moreover, 1,455 individuals received personal counseling sessions focused on family support, abortion prevention, and the value of every unborn life.

### ***Life Centers as Humanitarian Hubs***

Gift of Life's Life Centers transformed into true humanitarian hubs, where all those in need, especially those affected by the war, could receive support. Internally displaced people, single mothers, and elderly individuals found refuge and assistance in our centers. Here, they received food, clothing, hygiene products, counseling, and spiritual guidance.

The Life Centers became not only places of physical support but also spaces where people could find hope and peace through God's Word. Bible classes, informal meetings, and Christian support groups continued to grow, helping people find strength in faith and community.

### ***Looking Ahead***

Despite the growing challenges and ongoing destruction caused by war, Gift of Life Ukraine remains committed to its mission. Our team continues to trust in God's promise: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psa 46:1).

In 2025, we plan to expand the foundation's activities, with a special focus on missionary work and evangelization. We will actively seek new ways to reach people with the gospel and develop new projects and partnerships to better serve the people of Ukraine.

With faith and perseverance, the Gift of Life team presses on, confident that God will continue to provide strength and resources to serve our people. As the Apostle Paul reminds us: "In due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart" (Gal 6:9).

The Gift of Life team expresses deep gratitude for the prayers and support of our partners and friends, which sustain us in this vital mission.

*Dmytro Maksymenko, Director, Gift of Life*

## **AUSTRALIA**

The Lord asked, "Who shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah answered the call, "Here am I send me!" The Triune God, through Our Redeemer Lutheran Church and the Board for World Outreach, keeps asking, "Who will go for us?"

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church is an independent Lutheran Church in fellowship with the ELS. The congregation has 19 members. It is just outside the urban area of Brisbane, Queensland. Two years ago, Our Redeemer requested mentoring support from the Board for World Outreach, which the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in convention resolved to accept in June of 2023.

In December of 2023, Our Redeemer's pastor, the Rev. Dan Finn, resigned his call for personal reasons. Since then, the congregation has been vacant and has been served by the Rev. David Meyer with assistance from council member, Mark Kelly. The congregation has been working with the BWO to call an ELS pastor. The call is a joint call with Our Redeemer Lutheran Church and the Board for World Outreach. While it is a joint call, Our Redeemer is taking full responsibility for the pastor's wages.

The Our Redeemer members are very dedicated Christians and have a great desire to do outreach and grow. Every candidate who has been called has highly complimented the congregation's commitment and encouraging attitude. At the time of writing this report, the congregation has extended nine calls all of which have been declined. One of the questions that came up earlier in the call deliberations had to do with Australian wage compensation. Since the exchange rate between the US dollar and the Australian dollar is in constant flux, the committee along with Our Redeemer worked to clarify and make sure the compensation was in line with Australian public teacher wages.

Not only are there opportunities to do outreach and numerically grow the Our Redeemer congregation, but there also may be opportunities to connect with disaffected Lutheran Church of Australia [LCA] clergy and congregations. In the fall of 2024, the LCA resolved to ordain women. That movement has led some LCA members to look elsewhere for like-minded Lutherans.

Two WELS missionaries and their families are also attending the congregation. They have been called by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod [WELS] to do outreach to Asian immigrants in the Brisbane urban area. Their presence has been an encouragement to the congregation. They have also begun contacting some disaffected LCA members. The WELS missionaries have offered to help in the congregation as requested.

The Australia Committee is also looking into exploratory visits to determine the viability of Australia as a new mission field. A second pastor could be called to expand mission work as well as to provide mutual support for the Our Redeemer pastor, including mentoring should a seminary graduate be considered for the joint call.

The Australia Committee thanks you for your support and prayers as we, together with Our Redeemer, continue in the calling process that the right man will answer, “Here I am! Send me.”

*The Rev. Tim Bartels, chairman—Australia Committee*

#### **RESOLUTIONS:**

WHEREAS, The synod guidelines call for staggered 3-year terms for board members, and,

WHEREAS, The BWO desires to follow the synod recommendation to implement such terms in its Type B appointments, and,

WHEREAS, The BWO appointed Dan Browning as a Type B member for one year and Rev. Tim Bartels as a Type B member for two years to begin upon ratification by the synod convention in June of 2025, and,

WHEREAS, Those appointments, upon expiration of the aforementioned terms will be reappointed as three-year terms respectively, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That the synod in convention ratify these appointments as outlined above.

## **REPORT OF THE BOARD FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOLS**

*Committee #11: Elementary Education*

#### **PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

The schools of the ELS aspire to assist families in bringing up their children “*in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*” (Ephesians 6:4). To this end we serve to produce students with clear understandings of both their citizenship in heaven and on earth. We want our students to know Jesus as their Savior from sin and death, and as the lens through which all of Scripture is to be understood. And we want them to understand that God calls them to make use of their talents in their Christian vocation. We believe an education founded in the liberal arts is best suited to help students discover and explore their talents and how they can best be used in service to God and neighbor.

#### **BOARD MEMBERS**

The board serves to support the schools of the ELS using the insights of pastors, professional educators, and laymen from the various geographical areas of the synod. Currently the board is served by the following members: Mr. Chris Poetter, Rev. Chris Dale (chair), Rev. Michael Dale (secretary), Mr. Todd Knutson, Rev. Josh Skogen, Mr. Ken Meyer (Treasurer), Mr. Nathan Rovey, Rev. Jesse Jacobsen, and Mr. Shu-Ting Lai (Secretary for Schools). Dr. Carrie Pfeifer (Bethany Lutheran College Ed. Dept.) serves the board as an advisory member.

#### **ELS SECRETARY FOR SCHOOLS**

The ELS Secretary for Schools, Shu-Ting Lai, oversees the work of ELS schools by providing call lists, managing the continuing education grant program, and providing guidance and support. He reports to the Board for Lutheran Schools at their semi-annual meetings. Since our last Synod Convention, the Secretary for Schools performed school visits at Mount Olive (Mankato, Minnesota), Heritage (Apple Valley, Minnesota), Peace (Kissimmee, Florida), Parkland (Tacoma, Washington), and Lakewood (Lakewood, Washington).



## MEETINGS

Since the 2024 Synod Convention, the board met:

September 30–October 1 at the ELS Headquarters (Mankato, Minnesota)

January 13 at Christ Lutheran Church & School (Port St. Lucie, Florida) and January 14 at Grace Lutheran Church/Gracie's Preschool (Vero Beach, Florida).

## SUGGESTED ELS TEACHER SALARY SCALE

At the 2021 ELS Convention, the use of the WELS Teacher Compensation guidelines for ELS schools was approved. The Board for Lutheran Schools suggests using Column C for teachers, Column D for early childhood directors, and Column E scale for principals. The compensation calculator can be found at <https://cwcompcalc.wels.net>. Health insurance should be provided for the teacher based on family need using WELS VEBA or an equivalent plan. The Secretary for Schools is available to assist congregations with this process.

## ELS NATIONAL TEACHER CONFERENCE

The board is actively promoting the 2026 ELS National Teacher Conference to be held July 13–16 in St. Augustine, Florida, a city with a long rich history on the Atlantic coastal waters. The committee members are Kurtis and Andrea Freimuth, and Chris and Ann Poetter. Information will be sent to schools in July of 2025.

The conference will be held at Flagler College and will include worship, educational presentations, and activities in the local area. The board encourages all of our ELS teachers to attend.

## BLS GRANT DISBURSEMENTS

The BLS supports various initiatives by disbursing most of its funds to ELS schools and teachers in the following ways:

### *School Subsidy Grants*

**Gloria Dei, Saginaw, MI**, for the development of an early learning center—\$40,000 approved in 2023, to be dispersed at \$15,000 (2023), \$12,500 (2024), and \$12,500 (2025)

**Holy Trinity, Okauchee, WI**, for further building updates—\$15,000 approved in 2024, to be dispersed at \$7,500 (2024), and \$7,500 (2025)

**Faith, Oregon, WI**, for Sursum Corda Classical Hybrid School—Requested \$50,000 in 2024, board approved \$6000 (2024), and \$6000 (2025), and will evaluate success of the project before deciding on further disbursements.

**Peace, Kissimmee, FL**—\$37,500 approved in 2025, to be disbursed at \$7,500 (2025), \$15,000 (2026), and \$15,000 (2027).

**Faith, Carthage, MO**, for preschool expansion project—\$50,000 approved in 2024, to be disbursed at \$20,000 (2025), \$15,000 (2026), and \$15,000 (2027).

### *School Sustainability Grants*

**Mt. Olive, Mankato, MN** (\$10,500) to cover the cost of Blueprint Schools, Inc. consultancy.

**Peace, Kissimmee, FL** (\$12,500) to cover the cost of Blueprint Schools, Inc. consultancy.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION GRANTS FOR TEACHERS

The board is pleased to offer grants in the amount of \$600/year to teachers serving ELS schools. These grants are intended to help defray costs associated with continuing education. Teachers need only submit the application and receipt for continuing education to the board through the Secretary for Schools at [principal@bethanyles.com](mailto:principal@bethanyles.com). To support this important program financially, please include “Teacher Incentive Program” with your gift to the ELS.

## COURSE DEVELOPMENT GRANT FOR BETHANY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

In 2024, the BLC Education Dept. requested \$3,600 to support the development of online religion courses for post-baccalaureate students seeking ELS teacher certification. The request was approved, and the funds have been distributed.

### *Travel Grants For BLC ELS Teacher Certification Students*

The BLS supports future ELS teachers who are training at BLC by providing a travel grant for student teaching opportunities outside of the state of Minnesota.

### *Bethany Lutheran College Teacher Incentive Program Grants*

Recognizing the need for BLC-trained teachers in our ELS schools, in 2018, the board resolved to set aside \$15,000 as seed money for a new program to incentivize BLC education students to teach in our ELS schools. The program will cover the cost of the student's religion textbooks while taking courses in the BLC ELS Teacher Certification Program as well as offer a \$1000 bonus after completion of each of the first four years teaching in an ELS school.

We thank God that since its inception, this program has received continued support from individuals and congregations throughout the ELS. It is our hope that such support will continue to grow throughout the coming years.

### **GRANTS RECEIVED**

**Bolick Foundation**—In December 2024, the BLS received \$24,564.82 from the Bolick Foundation to partially fund our School Sustainability Initiative. The board expresses sincere gratitude to the Bolick Foundation for seeing the merits of the initiative and for its financial support.

**Schwan Foundation**—In January 2025, the BLS received \$35,000 from the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation to support teacher development in the ELS. The board expresses sincere gratitude to the foundation for its continued financial support.

### **ELS HOMESCHOOL ASSOCIATION GRANTS**

The Board for Lutheran Schools has, in the past, supported the Lutheran Homeschool Association in their endeavors. Pastor Josh Skogen serves as the Board for Lutheran Schools liaison to this organization.

### **TEACHER ANNIVERSARIES**

Chris Arndt (Holy Cross)—10 years  
Emma Carr (Parkland)—10 years  
Stephanie Pasillas (Bethany)—10 years  
John Matzke (King of Grace)—25 years

### **TEACHER INSTALLATIONS**

The board has been notified that the following teachers have been installed prior to or during the 2024–25 school year:

MacKenna Adsit (Heritage)  
Audrey Faith Amiling (Parkland)  
Becky Cleven (Holy Cross)  
Katy Hennen (Trinity)  
Heather Juedes (Parkland)  
Chloe Kuhlman (Holy Cross)  
Sherri Medico (Holy Trinity/Tree of Life)  
Pamela Perry (King of Grace)  
Laurie Rygh (Scarville)  
Pauline Sundby (Parkland)  
Hannah Weide (Holy Cross)  
May the Lord continue to bless their work.

### **LUTHERAN SENTINEL SERIES ON EDUCATION**

Thanks to Pastor Josh Skogen and Kyle Madson for their work planning and publishing the current *Lutheran Sentinel* series based on Christian education in the ELS. This year-long series focused our ELS on the important role that Christian education plays in our story, past, present, and future.

### **ELS SCHOOLS AS MISSION FIELDS**

The board encourages congregations to continue to make use of the school ministry as a mission arm of the congregation. Many resources are available through our synod and the WELS. Schools are encouraged to contact the Secretary for Schools for assistance in this area.

### **SCHOOL VISITATION ENCOURAGEMENT**

The board encourages every ELS school to request a visit from a neighboring ELS principal, the Secretary for Schools, or a member of the education faculty at Bethany Lutheran College. Grant disbursements to schools are contingent upon the requesting school hosting a school visitation. Principals are encouraged to contact the Secretary for Schools for help in setting up a school visitation.

## PRINCIPAL MEETING

There will be a meeting for all ELS principals on Monday, June 16, during Synod Convention lunch recess. All principals are encouraged to meet Pastor Chris Dale and Mr. Shu-Ting Lai at the convention stage as soon as the convention breaks for lunch.

*The Rev. Chris Dale, chairman  
Mr. Shu-Ting Lai, Secretary for Schools*

# REPORT OF THE BOARD FOR YOUTH OUTREACH

*Committee #12: Parish Services*

## MEMBERS

The Rev. Kyle Madson (outgoing chairman), the Rev. Joshua Mayer (chairman), the Rev. Jeff Hendrix (secretary), the Rev. Tony Pittenger, Mr. Jim Sundby, Prof. Ben Faugstad, Mr. Chris Hoffman, and the Rev. Abe Faugstad (appointed).

## LUTHERAN YOUTH ASSOCIATION (LYA)

**2024:** The Lutheran Youth Association Convention was held July 25–28, 2024 at Concordia University Chicago with 211 participants (teens and leaders). The theme was “Justified.” Prof. Pete Bloedel and Rev. David Locklair were keynote speakers. St. Timothy, Lombard, IL hosted a service project. The director was Jeff Hendrix.

**2025:** LYA 2025 is scheduled for July 24–27, 2025 in Spokane, WA, under the theme of “Sanctified,” completing our three year apologetic series on the three articles of the Apostles’ Creed. BYO members Jim Sundby and Tony Pittenger are serving as directors.

**2026:** LYA 2026 is planned again to include a visit to the Creation Museum in Cincinnati, OH. Theme: “In the Beginning... בְּרֵאשִׁית”.

**2027:** Our normal rotation of having LYA at BLC will be pushed back one year to coincide with BLC’s 100th anniversary.

## LUTHERAN YOUTH HONOR CHOIR

Honor Choir Camp, run independently by BLC music professors in the past, is now under the direction of BYO as the Lutheran Youth Honor Choir, with the assistance of the Worship Committee. This is a prestigious confessional Lutheran choir which students are privileged to attend. Board member and music professor Benjamin Faugstad does the majority of the planning and administration.

**2024:** Honor Choir attendance was up nearly 53% over the previous year with 29 participants. Because of the success, we surpassed our expenses and were able to give \$1634.72 back to BLC. A large portion of the Honor Choir students intend to go to college at Bethany.

**2025:** Honor Choir is taking place during Synod Convention, June 14–18.

The BYO has resolved again that our board and BLC would each subsidize \$3000 of the total cost, with registration (at \$250) making up the rest. Information is at [ELS.org/honorchoir](http://ELS.org/honorchoir).

## SUMMER CAMPS

We continue to be more intentional about supporting our summer camps, and in return encouraging them to support Lutheran education (HS, college, seminary, etc.). We have increased our grant support for them (up to \$10 /camper, based on the previous year’s camp attendance as reflected in the synod report), while in return asking how these camps promote Lutheran higher education in our fellowship.

***Camp 4 Star, Washington*** (no report available at printing time)

Held at Millersylvania State Park. Director:

2024: Children served:

2025:

Theme:

### ***Camp Indianhead, Minnesota***

*Note:* Camp Indianhead has been folded under the BYO for synod oversight for finances, while management remains at local level.

Held at Lutheran Island Camp at Hennig, Minnesota and at Camp Omega, Waterville, Minnesota Directors: The Rev. Shawn Stafford, and the Rev. Josh Mayer. Facebook.com/CampIndianheadMN.

2024: Children served: 128.

2025: High School: July 7–11 at Lutheran Island Camp; Middle School: July 14–18 at Camp Omega (\$500). Theme: “Apologia: Defend the Faith”

### ***Camp Lor-Ray, Twin Lake, Michigan***

Superintendent: Vacant; Camp Coordinator: Mari Stegman (WELS). Spiritual Oversight: the Rev. Eric Hoefl. CampLor-Ray.org

2024: Children served: 1st–3rd: 18; 4–6th: 48; 7–9th: 42; total: 108.

2025: 1st–3rd grade: June 29–July 1 (\$199/\$175); 4t–6th grade: July 6–11; 7th–9th grade: July 13–18 (\$299/\$275). Theme: “Live Boldly (Romans 1:16)”

### ***Camp Lutherhaven, Washington***

Held at Wildcat Lake, Bremerton, Washington. Directors: Alan Nesselth, Amy Sharrett

2024: Children served: 55.

2025: July 6–11 (\$135). Theme: Undecided

### ***Camp Rise, Wisconsin***

Held at Camp LuWiSiMo, Wild Rose, Wisconsin. Director: The Rev. Nate Abrahamson. Camprise.org

2024: Children served: 69.

2025: 5th–10th grade: July 6–11 (\$460/\$490). Theme: “Seen”

## **ELS YOUTH RETREAT GRANT**

The BYO will reimburse expenses incurred by our congregations hosting youth retreats and activities. Retreats are to include youth from at least two congregations and are to include devotions or Biblical study. Retreats with 24 youth or less are eligible for reimbursement for expenses up to \$250. Retreats with 25 or more youth are eligible for reimbursement for expenses up to \$500. Inquiries and applications are to be made through the congregation’s pastor to the BYO chairman with the secretary copied.

## **ELS YOUTH MISSIONARY (‘HUGH BROOKS’) FUND**

The Hugh Brooks mission fund assists ELS teens and college students with financial help to participate in mission work within our fellowship. Youth Leaders and Parents or Teens should reach out to the Board for Youth Outreach through their congregational pastor with ideas for participating in mission work. Here are some things we’ve done in the past:

- The Hugh Brooks Fund has supported college students who traveled to canvass for a new mission in Texas
- The Hugh Brooks Fund has supported teens who work with Kingdom Workers supporting churches do outreach
- The Hugh Brooks Fund has supported a teenager who has helped with a mission in Vietnam

## **PUBLICATIONS & VIDEOS**

We will be devoting time and resources to producing regular video content for teens on Instagram, YouTube, and other social media platforms. @Lutheran Youth Association on YouTube; @ELSYouth on Instagram. Some will include previously planned videos on the Catechism (see 2024 synod report).

*Now richly to my waiting heart,  
O Thou, my God, deign to impart  
The grace of love undying.  
In Thy blest body let me be,  
E’en as the branch is in the tree,  
Thy life my life supplying.  
(ELH 167 v. 3)*

*The Rev. Jeff Hendrix, secretary*

# REPORT OF THE BOARD FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE

*Committee #12: Parish Services*

The ELS Board for Christian Service currently consists of the following personnel: Mr. Denny Behr; Mr. Kirk Campell, the Rev. Erich Hoeft (chairman); the Rev. James Kassera (secretary); and Mr. Robert Reid. The board met three times in the past year, with regular meetings in June, October, and February in 2024-2025.

## **TERM LIFE INSURANCE**

The synod carries term life insurance through the synod's group life policy through MetLife. This policy is on all called workers "actively at work." "Actively at work" is defined in the policy as: working in the usual course of business; a minimum of 30 hours per week." Congregations, at their option, can include staff in their term coverage as well. Currently our congregations reimburse the premium costs of that term life insurance to the synod. We would like to thank the congregations of our synod for their continued financial support of this program.

Through Age 64	\$50k of coverage
65 through 69	\$32.5k of coverage
70 and above	\$25k of coverage

## **WORLD NEEDS FUND**

The balance of the World Needs Fund as of December 31, 2024 is \$37,717.00. Through the Mother's Day offering and other donations, the fund receives gifts from individuals and congregations. The World Needs Fund received donations totaling \$1,390.99 from congregations and \$4,201.78 from individuals.

The board approved disbursements of \$3,714.00 in 2024 for various world relief and group/individual special needs requests.

The board thanks all the individuals and congregations who donate toward relief in these areas for their generosity and encourage them to continue to do so. We praise our heavenly Father for the blessings He has showered on His people!

If anyone knows of any person or organization that the ELS Board for Christian Service can help, they should let the board know by filling out the board's application for assistance. The form is available online in PDF format at: <http://www.els.org>. Note that the rest of the board's guidelines for assistance can be found there as well.

The board follows these recommended limits on assistance, as published in the 2008 Synod Report:

\$0 - \$2,000	Individuals
\$5,000 - \$10,000	Congregations & organizations
\$5,000 - \$10,000	World Relief

Please note that the Board for Christian Service can adjust these amounts as need and situations arise.

## **DISASTER FUND**

The board receives gifts during times of natural disaster to help individuals and congregations of our fellowship. Together with the Ukrainian Crisis Fund, as of December 31, 2024, the disaster fund is at \$165,240.00. We thank the individuals and congregations of the synod for their generosity.

## **PENSION PLAN/RETIREMENT BENEFITS**

In order to address the future retirement needs of our synod's called workers, the synod has set up an IRS-compliant, third-party-administered 403(b) plan. The ELS participates in the Shepherd Plan Solution through the Hahn Financial Group, Inc. and Retirement Plan Consultants, LLC. In addition to encouraging called workers to plan for their retirements, the board strongly encourages the pastors and teachers of our synod to enroll in the Shepherd Plan. As of January 2024, the Board of Trustees recommended and the Board for Christian Service has decided that all matching funds provided by the synod can only be deposited into an account in the Shepherd Plan through Hahn Financial Group.

In 2024 the synod matched congregational funding of pastors' and teachers' pensions up to \$300 for all pastors and full-time teachers and \$150 for part time teachers. Total support payments were \$39,900 for the year. Funding for 2024 is yet to be will remain the same.

## **WIDOWS' SUBSIDIES**

We are currently supporting 8 widows with payments of \$340 per month. Total support payments for 2024 was \$32,980.00. The amount of subsidy will remain the same for 2025.

## **CALLED WORKER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CWAP)**

The synod contracts with Christian Family Solutions, a church-related organization of the WELS, to offer in person, internet-based, or phone-based counseling services to the synod called workers and their immediate family members. While all information about clients is kept confidential, the board was informed of opened and on-going cases. In 2024, the board provided 93 hours of counseling services for a total of 20 clients, 6 of which are currently active in the program. We have spent \$8,000.00 this past year providing those services. Currently the number of sessions will be limited to six. However, if long-term support is necessary, the councilor and individual will explore appropriate local resources to help meet that need. If no local resources are available, an additional six sessions may be requested. The request for additional sessions should be made directly to the ELS president by Christian Family Solutions and authorization for the additional sessions must be transmitted from the president's office to Christian Family Solutions.

This service is not meant to replace the circuit visitor in his capacity as counselor, but rather to supplement the circuit visitor. In fact, for most matters, the board still encourages the pastors of the ELS to make use of their circuit visitor in this area. At the same time, the board realizes that there may be some non-ministry, family-related issues that are better handled by a counselor than by a circuit visitor. Also, a circuit visitor may, after meeting with an individual, feel the need to refer him or her to a professional counselor. Now the circuit visitor can refer people in the certain knowledge that he is referring to counselors who are of the same Christian fellowship and who share a Christian, confessional Lutheran worldview.

The board would also like to encourage individual ELS congregations to examine the practical costs and benefits of the Member Assistance Program from WLCFS for their own use. Every congregation at some point will have a family in crisis or an individual who has gone through a traumatic event. For a relatively small cost, a church can offer professional, Christian counseling to all of its members. For more information, please search online at the CFS web site: <https://www.christianfamilysolutions.org>, or call CFS at 1-800-438-1772.

## **SUPPORTING OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL**

The board, in partnership with Lutheran Military Support Group (LMSG), shares Christian fellowship and support to veterans and their families.

A project of the LMSG, known as the Christian Service Members' Handbook, is a book of prayers, scripture readings, hymns, Luther's Small Catechism, and devotional material geared for service men and women. The board has elected to make these books available, free of charge, through the BLC Bookstore, to individuals upon request (not to exceed 3 per request).

## **ELS MILITARY MONUMENT PROJECT**

The location of the new monument is next to Tweit Hall, east of Division Street. It was dedicated on June 20, 2023, at the synod convention. Having finished its work, the board's established ad hoc committee has handed over the supervision of the remaining funds for monument care to the board. We have insured the monument for a total of \$481.00 in 2024. In efforts to support the monument's upkeep, the board encourages individuals or groups to purchase additional pavers. Donation level details for pavers, benches and service pillars can found at [els.org](http://els.org).

The board is thankful to many people whose donations helped to complete the monument, to Bethany Professor Jason Jaspersen, for designing the monument and sculpting the two warrior figures, and to people over the years who served on or assisted the monument committee.

*The Rev. Erich Hoefl, chairman*

# **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON WORSHIP**

*Committee #12: Parish Services*

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Members of the committee during the past year were Mr. John Baumann, Rev. James Braun (secretary), Prof. Mark DeGarmeaux, Rev. Peter Faugstad (chairman), and Dr. Eric Harstad. The committee held one meeting in person on October 1, 2024, along with four meetings via Zoom on November 23, January 25, March 15, and May 17.

## **WORSHIP RESOURCES**

The committee adds new resources each year to the worship pages on the synod website. An archive of the "Heritage of Hymns" programs can now be accessed: [els.org/worship/general-worship-resources/heritage-of-hymns/](http://els.org/worship/general-worship-resources/heritage-of-hymns/). These programs are offered annually

at the Synod Convention and typically highlight the anniversary year of a hymnwriter or a published collection of liturgy, hymns, or music. “Liturgical Year Artwork” has also been added to the website: [els.org/worship/liturgical-year-artwork/](https://els.org/worship/liturgical-year-artwork/). Rev. Jeff Hendrix produced these images for each Sunday and festival of the historic church year. Each image utilizes the logo originally created by Rev. Don Moldstad for the Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary (ELH).

The “Music for Liturgy and Hymns” page provides multiple links to assist congregations with music for worship: [els.org/worship/music-for-liturgy-and-hymns/](https://els.org/worship/music-for-liturgy-and-hymns/). For congregations without a regular accompanist, the “ELH Hymn Recordings” link connects to a page with audio for the copyright-free melodies of the ELH. The “ELH Liturgy Recordings” link provides downloadable files for Rites 1, 2, and 3 of the ELH along with Matins and Vespers. Rev. Paul Webber ([paul.webber@blc.edu](mailto:paul.webber@blc.edu)) has developed a system for using these audio files and has assisted several ELS pastors with getting it set up.

Another option for music accompaniment is through the “Substitute Organist Service” (S.O.S.) from Church Music Solutions: [churchmusicsolutions.com/](https://churchmusicsolutions.com/). Several ELS pastors and congregations have used this service. The Rev. James Braun ([jaymbee@mac.com](mailto:jaymbee@mac.com)) would be happy to give input about setup and use.

### **ELH REPRINT & SUPPLEMENT PROJECT**

The ELH has gone through four printings since its publication (1996, 2001, 2007, and 2017). The inventory again needs to be replenished, so the committee is working to have an order placed by the end of 2025.

The committee thanks the pastors and parishioners of our synod’s congregations for their interest in the ELH Supplement project. Many hymn suggestions were received over the last two years, and the committee is reviewing each one. We intend to complete our review of these hymns by the end of 2025 as we work toward a collection of 100–125 hymns.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN**

The committee continues to work on its strategic plan items. As part of its objective toward “encouraging excellence in worship music,” Prof. DeGarmeaux has published several volumes of *Every Sunday Organist*. Volume 1 was released in 2023, volume 2 in 2024, and volume 3 is planned for this year. Copies can be purchased from the Bethany Bookstore. “To encourage ways to enhance the presentation of liturgical worship,” committee members are ready to make presentations on historic Lutheran worship and to conduct workshops for organists and choir directors. Congregations are invited to contact the members of the committee to schedule these presentations and workshops.

### **HERITAGE OF HYMNS**

A Heritage of Hymns program was held on June 17, 2024. Pr. Peter Faugstad led a study of “The First Lutheran Hymnbooks” on their 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with special emphasis on the *“Achtliederbuch”* [*Eight Song Book*].

A Heritage of Hymns program will be held at the upcoming synod convention. The topic is marriage, coinciding with the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Martin Luther’s marriage to Katharina von Bora.

### **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

As the committee seeks to “keep abreast of trends, movements and new materials in all aspects of worship” (ELS Handbook), Mr. Baumann and Prof. DeGarmeaux attended worship conferences in the summer of 2024. The Rev. Faugstad served as the chaplain for the “Never Confounded” ELS Pastors’ Retreat in Houston, Texas, February 17–21, 2025. Dr. Harstad continues to direct the Minnesota Valley Chorale (since 2012).

The committee requested \$4,200 from the synod budget in 2025 to cover general expenses. Grant money received in 2023 is earmarked for special projects.

*The Rev. Peter Faugstad, chairman*

# REPORT OF THE LAYMEN'S DELEGATES EQUALIZATION FUND COMMITTEE

*Committee #7: Finances*

The purpose of the Laymen's Delegates Equalization Fund is to help defray the transportation costs of the laymen delegates. Each congregation needs to carry out its responsibility by responding with a check to the fund after being invoiced, so that the committee may provide the best possible service to the laymen delegates.

## STATEMENT OF CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS – 2025 CONVENTION

Cash Balance on Hand 4/1/2024	\$ 1,213.13	
Receipts 4/1/2024 through 4/01/2025:		
Assessments Received of \$21,698.00 Assessed	\$20,783.00	
Interest Income	\$ <u>.61</u>	
Total Receipts		<u>\$20,783.61</u>
Total Cash Available		\$21,996.74
Disbursements 4/1/2024 through 4/1/2025:		
Air Fares and Mileage	\$18,140.72	
Printing, Postage, checks, etc.	\$ <u>60.00</u>	
Total Disbursements		<u>\$18,200.72</u>
Cash Balance on Hand 4/1/2025		<u>\$3,796.02</u>

1. Delegates that register at the convention and turn in airfare expenses and/or trip mileage is reimbursed for those expenses. (If flying please turn in airfare expenses and not round-trip mileage.)
2. Delegates are encouraged to ride together, whenever possible to reduce the travel costs.
3. Mileage payments are made at the rate of \$.25 per mile for one round trip to any layman delegate who drives his own car or \$.40 per mile if accompanied by a second delegate or a pastor. Bus fares and shuttle services are also acceptable. Car rental costs are not reimbursed but mileage to or from the airport are reimbursable. Mileage from the point of departure are reimbursed at the lesser of the mileage rate or the cost of an airline ticket, up to a maximum of \$600.00 per delegate, as determined by the Equalization Committee.
4. The Chairman is to receive \$.25 per mile or actual expenses; whichever was less, out of the fund to cover his costs of attending the convention. (Note: If chairman was a delegate he is reimbursed according to rules for delegates.)

*Keith Wiederhoeft, equalizer, protemp*

# REPORT OF THE PLANNING AND COORDINATING COMMITTEE

*Committee #7: Finances*

## MEMBERSHIP

The Planning and Coordinating Committee consists of: the three officers of the synod (president, vice president, and secretary); the respective chairmen of the Board for Christian Service, the Doctrine Committee, the Board for Education, the Board for Home Outreach, the Board of Regents, the Board for World Outreach, the Committee on Worship, the Board for Youth Outreach; and three (3) laymen elected by the synod at its convention. The president and the secretary of the synod serve as the chairman and secretary of the committee. The treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod serves as an advisor.

## MEETINGS

The committee held a virtual meeting on September 23, 2024 and a meeting in Mankato, Minnesota on February 13, 2025.



## BUDGET

The Planning & Coordinating Committee, in preparing for the convention-directed transition to a July–June fiscal year calendar, recommends the *short-year* budget for January 1–June 30, 2026 as it is printed in Appendix A which includes \$380,000 in congregational contributions.

## ADDRESSING DEFICITS

In February 2025 the Strategic Planning Committee proposed to the Planning and Coordinating Committee a balanced budget for the fiscal half-year 2026 synod operating fund. This was the first step in the budgeting process to address deficit budgets. However, it should also be recognized that fund balances are in part made up of monies donated for the work of the boards and synod. To not utilize these funds would be counter to the desires of the donors. Therefore, the Planning and Coordinating Committee encourages boards to practice godly stewardship principles and wisely use fund balances in their work for Christ’s Kingdom, which may include using them to supplement yearly income. The Strategic Planning Committee continues to work on additional steps to achieve yearly balanced budgets, including a new strategic plan (*Synod Report, 2024, page 173*).

## PLANNING

At the 2021 convention, the synod adopted a five-year strategic plan “Tell of Jesus and His Love” (*Synod Report 2021, p. 191*). The synod’s vice-president has been given the responsibility of tracking the progress of this plan which is reviewed by the Planning & Coordinating Committee at its annual February meeting. The progress report is printed in Appendix B with the progress acknowledged in ***bold italics*** indicating an update from the 2024 *Synod Report*.

To assist the committee in the vital work of planning, in 2023 the committee authorized the synod’s president to appoint a three-year ad-hoc task force called the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). The SPC is to develop a strategic planning and budgeting process that can be adjusted on a regular basis as the needs of the synod change. The committee consists of: Mr. Lyle Fanning, the Rev. Brad Kerkow (chairman), Mr. Mark Perwitz (secretary), the Rev. Daniel Ruiz, and the Rev. Greg Schmidt. In 2024 the SPC conducted surveys of the synod’s boards to discover critical issues that may be impacting the work of the synod. Two issues were identified:

1. Synodical Financial Health and
2. Communications/Marketing.

The SPC created two subcommittees to examine each issue and provide recommendations. The Planning & Coordinating Committee approved of these issues and the SPC’s ongoing work to resolve them.

After 2+ years of detailed evaluation and strategic planning from this ad hoc committee, with the oversight of the Synod Review Committee, and counsel from the members of the P&CC and the Board of Trustees, the following resolution is recommended for adoption by the convention. The underlined portions reflect proposed revisions to the current bylaws:

### ***RESOLUTION: Planning & Coordinating Committee Restructure, Budget Reallocation Support***

WHEREAS, The synod president established an Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Advisory Committee, per the consent of the Board of Trustees<sup>1</sup>, in the fall of 2022 for the purpose of reviewing the work of the Planning and Coordinating Committee (P&CC) to assess how our synod can become more strategic in our planning and budgeting, and,

WHEREAS, The assessment presented by the Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Advisory Committee to the P&CC in February 2023 had identified gaps in the planning process and included recommendations for improvement. The identified gaps included the following items, and,

- Insufficient Planning
- Need for a Strategic Plan Owner
- Need for a Strategic Plan that is dynamic and addresses emerging issues
- Committee members need the strategic planning and budgeting skillset, experience, and visibility (wide and narrow views of the synod work and challenges)
- The strategic planning process must gather all of the necessary inputs
- P&CC planning is ministry-focused and lacks administrative-focus
- Ensure that the proposed Strategic Plan is unambiguous
- The P&CC was originally established when the budgetary structure and income of the synod were different.

WHEREAS, The P&CC resolved that the president appoint an ad hoc task force committee, known as the Strategic Planning Committee, for a period of three years, and,

WHEREAS, The Strategic Planning Committee has developed strategic planning and strategic budgeting processes which were approved by the P&CC, and these processes had been used in the development of the 2025 and 2026 budgets including the addition of several critical strategic issues, and,

WHEREAS, The Strategic Planning Committee efforts have demonstrated the achievement of dynamic strategic planning and budget alignment with the synod’s strategic objectives, and,

WHEREAS, The ELS Handbook grants authority to the Board of Trustees to reallocate the unspent portion of the approved budget in the event of “an anticipated income shortfall and in order to prevent unwarranted deficits” (ELS Handbook, Guidelines for the Planning and Coordinating Committee, Article V: Synodical Budget Operations, Paragraph A.3), and, WHEREAS, The Planning and Coordinating Committee has assigned responsibility and accumulated knowledge regarding the development of the synod’s strategic plan and the aligned strategic budget, and desires to ensure that the Board of Trustees has the necessary information to guide potential budget reallocation decision-making, and, WHEREAS, This resolution does not change the authority of the Board of Trustees, but ensures consultation between the Board of Trustees and the Planning & Coordinating Committee occurs, therefore, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Guidelines for the Planning and Coordinating Committee be revised as follows, effective August 1, 2025:

## **Guidelines for the Planning and Coordinating Committee**

### **Preamble**

The committee exists to establish and maintain a dynamic strategic plan, establish priorities for the work of the synod and recommend a budget to carry out the work of the Lord’s Kingdom. Its membership is composed of ~~the chairmen of the boards and committees in order to coordinate the work and finances of the synod.~~ clergy and lay members with strategic planning skills, budgeting experience and a general overall knowledge of the operations of the synod.

### **Article I: Membership and Organization**

- A. ~~The membership shall consist of the officers of the synod, the chairmen of the Board for Christian Service, the Doctrine Committee, the Board for Lutheran Schools, the Board for Home Outreach, the Board of Regents, the Board for World Outreach, the Committee on Worship, the Board for Youth Outreach, and three laymen elected by the synod at its convention. Under exceptional circumstances, if the chairman of a board is unable to attend, he may send a representative from the board’s membership. The treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod shall be an advisor.~~
- A. The membership shall consist of the president, vice-president, and secretary of the synod, two clergy and two laymen. The two clergy and two lay members shall be appointed by the president and approved by the Board of Trustees. Appointments are to consider the attributes of leadership, strategic planning skills and budgeting experience, and a general knowledge of the operations of the synod. The appointments are for a period of three years in staggered terms and shall be ratified at the next annual convention of the corporation. The committee will be supported by advisory members consisting of synodical workers, and others as appropriate.
- B. ~~The three laymen elected to the committee shall not hold a position on the Board of Trustees or on any of the boards or committees referred to in Article I.A, or hold an office in the synod during their tenure on the Planning and Coordinating Committee.~~
- C. ~~The president and secretary of the synod shall serve as the chairman and secretary of the committee. The duties of the committee secretary are defined in General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C.~~
- B. The president of the synod or his designee shall serve as the chairman. The committee secretary shall be selected from among the committee members. The duties of the committee secretary are defined in General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C.
- D. ~~Time and frequency of meetings shall be determined by the chairman.~~
- C. The committee shall meet no less than quarterly due to the emphasis on dynamic strategic planning and monitoring of synodical strategic action plans. At least one meeting must be in-person. Meetings by electronic means are permissible at the discretion of the chairman. Special meetings may be called by the chairman or by a majority of the voting members of the committee. However, the committee shall not meet on less than two days’ notice, oral or written, without the unanimous consent of the committee. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum. There shall be no proxy voting.

### **Article II: Duties**

- A. The committee shall engage in strategic planning for the future work of the synod by developing dynamic long-range term plans (five years or longer).
  - 1. ~~It shall solicit future projections from the synod’s operational boards and committees and the educational boards and institutions of the synod.~~
  - 1. It shall solicit strategic planning input from the synod’s elected boards and the institutions of the synod. It shall convene an annual meeting of the chairmen of the synod’s elected boards and committees to review the strategic plan.
  - 2. It shall solicit strategic planning input from the synod officers and administrators and others that may have an over-arching view of the synod’s needs and challenges.
  - 3. The Planning and Coordinating Committee shall define the amount of detail required for strategic planning, including implementation of projects and financial factors.

- ~~3.~~ 4. On the basis of its evaluation, the committee shall recommend for approval to the synod unified strategic plans for the work of the synod not limited to financial concerns.
- ~~4.~~ 5. The committee shall review and update the plans and report to the synod.
- B. The committee shall develop and recommend an annual budget which is aligned with the strategic plan for adoption by the convention.

### **Article III: Synodical Budget Preparation**

- A. Each synodical board or committee that operates with budgeted funds shall prepare a budget request to submit to the Planning and Coordinating Committee. The request will include:
  - 1. Expenditures for the previous year and the current year to date.
  - 2. Itemized requests for the next year for operating expenses, and for new projects with cost estimates.
- A. Each synodical board that operates with budgeted funds shall prepare a budget request to submit to the Planning and Coordinating Committee. The treasurer will support the Planning and Coordinating Committee by providing the approved budget and expenditures for the previous and current year-to-date and the current balance of any board-specific fund balances. The budget request will include itemized requests for the next year for operating expenses, and for new projects (including assigned elements of the updated strategic plan) with cost estimates.
- B. The president of the synod, treasurer, and giving counselor shall forecast the anticipated revenue from congregational offerings and donor grants in support of the overall budget development.
- ~~B.~~ C. The Planning and Coordinating Committee shall review requests and prepare a budget (anticipated income and expenditures) for the following fiscal year. It shall submit its recommended budget to the synod convention.

### **Article IV: Synodical Budget Adoption by the Convention**

- A. The recommended budget from the Planning and Coordinating Committee will be assigned to the convention committee on Finance. The Committee on Finance will review and submit the proposed final budget to the convention with comment. Comments may include:
  - 1. A recommendation to approve the budget as proposed by the Planning and Coordinating Committee.
  - 2. A recommendation to approve with amendments:
    - a. Amendments proposed from the floor of the convention, and approved for consideration by the convention, must be submitted to the convention Committee on Finance for study before final adoption.
    - b. No amendments requiring the expenditure of synod funds will be approved unless a funding source is identified.
- B. The convention will consider and adopt the budget.
  - 1. Any synod board or division of work which concludes that its needs are not being given adequate consideration by the Planning and Coordinating Committee may appeal to the synod convention who shall order the Planning and Coordinating Committee to review the complaint and report to the following synod convention.
  - 2. The adopted budget will include anticipated income and anticipated expenses.

### **Article V: Synodical Budget Operations**

*(see Guidelines for the Board of Trustees, Article IV)*

- A. The Board of Trustees will oversee the operation of the synod budget (see Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article VIII; Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter V, Paragraph 1).
  - 1. Expenses will be paid by the synod treasurer when submitted and approved by the appropriate board and or the synod president within the funding limits established in the final budget.
  - 2. Expenditures for a board or office may exceed the adopted budget if funds are, or become, available in the designated year, such as:
    - a. Income in excess of estimates or actual expenses.
    - b. Special gifts, legacies, etc.
    - c. Special circumstances that make it prudent or desirable to proceed by borrowing or otherwise funding these expenditures.
    - d. Designated gifts to be used in designated areas.
    - e. Sufficient fund balance for the respective board.
  - 3. In the event of an anticipated income shortfall and in order to prevent unwarranted deficits, the Board of Trustees may reallocate the budget approved by the convention.
    - ~~a. If time permits, the Board of Trustees may consult with the Planning and Coordinating Committee in preparing the reallocated budget.~~
    - a. The Board of Trustees shall consult with the Planning and Coordinating Committee and receive a recommendation from them in preparing the reallocated budget.

b. All boards directly affected and the Planning and Coordinating Committee shall be informed of such reallocation of the budget.

B. The synod may override a decision of the Board of Trustees to reallocate budgeted funds at the regular convention or a special convention called for that purpose.

*The Rev. Glenn Obenberger, chairman  
The Rev. Kyle Madson, secretary*

**APPENDIX A**

**Evangelical Lutheran Synod**

**Budget to Actual Income & Expense Comparison**

	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Budget 2024	PreAuditor's Review Actual 2024	Original Budget 2025	Revised Budget 2025	Jan-June Budget 2026
<b>Beginning Fund Balances</b>	\$ 5,119,126	\$ 5,119,126	\$ 6,329,094	\$ 6,329,094	\$ 6,643,175	\$ 6,643,175	\$ 6,129,692
Reclassification of fund balances				\$ (53,343)			
<b>Income</b>							
Congregations	\$ 840,000	\$ 880,353	\$ 860,000	\$ 811,082	\$ 900,000	\$ 900,000	\$ 380,000
Congregations designated	\$ 20,400	\$ 144,058	\$ 31,300	\$ 52,022	\$ 63,300	\$ 63,300	\$ 21,400
Cross-stitch	\$ -	\$ 31,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ -
Endowment Funding	\$ 529,755	\$ 319,156	\$ 396,720	\$ 329,232	\$ 340,211	\$ 340,211	\$ 202,418
Estates	\$ -	\$ 184,862	\$ -	\$ 255,096	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ -
Grant & Helpings Hands	\$ 14,700	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 72,500	\$ 72,500	\$ -
Individual Gifts	\$ 271,500	\$ 425,539	\$ 302,000	\$ 492,825	\$ 416,622	\$ 416,622	\$ 110,850
Investments	\$ 135,500	\$ 181,020	\$ 53,040	\$ 249,606	\$ 130,040	\$ 130,040	\$ 56,000
Mission Advancement Project (MAP)	\$ 329,600	\$ 355,000	\$ 355,000	\$ 353,900	\$ 355,000	\$ 355,000	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 2,850	\$ 2,015	\$ 2,750	\$ 104	\$ 11,250	\$ 11,250	\$ 5,466
Organization Giving	\$ 32,400	\$ 87,132	\$ 38,500	\$ 35,452	\$ 42,500	\$ 42,500	\$ 16,000
Publications Sales/Subscriptions	\$ 40,000	\$ 39,880	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,854	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 16,000
Registration /Fees/Rent	\$ 50,000	\$ 58,056	\$ 50,000	\$ 96,716	\$ 75,250	\$ 75,250	\$ 35,625
Salary Reimbursement	\$ 27,600		\$ 27,600	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -
Schwan Foundation	\$ 410,000	\$ 161,500	\$ 356,500	\$ 258,750	\$ 460,000	\$ 460,000	\$ 382,500
<b>TOTAL Income</b>	<b>\$ 2,704,305</b>	<b>\$ 2,869,571</b>	<b>\$ 2,538,410</b>	<b>\$ 3,010,639</b>	<b>\$ 2,929,173</b>	<b>\$ 2,929,173</b>	<b>\$ 1,226,259</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>							
Bethany Lutheran College	\$ 275,000	\$ 275,000	\$ 275,000	\$ 268,052	\$ 300,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 50,000
Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary	\$ 31,500	\$ 27,643	\$ 31,500	\$ 30,041	\$ 31,500	\$ 31,500	\$ -
Board for Christian Service	\$ 54,245	\$ 95,949	\$ 55,840	\$ 82,405	\$ 109,250	\$ 109,250	\$ 63,500
Board for Home Outreach	\$ 725,424	\$ 734,260	\$ 656,493	\$ 608,957	\$ 776,372	\$ 776,372	\$ 312,639
Board for Lutheran Schools	\$ 52,050	\$ 56,685	\$ 49,030	\$ 55,356	\$ 77,000	\$ 77,000	\$ 39,850
Board for World Outreach	\$ 808,179	\$ 864,161	\$ 693,750	\$ 679,625	\$ 880,366	\$ 880,366	\$ 432,478
Board for Youth Outreach	\$ 79,700	\$ 88,202	\$ 91,300	\$ 82,009	\$ 97,542	\$ 97,542	\$ 20,920
Synod General Fund	\$ 908,353	\$ 860,499	\$ 896,473	\$ 824,947	\$ 889,862	\$ 849,862	\$ 469,930
Thoughts of Faith	\$ 340,000	\$ 335,562	\$ 401,700	\$ 366,617	\$ 370,764	\$ 370,764	\$ 168,560
<b>TOTAL Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 3,274,451</b>	<b>\$ 3,337,961</b>	<b>\$ 3,151,086</b>	<b>\$ 2,998,010</b>	<b>\$ 3,532,656</b>	<b>\$ 3,442,656</b>	<b>\$ 1,557,877</b>
<b>* Net Income/(Loss) before Unrealized Gains/(Losses)</b>	<b>\$ (570,146)</b>	<b>\$ (468,390)</b>	<b>\$ (612,676)</b>	<b>\$ 12,630</b>	<b>\$ (603,483)</b>	<b>\$ (513,483)</b>	<b>\$ (331,618)</b>
Unrealized Gains/(Losses)		\$ 693,320		\$ 354,794			
<b>Net Income/(Loss) after Unrealized Gains/(Losses)</b>		<b>\$ 224,930</b>	<b>\$ (612,676)</b>	<b>\$ 367,424</b>	<b>\$ (603,483)</b>	<b>\$ (513,483)</b>	<b>\$ (331,618)</b>
Transfer Family of God Net Balance of Building Sale to Board of Home Outreach	\$ 130,540						
Reclass Anniversary Fund to Board of Home Outreach	\$ 854,499						
<b>Ending Fund Balances</b>	<b>\$ 4,548,980</b>	<b>\$ 6,329,094</b>	<b>\$ 5,716,418</b>	<b>\$ 6,643,175</b>	<b>\$ 6,039,692</b>	<b>\$ 6,129,692</b>	<b>\$ 5,798,074</b>

\* Net losses are covered by Fund Balances

**APPENDIX B**

***2025 Report on the Progress on the Five-Year Strategic Plan***

Prepared by the Rev. Michael K. Smith, ELS Vice President

***(Bold italics indicate an update from the 2024 Synod Report.)***

**Tell of Jesus and His Love.**  
 “Go home to your people, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how He had mercy on you.”  
 (Mark 5:19)

1. Every congregation, in Christian love, enhance their focus on reaching the lost.
2. Equip the next generation through Christ-centered education.
3. Develop and disseminate evangelism resources for home and world outreach.
- 4 Establish and support synod missions at home and abroad.
5. Endeavor to increase the efficiency and productivity of our synod’s boards.

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	COMPLETION DATE / PROGRESS
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<b>1. Every congregation, in Christian love, enhance their focus on reaching the lost.</b>		
a. Every congregation and pastor pursuing excellence in preaching and teaching, applying Law and Gospel appropriate to each text. Circuit Visitors*	Circuit Visitors define excellence in preaching and teaching and develop critique form.	2023 Circuit Visitors: 1. A form has been developed and adopted for use in 2021. 2. A definition of excellence in preaching and teaching was completed in 2022.
	Circuit Visitors promote sermon critiques throughout the synod and every congregation receives at least one visitation.	2025 Circuit Visitors: Circuit Visitors were tasked to promote sermon critiquing in winkels and circuit pastor conferences in 2021 and report in 2022. It is expected that the Circuit Visitors will develop a plan to conduct visitations by 2025 using alternates visitors as necessary. Visitations were encouraged at the 2022 CV Conference. Pastor Paul Schneider has been appointed as mentor and monitor of accomplishing a visit at every ELS congregation by 2026. The BHO is working to establish a visitation triage team to work with Circuit Visitors for congregations that are at or below critical mass.
b. Every congregation pursuing excellence in worship. Committee on Worship*	Worship Committee sending out periodically “Excellence in Worship” notes.	2024 Committee on Worship: The committee is working on “Excellence in Worship” notes and will distribute them when ready.

	Worship Committee encouraging excellence in worship music, including the promotion of, and possible grants for, the use of the “Substitute Organist Service” from Church Music Solutions.	2026 Committee on Worship: 1. Recordings of the liturgies and hymns of the <i>Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary</i> are available at <a href="https://els.org/resources/worship/music-for-liturgy-and-hymns/">https://els.org/resources/worship/music-for-liturgy-and-hymns/</a> . The ELH liturgy recordings for Rite 1, Rite 2, Rite 3, Matins, and Vespers were recently remade by John Baumann. 2. Updated information about the “Substitute Organist Service” is provided each year in the report to the convention, and the cost of the service is negotiable for smaller congregations. Subsidies for “Substitute Organist Service” will not be offered due to price negotiability. 3. Hymn accompaniment and prelude music resources have been compiled by Prof. Mark DeGarmeaux for use by organists and pianists, and more resources are being developed. 4. The Worship Committee hosts a “Heritage of Hymns” event at each convention featuring historic music and hymnody from Lutheran composers and authors.
	Worship Committee offering workshops for ELS congregations and pastors to encourage ways to enhance the presentation of liturgical worship in a constant effort to achieve excellence in this vital part of congregational life. (Point of reference: 2011 “Report of the Committee on Evangelical Lutheran Synod Worship”).	2026 Committee on Worship: Members of the Worship Committee are ready to make presentations on historic Lutheran worship and to conduct workshops for organists and choir directors by request. Congregations are invited to contact the members of the committee to schedule these presentations and workshops.
c. Every congregation praying for missions at home and abroad. President* Communication Director†	One prayer per month.	2021 President: The Communication Director, in consultation with the Evangelism-Missions Counselor and the Board for World Outreach Administrator, began providing these prayers for divine services in December 2021, alternating monthly between home and world missions. Communication Director: Prayers are sent each month when received from the Evangelism-Missions Counselor and the BWO Administrator. The prayers are also included in the President’s newsletter.
d. Every congregation growing in Christian stewardship.		
i. Localized projects that circuits can adopt and support.	List ideas under “resources” on synod website.	2023
ii. Synod-wide database of laity talents and skills.	Create this via Giving Counselor’s Office.	2025

<p>iii. Clearinghouse of ideas for equipping members for kingdom service. Giving Counselor* Board for Home Outreach* President† Communication Director^</p>	<p>Add to webpage.</p>	<p>2025 Board for Home Outreach: Currently updating the synod's webpage with community service opportunities.  Communication Director: Website is updated as materials are received from BHO.</p>
<p>e. Every congregation developing a plan for outreach to the whole community. Board for Home Outreach*</p>	<p>Each circuit make this a focus.</p>	<p>2026 Board for Home Outreach: 1. "Do You Have a Pastor?" campaign <b><i>has been rolled out and is available to congregations.</i></b> 2. <b><i>The board has partnered with "Everyone Outreach" of the WELS – highly recommended and available to all ELS congregations.</i></b></p>
<p>f. Every congregation seeking service opportunities in the community. Board for Home Outreach* Board for Christian Service†</p>	<p>Discover the local niche (e.g., Jesus Cares Ministry, Care Facility Ministry).</p>	<p>2026 Board for Home Outreach: 1. A list of community service opportunities has been created and will be made available shortly. 2. A congregational self-assessment has been created and will be made available shortly.</p>
<p>g. Encourage congregations to make their Bible studies and devotions available online. Communication Director* President†</p>	<p>Some of these can be put out on our synod website, others, locally.</p>	<p>2026 Communication Director: Website and separate repository are ready. Awaiting clarification on which individual/board is responsible to review and choose studies for inclusion.</p>

**2. Equip the next generation through Christ-centered education.**

<p>a. Support congregations in the development of schools.          Board for Lutheran Schools*          Board of Trustees†          Board for Home Outreach†</p>	<p>Target certain congregations for development of a school.</p>	<p align="right">2025</p> <p>Board for Lutheran Schools:  <i>Members of the board will meet with members of the BHO in February 2025 to discuss the feasibility of a cooperative project involving a school choice school start in combination with a mission congregation.</i></p> <p>The board has been in contact with the following congregations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Our Saviour – Lake Havasu City, AZ: Still potential here. More exploratory work is necessary. However, school choice in Arizona continues to flourish as a new parent-driven educational option.</li> <li>2) Faith – Oregon, WI: In 2023, the board requested a more developed business plan from Faith, Oregon, which we received prior to our Jan. 2024 meeting. After review, we funded a portion of their request over CY 2024 &amp; 2025, at which time we will review their progress and decide on further disbursements.</li> <li>3) Gloria Dei – Saginaw, MI: Grant for \$40,000 from the board was approved in January 2023. The congregation continues to make successful progress as they carry out their strategic plan for an early learning center start up in 2025.</li> <li>4) Faith – San Antonio, TX: The board has contacted the congregation but the congregation needs to pay off its mortgage before proceeding.</li> <li>5) Our Savior – Lakeland, FL: Currently in vacancy. No progress to report.</li> </ol>
<p>b. Develop strategies to reach our unchurched school families.          Board for Lutheran Schools*          Board for Home Outreach†</p>	<p>Use of the Harvest Strategy (WELS).</p>	<p align="right">2025</p> <p>Board for Lutheran Schools:          The BHO sent a representative to the BLS meeting in October 2022 to share its harvest strategy for congregations with schools. The BLS recommends giving the BHO the primary responsibility for this work.</p> <p>Board for Home Outreach:          A harvest strategy has been developed, <i>presented, and is available for use.</i></p>



<p>c. Help instill a Christian worldview among our membership and the succeeding generations.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">President* Board for Youth Outreach* Doctrine Committee† Ad Hoc Committee on Apologetics^ Board of Regents^</p>	<p>Implementing a “center” for college, seminary, and synod at BLC campus. Enhancing the use of apologetics at our annual LYA conventions.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">2024</p> <p>President: The Apologetics Board was established at the 2022 convention and was elected at the 2023 convention. <b><i>Rev. David Thompson now serves as the director of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews.</i></b></p> <p>Board for Youth Outreach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>LYA themes and keynotes “Created,” “Justified,” and “Sanctified” address worldview conflicts with the Christian faith and seek to prepare successive generations to defend the faith.</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Camp games such as “Romans and Christians” which have been used at Camp Rise and now being implemented at Camp Indianhead MN, help prepare youth to speak about, defend, and witness their faith in an unbelieving world.</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>\$1200 has been approved by the BYO to fund the transition from Young Branches material from magazine into video format more accessible to Gen Z youth.</i></b></li> </ul> <p>Board of Regents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b><i>The Center for Apologetics and Worldviews has been established.</i></b></li> <li>2. Sponsoring the “In-Depth Series” of lectures on campus that helps Bethany students navigate current topics affecting today’s Christians.</li> </ol> <p>Doctrine: Published a series of articles in the <i>Lutheran Sentinel</i>.</p>
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<p>d. Promote the close connection between the synod and the “One Thing Needful” at Bethany Lutheran College within every congregation and school of the synod.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Board of Regents* President†</p>	<p>The college will increase its visibility within the congregations and schools of the synod (e.g., congregation visits, presentations from faculty members, clergy-faculty led Bible studies).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2021–26</p> <p>Board of Regents</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The college president annually addresses the ELS convention delegates to promote the strong ties between the College and its synod. (College president’s goals presented to the Board of Regents)</li> <li>2. <b>“Roots of the Vine” – a total of 50 congregations were identified to contact and/or visit for the 2024-25 academic year. Congregations are becoming more receptive to having BLC visit with updates and student participation in their services when possible. (BLC annual goal)</b></li> <li>3. “Ministry Mindset” program launched by the BLC Education department in which BLC education majors receive encouragement from BLC education graduates and principals about serving in ELS schools. (BLC Education Department)</li> <li>4. Bethany employees will continue to be encouraged, as they are able, to use their gifts and talents in beneficial ways in ELS congregations and the community. (2022-27 Strategic Plan).</li> <li>5. College President has developed a “President’s Advisory Council” consisting of alumni and friends of BLC. (2022-27 Strategic Plan)</li> <li>6. <b>A Board of Regents newsletter is being sent to all ELS clergy informing them of decisions made at Regents’ meetings and inviting input.</b></li> <li>7. Annually hosting the Bethany Auxiliary on campus, from whom the College receives significant support. (BLC Advancement Office)</li> <li>8. A program goal to develop a Viking-to-Viking mentoring program to expand alumni engagement.</li> <li>9. An enrollment program to develop campus-wide visit experience for Lutheran High School partners and develop a template and process for K-12 summer program.</li> </ol> <p>President:</p> <p>The president is raising awareness of “Our College” as he makes visits around the synod. <b>He highlighted BLC in his presidential addresses from 2021–2024, and will do so in 2025.</b></p>
	<p>Accept invitations for faculty presentations, clergy-led Bible studies, etc.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2021–26</p> <p>Board of Regents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. BLC faculty present programs for ELS members and BLC students through the College “In Depth” series. (2022-27 Strategic Plan)</li> <li>2. BLC clergy serve as guest preachers in ELS congregations as invited. (2022-27 Strategic Plan) – <b>Don Moldstad, Tom Rank, and Shawn Stafford have preached and/or led Bible studies at congregations near the campus and beyond.</b></li> <li>3. BLC updates provided to ELS congregations by BLC representatives during Sunday morning presentations. (BLC Annual Goal)</li> </ol>

	<p>Contact every pastor of the ELS seeking input as to about how to strengthen the importance of the college within the congregations.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2021–26</p> <p>Board of Regents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As part of the “Roots of the Vine” program, BLC representatives reach out to ELS pastors to discuss close ties and support with Bethany and offer to make Bethany presentations in their congregations. (2022-27 Strategic Plan)</li> <li>2. <b><i>Pres. Pfeifer made his annual presentation about BLC to the ELS General Pastoral Conference in October 2024.</i></b></li> </ol>
	<p>Discuss with pastors how the college can support the congregations of the synod (e.g. continued religious instruction of members, training of musicians, etc.).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2021–26</p> <p>Board of Regents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “Roots of the Vine” discussions with pastors and congregation Church Councils include conversations regarding both how the congregations can support Bethany, and how Bethany supports the work of the congregations through its alumni as lay leaders in their congregations and called workers as ELS pastors and teachers. (BLC Annual Goal)</li> <li>2. In the future, online teaching may assist Bethany in developing a broader, non-traditional student body that needs flexibility in their learning. (2022-27 Strategic Plan)</li> </ol>

	<p>Seek to increase the percentage of ELS students attending BLC.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2021–26</p> <p>Board of Regents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The college president regularly addresses this issue with our board and desires to understand how more ELS eligible students take advantage of BLC. (College president's goals presented to the Board of Regents)</li> <li>2. The college president annually addresses the ELS convention delegates to promote the strong ties between the college and its synod. (College President's goals presented to the Board of Regents)</li> <li>3. The college has added and continues to consider adding majors that fit well with the needs of future ELS students. Examples are the additions of nursing, special education, engineering, computer science, legal studies, and criminal justice. A new emphasis area within the business administration major currently under consideration is agri-business (BLC Annual Goal)</li> <li>4. The Bethany Admissions department continues to provide financial and structural support so that ELS middle school and confirmation aged students from all ELS schools and congregations may visit at Bethany every 2-3 years. Bethany covers the cost for meals, and some hotel and logistical costs to help make this happen. We also engage with ELS principals regularly in order to keep this as a priority (BLC Admissions Strategy)</li> <li>5. The college provides an ELS Tuition Discount. (BLC Admissions Strategy)</li> <li>6. A very conscious effort was made to publicize the solidly confessional Lutheran flavor of Bethany.</li> <li>7. <b><i>The BLC recruitment staff continues to be very intentional about attempting to set up group visits to area WELS/ELS high schools.</i></b></li> <li>8. <b><i>Recruitment efforts are being made to further highlight the fine arts.</i></b></li> </ol>
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	<p>Raise the importance of BLC in the way that we function as a synod.</p>	<p>Board of Regents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The college president annually addresses the ELS convention delegates to promote the strong ties between the college and its synod. (College President’s goals presented to the Board of Regents)</li> <li>2. The “Roots of the Vine” program is being rolled out in the congregations of the ELS through Sunday congregational visits by BLC representatives. (BLC Annual Goal)</li> <li>3. “Ministry Mindset” program launched by the BLC Education department in which BLC education majors receive encouragement from BLC education graduates and principals about serving in ELS schools. (BLC Education Department)</li> <li>4. Bethany employees will continue to be encouraged, as they are able, to use their gifts and talents in beneficial ways in ELS congregations and the community. (2022-27 Strategic Plan)</li> <li>5. Recent cuts in some majors and minors have heightened the synod’s awareness of the need for maintaining a Christian liberal arts education at Bethany, the importance of Bethany to our synod, and the critical need to support Bethany.</li> </ol>
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<p>e. Position the ELS to take advantage in states that offer school choice. Board for Lutheran Schools*</p>	<p>Florida is a model for this concept (Step Up Program).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2026</p> <p>Board for Lutheran Schools:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A congregation was approached with a proposal, but it declined for the 2022 calendar year. This congregation was approached again in 2023 and interest seems to be growing for a school start. The board will hold its January meeting at their site in 2025 in the hopes of continuing to build interest for the project.</li> <li>2. More work is necessary to create a template for churches which would help to predict feasibility in their individual locations.</li> <li>3. A meeting was held with the Evangelism-Missions Counselor, Brad Kerkow, in January 2023 to discuss the creation of the template and how the Board for Home Outreach and Board for Lutheran Schools might work together on future projects in Florida—follow up with EMC will happen periodically as template work is completed. Still needed. Lack of time and funding stand in the way of this process getting completed.</li> <li>4. Over the past several years the board has prayerfully partnered with the BLC Education Department in efforts to increase enrollment in our ELS Teacher Certification Track. The Lord has blessed these efforts and the BLC Education Department now reports that 22 students will graduate as ELS Certified Teachers over the next 4 years. With this in mind, at its Jan. 2024 meeting the board resolved to attempt to increase our funding for the Secretary of Schools position beginning in CY 2025, taking it from a 1 day/month (not adequate time to compete current work) position to a half-time position. This would afford the SoS and the board the opportunity to work effectively with congregations on the development of schools. A preliminary job description has been created by the board.</li> <li>5. The board at its Jan. 2024 meeting discussed the opportunity that the growing school choice movement throughout the United States offers our ELS in terms of our increased ability to reach the lost, by starting schools as mission projects and as revitalization projects within current congregations. The board desires further collaboration with the BHO to take advantage of this opportunity to seek and save the lost through school/mission starts in school choice states in the very near future (Luke 19:10).</li> </ol>
<p>f. Work with home schooling groups. Board for Lutheran Schools*</p>	<p>Support an annual event; give ideas on curricular matters.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2022</p> <p>Board for Lutheran Schools:</p> <p>The board renewed its commitment to assist ELS homeschool groups by approving a school subsidy grant to Faith-Oregon, WI for assistance in starting Sursum Corda Classical Academy, a hybrid model school serving homeschool families.</p> <p><i>The board continues to be available to support ELS homeschool families through our Homeschool Liaison, Pastor Josh Skogen.</i></p>

<b>3. Develop and disseminate evangelism resources for home and world outreach.</b>		
<p>a. Develop a strategy for effective communication from the synod and to the world. President* Communication Director† Committee for Communication^</p>	<p>“Learn About Jesus” communication rejuvenated.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2022</p> <p>President: <b>“Lutherans Unplucked” podcast developed.</b></p>
<p>b. Educate the members of ELS in their roles in evangelism and outreach. Board for Home Outreach*</p>	<p>Accept invitations to present at parishes.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2021–26</p> <p>Board for Home Outreach: <b>1. The EMC continues to work with individual congregations. The BHO continues to investigate and communicate information and resources to congregations.</b> <b>2. “Everyone Outreach” program is available to any ELS congregation and is highly recommended.</b></p>
<p>c. Produce evangelism and apologetic resources. Board for Home Outreach* Doctrine Committee† Board for World Outreach^</p>	<p>Look both to the Doctrine Committee and Board for Home Outreach for producing materials in their specific purviews.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2021–26</p> <p>Board for Home Outreach: 1. “We’re Glad You Asked About...” brochures have been updated for content. Graphic design is being updated and they will be available digitally. 2. Spanish version of “Peace Devotions” has been <b>printed and is available.</b> 3. Christmas and Easter postcards are made available to the synod through the EMC. 4. Other personal witnessing tools and resources <b>are available</b> on the ELS web site. 5. Some of this work <b>is now being carried out</b> by the Board for <b>World Outreach.</b></p> <p>Board for World Outreach: Always searching for suitable materials for translation and dissemination among our mission fields. Some have been accomplished and others are being considered.</p>
<p>d. Produce materials to assist in making a clear confession of Christian truth in a post-Christian culture. President* Board for Youth Outreach* Doctrine Committee† Ad Hoc Committee on Apologetics^ Board of Regents^ (See structure for 2 c, above)</p>	<p>Disseminate selected materials through the BLC chaplain’s office and Religion Department.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2023</p> <p>President: “One Little Word” monthly videos are being produced. <b>“Lutherans Unplucked”</b> podcast on various topics <b>is in production.</b></p> <p>The president has been encouraging BLC administration to add a very pointed and clear confession of what we believe, teach, and confess at our college to its website. This has been done on the “About Us” page on the BLC website.</p> <p>Board for Youth Outreach: Subcommittee working on content, scope, and production of six apologetic videos (one relating to each of the six chief parts of the Small Catechism). Production will be coordinated with BLC media arts. Funding is being sought through the Bolick Foundation.</p>

**4. Establish and support synod missions at home and abroad.**

<p>Board for Home Outreach* Board for World Outreach*</p>	<p>i. BHO begin six new missions/ministries in a five-year span. ii. BWO, per the guidelines, locate and establish world mission field(s) (<i>Synod Report</i> 2019, page 101 Resolution 8).</p>	<p align="right">2021–26</p> <p>Board for Home Outreach:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>Invested heavily in creating a program for congregational self-assessment leading toward potential revitalization by calling Rev. Ed Bryant as the Congregational Counselor.</i></b></li> <li>Received grant money from the Schwan Foundation to engage four congregations with Grace in Action strategic planning to take the next step in their ministry.</li> <li>Actively creating and pursuing congregational partnerships (cross-cultural ministry at existing ELS congregation, daughtering congregations, preaching stations)</li> <li><b><i>Two new ministries complete; in the process of calling an exploratory home missionary for a new start.</i></b></li> <li><b><i>Unlimited opportunities to begin missions and ministries hampered by limited funding.</i></b></li> </ol> <p>Board for World Outreach:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The long-held strategy of establishing mission outreach in greater Seoul, South Korea among the Chinese-Korean (Mandarin speaking) diaspora is starting to take on real form and substance with the initial and evolving efforts of Pastor David Choi.</li> <li>Work has started more closely with the Australia mission field, currently centered around Our Redeemer in Brisbane. The board is assisting with calling a pastor.</li> <li>The LMSI district in Rajahmundry is seeking assistance and support in the creation of a new congregation and church facility.</li> </ol>
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**5. Endeavor to increase the efficiency and productivity of our synod’s boards.**

<p>a. Make use of Ministry Leadership Institute (MLI) for specific boards/entities (e.g., Board for World Outreach, Board for Home Outreach, Board for Lutheran Schools, Board for Youth Outreach).</p>	<p>Initiate as boards see fit and assess its effectiveness.</p>	<p align="right">2021–26</p> <p>Board for Home Outreach:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grant money received from the Schwan Foundation to engage four congregations with Grace in Action strategic planning to take the next step in their ministry.</li> <li>The board continues to seek better understanding of the process of applying for grants and funding from a variety of funding sources.</li> <li>The board received a \$20,000 grant from the Bolick Foundation (a new grant entity).</li> </ol> <p>Board for World Outreach: <b><i>The board is in the early stages of working with Grace in Action to develop a new strategic plan.</i></b></p> <p>Board for Youth Outreach: <b><i>The board decided not to make use of MLI (Grace in Action) training. However, principles from the program have been applied to the board to improve workflow and board structure. The board has been organized into four subcommittees to carry out the work assigned to it by the synod.</i></b></p>
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<p>b. Continually consult the guidelines of the ELS <i>Handbook</i>, respectively.</p>	<p>At each opening session following convention, note the guidelines.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">2021–26</p> <p>Board for Home Outreach: The administrator and board periodically review the synod’s <i>Handbook</i> and the board’s own handbook to be sure it is following the relevant guidelines. When necessary, amendments and updates are suggested so the guidelines fit the current situation as well as anticipated future situations. The board, as suggested, will consult the handbooks at its first meeting after synod conventions</p> <p>Board for Youth Outreach: <b><i>The board has conducted a study of its duties in the synod Handbook and has reorganized to carry out these duties more effectively.</i></b> <b><i>The synod Handbook will be reviewed annually to ensure subcommittees are effectively carrying out the assigned duties.</i></b></p>
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Key: \* Primary Responsibility  
† Secondary Responsibility  
^ Tertiary Responsibility

## REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

*Committee #7: Finances*

### MEMBERSHIP

The Board of Trustees consists of nine trustees. During this past year, two long-standing members of the Board, Mr. Dave Ewert and Rev. Craig Ferkenstad, did not avail themselves to reelection. Their decades of service to the synod on the Board of Trustees is greatly appreciated. Mr. Chan Smith was elected to fill the lay vacancy on the board. And, by virtue of election to the office of synod secretary, Rev. Kyle Madson was added to the board as well.

Serving on the board are: Mr. Dennis Behr, the Rev. Phillip Lepak, the Rev. Jonathan Madson, the Rev. Kyle Madson, Mr. Paul Mielbrecht, the Rev. Glenn Obenberger, Mr. J.T. Pedersen, Mr. Channing Smith, and the Rev. S. Piet VanKampen. The synod’s vice president, the Rev. Michael Smith served as an advisory member to the board. Mr. Dave Ewert has agreed to continue to serve as an advisory member to the board as well. The Rev. Keith Boheim represents the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation as an advisory consultant.

The president of the synod and the secretary of the synod also serve as the chairman and secretary of the Board of Trustees.

### MEETINGS

The Board of Trustees has met since the last convention for regular meetings on August 14, November 12–13, February 13. The board also will meet in May. Electronic meetings were held on January 28 and March 10, 2025 as well.

Members serving on the Board of Regents–Board of Trustees Subcommittee are Mr. J.T. Pedersen, the Rev. Jonathan Madson, and Mr. Paul Mielbrecht. Members serving on the Board of Trustees–Home Outreach Subcommittee are Mr. Dennis Behr, the Rev. Phillip Lepak, and Mr. Chan Smith. Members serving on the Board of Trustees–World Outreach Subcommittee are the Rev. Jonathan Madson the Rev. Michael Smith, and the Rev. S.Piet VanKampen. Mr. David Ewert also serves as a liaison from the Board of Trustees to the Board of Regents.

### STAFF

The Treasurer (Mrs. Myrna Meunier) and Giving Counselor (Mr. Paul Manning) serve under the direction of the board and report regularly. Both Myrna and Paul are proving to be highly capable in their respective disciplines and areas of service. The synod is blessed to have them working in our behalf.

The communication director (the Rev. Paul Fries) reports directly to the synod's president. The Evangelism and Missions Counselor (the Rev. Brad Kerkow) is accountable to the Board for Home Outreach as well as a newly added position (2024 convention) of Congregational Counselor. The Rev. Ed Bryant accepted this call in July, was installed in October and is busy in his work serving our congregations. The World Outreach Administrator (the Rev. Thomas Heyn) is accountable to the Board for World Outreach. The Director for the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews (the Rev. David Thompson) reports to the Board on Apologetics.

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD**

As the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the board is entrusted with the "general management and control of this corporation" between meetings of the synod (ELS *Articles of Incorporation*, Article VIII) and is especially concerned about the physical properties and fiscal responsibilities of the synod.

In recognizing some functionally conflicting language regarding the cooperating efforts of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents in overseeing the operation of Bethany Lutheran College, the trustees in their May 2024 meeting resolved the following amendment to the bylaws to be brought before the 2025 convention (change is noted with strikethrough and underline):

BE IT RESOLVED, The guidelines for the Board of Trustees of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., Article I: Governance be amended as follows: "The trustees shall have the general management and control of ~~all~~ secular business and temporal affairs of said corporation. All such business and affairs they shall conduct in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation, bylaws, rules and resolutions of the synod and of Bethany Lutheran College."

### **FINANCES**

The Board of Trustees oversees the operation of the synodical finances and budget. As of November of 2024, the administration of the financial accounts of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews (CAW) has been transferred from Bethany Lutheran College to the Evangelical Lutheran synod.

#### ***Congregation Funding***

In 2024, congregational offerings totaled \$811,082, coming up shy of the adopted congregational contribution goal of \$860,000 (cited in *Synod Report 2024*, page 139).

During this past year, the closure of the congregation Our Savior's Lutheran Church - Bishop, CA resulted in direct synod funding of \$22,500 to support the *Never Confounded Pastoral Retreat – 2025*. Other proceeds from this property sale have been generously gifted to support program and department efforts at Bethany Lutheran College, as well as gospel ministry at home and abroad.

#### ***Missions Advancement Project, Inc.***

The Missions Advancement Project (MAP) received funding of \$355,000 to support Peru, Chile, India/LMSI, Gift of Life/Thoughts of Faith and related administrative expense. The Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation will not be providing designated financial support for MAP beyond 2024 and will include the funding in the core request from the ELS. This will not result in reduction of funding.

#### ***Program Funds***

The synod is dependent upon the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation for financial support of its programs and wishes to express continued gratitude to the Foundation for its generous aid.

To supplement the 2024 budget, the synod requested and was granted \$410,000 from the Foundation meeting its targeted "base grant" amount of \$410,000 in the following areas: BWO \$211,250, BHO \$140,000 and the Office of the President \$34,250 for Harmony Among the Clergy and \$24,500 for onboarding and training of Giving Counselor.

#### ***Special Project Grants***

Special Project Grants are awarded by the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation for special projects. Application for such grants are made to synod's Board for Trustees for review and recommendation and are awarded upon approval of the Foundation.

For 2024, the following special projects received approval and funding:

Congregational Counselor for \$100,000, (*Board for Home Outreach*)  
Never Confounded Retreat for \$27,500, (*Pastoral Care Committee*)  
Vicar in Mission for \$36,500 (*Board for Home Outreach*)

All beneficiaries of the Foundation have the option of applying for Project Funds to assist with unexpected budget shortfalls, emergencies and opportunities to share the gospel message that were not planned for in the budget year.

### ***Wills and Estates***

The synod gratefully acknowledges the receipt of proceeds from the following estates in the calendar year 2024:

Robin R. Moerman	\$146,145.03
June Moldstad	\$33,461.91
Martin A. Robinson Trust	\$31,100.00
Joyce Schneider	\$5,802.89
Grant Seydel	\$4,623.31
Eunice M. Wehrenberg	\$17,273.70

### ***Expenditures***

Audited numbers were not available at the time of this report but the “actual expenditures” will be included in the Consolidated Financial Statement of the synod audit and the supplemental information presented during the synod convention.

## **PROPERTIES**

The board serves as custodians of the synod’s property and is responsible for any financial obligations of the synod.

### ***Loans***

The trustees held two individual \$750,000 loans with Bethany Lutheran College. The trustees in cooperation with the Board of Regents agreed to consolidate these two loans into a single \$1.5M loan with an agreed upon 0% interest rate retroactive to July 1, 2024. The college will pay \$26,250 twice annually with the balance payable in full June 30, 2034.

### ***Archives and History***

The Committee for Archives and History functions under the direction of the Board of Trustees which appoints members to the committee.

The committee oversees the work of the Synod Archives, the Ottesen Museum, and the ELS Historical Society. Committee members include the Rev. John Petersen (chairman), the Rev. Mike Muehlenhardt (secretary), the Rev. Craig Ferkenstad (asst. archivist), the Rev. Ted Gullixson (archivist), synod President Glenn Obenberger (ex-officio) and the Rev. Shawn Stafford. The committee regularly hears reports from the Synod Archivist Ted Gullixson, Ottesen Museum Director of Programming Rebecca DeGarmeaux, and ELS Historical Society President Michael Lillienthal. The committee met in September of 2024 and February of 2025.

### ***ELS Archives***

ELS Archivist, Rev. Theodore Gullixson, was serving a vacancy in Albert Lea, MN and Northwood, IA from June to December, 2024. Much work has been carried on by Craig and Teresa Ferkenstad. Rev. Craig Ferkenstad produced a series of five brochures that highlight the work of the ELS Archives and the Ottesen Museum. Photographs have been filed and the home and foreign mission papers have been filed. A spreadsheet was developed that detailed *Lutheran Sentinel* articles about ELS congregations, pastors, and lay people. The archives has received documents from several congregations that closed, from minutes from ELS boards and committees, from the Committee for Integrating Technology, from the ELS Historical Society, and from ELS Mission Rallies. Rev. Paul Fries transferred digital documents and videos to a hard drive owned by the archives. Indexes to the archive collections are on the synod website, including a link for the book “Evangelical Lutheran Synod Congregations and Pastors: Historical Register, 1918-2023.”

### ***Ottesen Museum***

The ELS Ottesen Museum has received 134 visitors in the past year including confirmation classes, Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary students, and Christmas open house guests. The annual Christmas open house was held on December 10, with theme “You Gave Me What? —Interesting and Unusual Donations to the ELS Ottesen Museum.” The presentation highlighted some of the more unique items in the collection. Over the course of the year, the museum had about a dozen sets of artifacts donated to add to the collection. Director of Programming, Becky DeGarmeaux, gave off-site presentations about the museum. She is also working on cataloging the entire collection and working on providing better storage containers for the items not on display. The museum has an active Facebook page and a regular column in the ELS Historical Society’s newsletter, *Oak Leaves*.

### ***ELS Historical Society***

The ELS Historical Society Board consists of chairman, Rev. Michael Lillienthal; vice-chairman, Neil Shaffer; treasurer, Larry Rude; secretary, Marie Aaberg; Julie Faugstad; Cheryl Heiliger; ELS president, Rev. Glenn Obenberger; ELS secretary, Rev. Kyle Madson; ELS archivist, Rev. Ted Gullixson; *Oak Leaves* editor, Rev. Timothy Erickson; Ottesen Museum Director of Programming, Rebecca DeGarmeaux.

The annual meeting of the ELS Historical Society was held at Lee Theater of the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center at Bethany Lutheran College on Sunday, June 16, 2024. The theme of the program was “Hymnbook Traditions of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.” The presenter was Rev. Craig Ferkenstad.

## **GIVING COUNSELOR REPORTING**

The 2024 synodical stewardship report marks the first full year I have served as the ELS Giving Counselor. It has been a transitional year that has included the support of many. Continued thanks to Rev. Daniel Basel as he offers guidance and supports the work of this office in an advisory role; and most importantly helps nurture many relationships that he developed over his years of service. Internal support from the business office of receiving and recording the many gifts is critical to our success and the work of Elsa Ferkenstad and Myrna Meunier is much appreciated leading this effort. Support provided by Rev. Paul Fries as the ELS Communication Director both in general strategy and in developing ongoing written communication was and is extremely important. President Obenberger has provided steadfast direction, leadership and invaluable insight into the ELS. Finally, a great debt of gratitude is owed to John and Kari Sehloff, who opened their home and hearts to my family and provided a place to live, without which the transition to Mankato would not have been possible. I am humbled by their generosity and their service to our Lord.

*Paul Manning, ELS Giving Counselor*

## **STEWARDSHIP**

### ***Congregational Giving***

We thank all ELS member congregations for their generous support of our synod. The financial support provided is essential to our synod's ability to function administratively, and also to share the Gospel message through all of our boards: Trustees, Home Outreach, World Outreach, Youth Outreach, Lutheran Schools, and Christian Service; our committees: Doctrine, Worship, Laymen's Delegates Equalization Fund Committee, Planning and Coordinating Committee, Synod Review and Strategic Planning; our schools: Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. The support from our congregations is critical to the synod and our work would not be possible without such support. The synod received \$811,081.90 of financial support in 2024 as designated congregation giving. Praise the Lord! This amount did fall short of the 2024 approved budget of \$860,000. We were grateful for a challenge grant of \$35,000 provided by an anonymous member that helped us close the budget gap. There were positives to celebrate as 48% (or 56) of our congregations increased their overall giving to the synod from their 2023 giving. We pray for those 36% (or 42) of our congregations that needed to reduce their giving, and the 21% (or 24) that were unable to give at all in 2024.

As we move through 2025 and prepare for our congregational budgets in 2026, please consider the following: Our overall congregational giving has not kept pace with inflation over the past 10 years. \$1 in 2015 is equivalent in purchasing power to about \$1.33 today, an increase of \$0.33 over 10 years. If our congregational giving had kept pace with inflation, we would have received \$992,910 of congregational support in 2024. As a congregation, please consider increasing your giving to help keep pace with the increasing cost of operating the synod.

### ***Current Giving and the Importance of Individual Gifts***

The current giving received for our ELS provides for a significant part of the funding during the fiscal year. Synod members are encouraged to first support their congregations and then prayerfully consider supporting the ELS with non-designated gifts and then the ELS boards as needed. We received a total of \$492,825 of individual gifts in 2024, exceeding our budget of \$302,000. Thank you for glorifying our Lord with your support!

### ***Visiting Our Congregations***

Visiting our congregations is a vital part of the Giving Counselor's role. Although these visits do not include preaching, they can be based on the needs of the congregation including Bible studies on stewardship, facilitating discussions on synod finances and how congregational gifts are used, examining your congregational and/or individual stewardship practices, supporting special projects or needs of the congregations and always offering individual support to our members to help them find the joy of giving. Visits were made to 21 congregations in 2024.

### ***Estate Planning and Planned Giving***

We urge all our brothers and sisters in Christ to remember our Lord's work in their wills and as beneficiary designations. In faith we confess that God is the owner of all we have and all we are. It is He who blessed us through our labors and faithful stewardship. We are responsible for managing what God has entrusted to us in life as well as in death. He has given us the privilege, opportunity and the joy of expressing our love for him and those we love through our estate plans. There are many financial vehicles that can be used to support ministry and to make tax-wise decisions. There are several options, depending on what is best

for you, including: Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) that remain a major portion of our synod giving, Charitable Gift Annuities, Donor Advised Funds, Endowments and Charitable Trusts. These options are best reviewed and considered on a person basis to meet your stewardship needs.

***Solicitation and Stewardship of Donors***

The first priority in 2024 was to be sure we were acknowledging and thanking all of our donors as we received gifts. Systems have been reviewed and revised to ensure that all gifts, regardless of the amount are received and acknowledged with the thankfulness they deserve. Various appeal letters and some electronic requests were utilized. As we move forward, the appeals will be focused on supporting our synod needs with undesignated gifts so financial support may be directed to the greatest needs of the synod. We pray that all gifts are given cheerfully and out of love for our Lord.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD FOUNDATION, INC.**

As the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation, Inc., the assets of the foundation are managed and controlled by the board (*Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation*, Article II.A). The president, vice president, secretary and treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod serve as the officers of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation. The annual meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation is held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation Investment Committee consists of four members elected to two-year terms by the Board of Trustees. During this past year, the committee has consisted of: Mr. David Ewert (outgoing) Mr. Chan Smith (newly appointed), Mr. Mark Olsen, Mr. J.T. Pedersen, and Mr. Jeff Younge. The committee meets concurrently with the quarterly meetings of the Board of Trustees to consider and make recommendations regarding the investment of the synod’s assets and the use of the income from those investments.

As of December 31, 2024 the financial position of Evangelical Lutheran Synod funds (including the ELS Foundation) is summarized as follows:

<b>STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION</b>			
<b>(pre-auditor review)</b>			
<b>Evangelical Lutheran Synod</b>			
<b>December 31, 2024</b>			
	<b>SYNOD</b>	<b>EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD</b>	<b>TOTAL ALL</b>
	<b>FUNDS</b>	<b>FOUNDATION</b>	<b>FUNDS</b>
Cash	\$379,631	\$0	\$379,631
LACE	\$0	\$720,000	\$720,000
Other Assets	\$1,927,231	\$1,935,726	\$3,862,958
Investment management accounts	\$9,702,904	\$15,664,943	\$25,367,848
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$12,009,767</b>	<b>\$18,320,669</b>	<b>\$30,330,436</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$578,029</b>	<b>\$422,805</b>	<b>\$1,000,833</b>
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$11,431,738</b>	<b>\$17,897,865</b>	<b>\$29,329,603</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$12,009,767</b>	<b>\$18,320,669</b>	<b>\$30,330,436</b>

It is important to note that most of the funds in the foundation are designated funds or endowments and are not readily available for general operational expenses of the synod.

For the year 2025, the distribution percentage from the endowments will be 4.0%.

An accounting is found in the “Financial Statements and Supplementary information.”

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF  
BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE, INC.**

The annual meeting of the Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. is held concurrently with the annual meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. At this meeting, BLC, Inc. elects the “Evangelical Lutheran Synod Board of Regents” and also the “Board of Trustees of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.”

As the Board of Trustees of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., the trustees “govern Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary with respect to the property. All other matters of trusteeship and governance are assigned to the Board of Regents” (*Guidelines for the Board of Trustees of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.*, Article III, Preamble).

A face-to-face meeting of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents was held November 12, 2024. The trustees receive reports from the college and seminary at each meeting.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE  
LUTHERAN SCHOOLS OF AMERICA, INC.**

Membership in the Lutheran Schools of America (LSA), Inc. is identical to membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The sole duty of the Board of Trustees is to manage the Lutheran Schools of America Fund. The day-by-day operations managed by the Board for Lutheran Schools. This year's convention also serves as the annual meeting of the Lutheran Schools of America.

*The Rev. Glenn Obenberger, chairman  
The Rev. Kyle Madson, secretary*

**REPORT OF THE  
SYNOD REVIEW COMMITTEE**

*Committee #14 Miscellaneous*

The members of the Synod Review Committee are the Rev. S. Piet Van Kampen, chairman; Mr. Karl Bloedel; the Rev. Craig Ferkenstad; the Rev. Theodore Gullixson, secretary; and Mr. James Flantz. President Glenn Obenberger serves as an advisory member. Since the 2024 synod convention, the committee has met four times.

The Synod Review Committee provided clarification to Pres. Obenberger on various issues by letter. The committee was asked to review the amendments to the Guidelines for the Planning and Coordinating Committee. There are no conflicts with the rest of the guidelines.

The following items are presented as suggested changes to the ELS Guidelines. The proposed additions are underlined.

**1) Amend Guidelines for the Board for World Outreach, Article IV, B.5 to read:**

“Coordinate fraternal relations among the foreign mission fields of the board and with other church bodies of our fellowship where their work impacts our foreign mission fields.”

NOTE: Historically the guidelines give to the synod president, with the assistance of the Doctrine Committee, the duty to maintain fraternal relations with other church bodies of our fellowship.

**2) Add to Guidelines for the Board of Trustees, Article V, B. to read:**

4. Provide support and advice to the synod's boards and committees upon request.

5. The annual report of the Giving Counselor will be included in the report of the board.

*The Rev. Theodore G. Gullixson, secretary*

**MEMORIALS**

**ESTABLISHING REGULAR DATE OF SYNOD CONVENTION**

*Committee #14 Miscellaneous*

WHEREAS, The date of the annual synod convention is set by the previous annual convention (Bylaws, Chapter V, Paragraph 1 e.), and

WHEREAS, It would be beneficial for scheduling purposes to know the dates of the annual conventions further in advance, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That the synod bylaws, Chapter V, Paragraph 1, e. be stricken and minor grammatical changes be made as follows:

**Chapter V: Sphere of Jurisdiction of the Convention**

Paragraph 1

The synodical conventions shall work to attain the purposes outlined in Chapter III of the constitution and to that end shall:

- a) review the activities of the synod as conducted by its officers, boards and committees during the previous year;
- b) by careful planning and proper resolutions arrange for the future work of the synod;
- c) elect a president, a vice president and a secretary of the synod; *and*
- d) elect such boards and committees as the synod may determine. Only those may serve on its boards and committees who are members of the synod, and men of good repute, ~~and~~

e) decide the time and place of the next synodical convention:

and,

B. BE IT RESOLVED, That Chapter IV, Paragraph 1 of the bylaws be amended to read: “Synodical conventions are to be held annually. *The synodical convention shall be held during the third full week of June, unless decided otherwise by the previous convention.*” (Additional words in italics)

*Bethany Lutheran Church  
Ames, Iowa*

## **REGARDING REQUIRED USE OF LITURGY BY SUPPORTED CONGREGATIONS**

*Committee #9: Home Outreach*

WHEREAS, Use of the liturgy is part and parcel of Lutheran worship, and,

WHEREAS, The Lutheran church self-consciously identifies as preserving the customary forms of worship, and,

WHEREAS, The Evangelical Lutheran Church states in her bylaws in Chapter 1 “Liturgical Forms and Ceremonies”: *In order to preserve unity in liturgical forms and ceremonies, the synod recommends to its congregations that they use the Order of worship based on the Danish-Norwegian liturgy of 1685 and agenda of 1688, or the Common Order of Worship, as each congregation may decide,* and,

WHEREAS, There is great benefit to uniformity of worship, and,

WHEREAS, The customary approved liturgies offer ample variety within acceptable limits, and,

WHEREAS, Changing the order of the elements of the liturgy changes what the service confesses, teaches, and conveys, and,

WHEREAS, Congregations that support the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod expect customary, approved, orthodox services to be conducted as noted in the synod bylaws, and,

WHEREAS, The synod convention in 2012 again recommended the use of approved liturgies stating citing the 2011 Report of the Committee on ELS Worship which states in part, “Our congregations as voluntary participants in the synod (an “assembly” which “walks together” can be expected to use forms, rites and ceremonies, in the proclamation of the gospel and in the administration of the Sacraments, that reflect and testify to the fraternal unity that exists between those who preach the same Gospel and administer the same Sacraments,” and,

WHEREAS, The Board for Home Outreach has stated it already requires use of the approved liturgies by congregations of mission status, and,

WHEREAS, At least one synodically supported congregation has not been using recommended liturgies before and since that time, and,

WHEREAS, A clear statement of requiring congregations supported by synod funds to use the approved liturgies would give synod boards the authority to enforce the will of the synod, and,

WHEREAS, It can be assumed that our synodical boards would appreciate clearer directives to do what they say they already do, therefore

A. BE IT RESOLVED, That synodical worship services be conducted according to the customary, approved, orthodox liturgies, and,

B. BE IT RESOLVED, That all congregations receiving support from synod be they foreign or domestic missions, or other classification are required to conduct all services according to customary, approved, orthodox liturgies as noted in the synod bylaws, and,

C. BE IT RESOLVED, That the understanding of customary, approved, orthodox liturgy includes the normal order of the elements of the liturgy.

*Reformation Lutheran Church  
Hillsboro, Oregon*

# REGARDING THE EVANGELICAL NATURE OF COMMENDING EVERY SUNDAY COMMUNION

*Committee #6: Doctrine*

- WHEREAS, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper "for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:27), and,
- WHEREAS, The Lord's Supper enables us to love as we are loved, which is indicated by Jesus in John 13:34, "A new commandment I give you so that you love one another," Luther's "Christian Questions and Their Answers" assert in the answer to question #18 "Why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?" "...That I may also learn of Him to love God and my neighbor (ELH p.39), and Luther's post communion collect implores, "...that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through [Jesus' body and blood] in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another," ELH p. 83), and,
- WHEREAS, Jesus indicated that His people are to celebrate the Lord's Supper often (1 Corinthians 11:25), and,
- WHEREAS, As often as we eat and drink in the Lord's Supper we, "Show the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26), and,
- WHEREAS, It is the responsibility of the church to make the Lord's Supper available (Matthew 24:45, 46; Luke 12:42, 43), and,
- WHEREAS, Our Lutheran fathers self-consciously defended their valuing the Lord's Supper by stating, "Falsely are our churches accused of abolishing the Mass, for the Mass is retained by us and celebrated with the highest reverence." (AC Article XXIV, ELH p. 16). And further, "We hold one Communion every holy day, and on other days it is given to those who ask for it" (ibid, p. 17), and also the apology states, "In our churches, mass is celebrated every Sunday and on other festivals when the sacrament is offered to those who wish for it after they have been examined and absolved" (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV, Tappert page 249) " and,
- WHEREAS, Offering the Lord's Supper does not compel anyone to receive it, while not offering it prevents everyone from receiving it, and,
- WHEREAS, A memorial titled "To Restore Every Sunday Celebration of the Lord's Supper" was submitted to the 2001 synod convention and,
- WHEREAS, The memorial was directed to the ELS standing Doctrine Committee by the 2001 doctrine floor committee and for response and report to the 2002 ELS synod convention, and
- WHEREAS, The ELS doctrine committee responded in part: "The motivation for attendance at the Lord's Supper should not be legalistic requirement," and,
- WHEREAS, A memorial titled, "Commending Every Sunday Communion" was submitted to the 2024 ELS synod convention in 2024,
- WHEREAS, The 2024 doctrine floor committee portrayed the memorial as being the same as the 2001 memorial, and,
- WHEREAS, Even the titles of the two memorials present them as materially different, and,
- WHEREAS, The 2024 floor committee by association further portrayed the memorial Commending Every Sunday Communion as being legalistic, and,
- WHEREAS, The memorial Commending Every Sunday Communion sought the opposite of legalism, therefore,
- A. BE IT RESOLVED, That the ELS Doctrine Committee examine the memorial *Commending Every Sunday Communion* to determine if it is legalistic, and,
- B. BE IT RESOLVED, That the Doctrine Committee return a recommendation regarding the 2024 memorial *Commending Every Sunday Communion* to the 2026 ELS synod convention.

*Reformation Lutheran Church  
Hillsboro, Oregon*



# COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

## ELECTION PROCEDURE (GENERAL SYNODICAL GUIDELINES, ARTICLE V.B-C)

Unless stated otherwise in the Constitution, its Bylaws, or these guidelines, a simple majority (a vote of fifty percent plus one) shall determine the decision of any election. Should an election end in a tie, the chairman may vote to break the tie or he may order another vote (Bylaws, Chapter IV, Paragraph 2).

If there is no majority, another vote of the same nominees will be taken for as many as three additional times. If there is no majority after the fourth ballot, a motion from the floor may request that those names with less than five percent of the total vote be removed from the next ballot. If that motion is defeated, an election using the original candidates will be continued.

(Nominees marked with an \* are incumbent.)

Current Elected Members

Nominees

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND WISCONSIN CORPORATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2 positions: 1 clergy or lay, 1 lay

2025

Mr. Dennis Behr  
Rev. Piet Van Kampen

### ***Clergy or Lay (3-year)***

Rev. Piet Van Kampen\*—Age: 47; Home Congregation: Holy Cross, Madison, WI; Years in the ELS: 27 as a member, 20 as a pastor; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 1 term; Education and Vocation: 2001 - BS, Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN (English Major, Philosophy Minor); other undergrad work at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, MN, and Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, MN; 2005 - MDiv, Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, MN; 2005, Ordained/installed as pastor, English Lutheran Church, Cottonwood, MN; 2013, Installed as pastor, Christ The King Lutheran Church, Green Bay, WI; 2023, Installed as associate pastor, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Madison, WI; 2008-2013, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade Football Coach, Lakeview School, Cottonwood, MN; Qualifications for office: Circuit 9 Pastor's Conference Secretary, 2006-2013; Board for Christian Service, 2009-2016; Planning & Coordinating Committee, 2010-2016 (as member of Board for Christian Service); Synod Review Committee, 2011-present; Explanation Review Committee, 2018-2024; Circuit 6 Visitor, 2017-2023; Contributing Editor, *The Lutheran Sentinel*, 2018-present; Christian Life Resources National Board, 2019-present; Currently on the Board of Trustees serving on Board for World Outreach Subcommittee, Compensation Committee

2026

Rev. Phillip Lepak  
Rev. Jonathan Madson  
Mr. Paul Mielbrecht  
Rev. Glenn Obenberger

2027

Mr. J.T. Pedersen  
Mr. Channing Smith

2028

Rev. Kyle Madson

*Advisory:* vice-president

Mr. Curtis Bull— Age: 51; Home Congregation: Faith Lutheran Church San Antonio, TX; Years in the ELS: 50 years; Education and Vocation: Primary job function is IT and Voice Service Desk Manager. This covers all the day to day duties serving as an escalation point for all customer IT and VOIP issues. I have over 20 years of experience in the IT field covering corporate and small business. My daily work requires me to interface with customers of varying age groups, knowledge, and education as well as my employer from the CEO down to the VP of the company. Outside of my daily work, I am a 3<sup>rd</sup> degree black belt in American Style Karate. I teach a couple of classes every week. I have developed a level of discipline and organization making it easier to prioritize time. Qualifications for office: I am a charter member of Faith Lutheran Church in San Antonio. Faith celebrated 50 years of the Lords grace and preservation May 2024. I have served as President, vice president, treasurer, secretary, and trustee at Faith. I am currently serving as elder helping to guide and assist our pastor in his vocation. In my martial arts connections, I have available various industry experts including legal and financial for consultation.

### ***Lay (3-year)***

Mr. Bill Bohning—Age: 70; Years in ELS: 29; Home congregation (including location): Mt. Olive Lutheran, Mankato MN; Education & Vocation: Education – Graduate of Worthington Senior High School in 1972 and attended Worthington Community College 1972–1974; Vocation – Retired from Taylor Corporation in Mankato, MN in 2020 after 33 years of service where I served in the role of president for multiple companies within the Taylor organization. Qualifications for Office: Relevant work experience – In my role as company president I was responsible for developing and managing people, teams, and relationships for the overall success of our companies, employees, and customers. I was personally involved in all aspects of these businesses that included business strategy, sales and marketing, account management, customer care, operations, human resources, procurement,

and budget and finance. During the course of my career at Taylor I served as president for up to 5 companies at one time that totaled 530 employees and \$65MM in annual sales. At Mt. Olive: Board of Education 2008–2009; Two terms as Council Chairman 2009–2010 and 2010–2011; Chairman of the Building Committee 2016–2019; Member of the Phased Growth Committee 2022–2023; For the ELS: Currently serving on Planning and Coordinating Committee 2023-present.

Mr. Tod Eckberg—Age: 65; Home Congregation: King of Grace, Golden Valley Minnesota; Years in the ELS: 42 years; Education and Vocation: Bethany Lutheran College AA-1979; Mankato State BS Earth Science 1983; Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Environmental Specialist 25 years; St. Paul Public Schools Environmental Health and Safety 10 years; Qualifications for office: King of Grace School Board 15 years, Senior High youth leader 5 years; West Lutheran (WELS) Board of Regents 15 years Last role Buildings and Grounds Chairman; West Lutheran Varsity Soccer coach 14 years

## BOARD OF REGENTS OF BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE AND BETHANY LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY – TYPE A MEMBER

3 positions: 1 clergy, 2 clergy or lay

### *Type A members*

2025

Rev. Erwin Ekhoﬀ  
Mr. Mark Madson  
Rev. David Thompson

2026

Rev. Mark Bartels  
Dr. Joshua Mears  
Rev. Alex Ring

2027

Mr. Steven DePrey  
Mr. Aaron Faugstad  
Mr. David Sparley

### *Type B members\**

2025

Mr. John Scott

2026

Rev. Aaron Ferkenstad

2027

Mr. Timothy Roemhildt\*

### *By virtue of office:*

Rev. Glenn Obenberger,  
president

### ***Clergy (3-year):***

Rev. Erv Ekhoﬀ\*— Age: 74; Home Congregation: King of Grace, Golden Valley, Minnesota; Years in the ELS: 49; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 5; Education and Vocation: Liberal Arts from Northwestern College, Bethany Seminary Graduate in 1976, retired clergy since 2020.; Qualifications for office: Presently serving on the Board of Regents as chair of the Finance and Audit Committee, member of the Advancement Committee, member of the Investment Committee, member of the Regents-Trustee subcommittee, member of the President’s Advisory Committee for Seminary and College, member of the Seminary Committee; chaired the Presidential Search Committee. Served on various boards and committees throughout the synod while I was in the active ministry.

Rev. Dr. Daniel Hartwig— Age: 41; Home Congregation: Trinity, West Bend, WI; Years in the ELS: 16; Education and Vocation: Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church and School near West Bend, Wisconsin; BA (liberal arts) – Bethany Lutheran College, 2006; MDiv – Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, 2010; PhD (theological studies) – Graduate Theological Foundation, 2021; Qualifications for office: I have served in congregations with Lutheran elementary schools for about 14 years. I have been (and presently am) interim principal and have experience with managing school budgets, policies, accreditation standards, etc., and have spent many hours teaching in the classroom setting.

### ***Clergy / Lay (3-year):***

Rev. David Thompson\*— Age: 70; Home Congregation: Mt. Olive Lutheran, Mankato; Years in the ELS: 43; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 3; Education and Vocation: Bethany Lutheran Junior College (AA), Mankato State Univ., (BA), Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary (Master of Divinity); Qualifications for office: Director of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews; numerous articles on Christian education; author of *What in the World Is Going On: Identifying Hollow and Deceptive Worldviews* (NPH).

Rev. Dr. Adam Brasich— Age:36; Home Congregation: Hope Lutheran Church (West Jordan, UT); Years in the ELS: 4 years; Education and Vocation: B.A., Wabash College; M.A. (American religious history), Florida State University; Ph.D. (American religious history), Florida State University; M.Div., Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary; ELS pastor since 2021.; Qualifications for office: Taught religion and history at Florida State University from 2012-2017; served as an adjunct professor of history at Bethany Lutheran College in 2018; attended a traditional liberal arts college similar in size to Bethany with a strong emphasis on teaching excellence; gained extensive experience with higher education operations (such as budgets and faculty searches) during his doctoral studies; remains active in academic research and publishing.

***Clergy or Lay (3-year):***

Mr. Mark Madson\*—Age: 76; Home Congregation: Mt. Olive, Mankato MN; Years in ELS: 76; Education and Vocation: Bethany Lutheran High School 1967; Bethany Lutheran JC 1969 (AA); Mankato State College 1972 (BS Education). Jr high and HS educator in Redwood Falls MN; sales and management positions in several different industries; the final 33 years with Taylor Corp. of No. Mankato MN. Qualifications: Over the past 48 years I have served on numerous boards and committees at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church and Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School. As a member of the Board of Regents, I enjoy using analyzing and problem solving skills that have been developed over the years to help identify God pleasing directions and decisions that help Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary remain solvent and continue to fulfill their mission.

Mr. David Harris— Age: 64; Home Congregation: Parkland; Years in the ELS: 29; Education and Vocation: M.B.A. earned in 1986; worked as an accountant and supply/distribution manager; Qualifications for office: served on various church boards, 1996–2024.

**DOCTRINE COMMITTEE**

2 positions: 1 clergy, 1 lay

2025

Dr. David Reagles  
Rev. David Jay Webber

2026

Rev. Jerome Gernander  
Dr. Timothy Schmeling

2027

Mr. Greg Costello  
Rev. Thomas Rank

*By virtue of office:*  
seminary president

*Advisory:* ELS vice president

***Clergy (3-year):***

Rev. David Jay Webber\*— Age: 63; Home Congregation: Bethany Princeton; Years in the ELS: 37; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 6; Education and Vocation: Master of Divinity and Master of Sacred Theology degrees. Served for 8 years as rector/president and professor of theology in Saint Sophia Lutheran Seminary in Ukraine, 1997-2005. Currently pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church in Princeton, Minnesota; Qualifications for office: Have often served as essayist at various theological and pastoral conferences (ELS, WELS, CELC), including this year's convention. Widely published (books and journals) in the areas of dogmatic, historical, and pastoral theology.

Rev. Patrick Ernst— Age: 31; Home Congregation: St. John's Lutheran Church (Frankenmuth MI); Years in the ELS: 5; Education and Vocation: 2010-2011 PSEO (high school dual credit) work at Martin Luther College; 2015 Graduate of Bethany Lutheran College (including semester abroad at Freie Universität; Berlin, Germany); 2019 Graduate of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary; Qualifications for office: Pursuing PhD in Theological Studies at Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne; Taught adjunct religion courses at Bethany Lutheran College (2016–2017); Completed MDiv thesis at BLTS that dealt in depth with doctrinal and ethical issues in liberal Lutheran theology; Taught congregationally on theological and worship trends in modern American evangelicalism; Presented a paper on the doctrine of church fellowship for the 2024 ELS General Pastoral Conference.

***Lay (3-year):***

Dr. David Reagles\*— Age: 36; Home Congregation: Mt. Olive Lutheran (Mankato); Years in the ELS: 34; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 1; Education and Vocation: PhD in History and Culture (Drew University, 2018); MA in the History of Christianity (Wheaton College, 2013); BA in History (BLC, 2011). Currently an administrator at Mankato Christian Academy (2023- ); Qualifications for office: Presented on a variety of topics in the history of Christianity; Published book-length study on the history secularization in the post-war period; served on the Board of Deacons for Mt. Olive for 3 consecutive terms (since 2017).

Mr. Tim Larson— Age: 73; Home Congregation: King of Grace, Golden Valley MN; Years in the ELS: 11; Education and Vocation: Degrees in Biology and Chemistry. Masters in Biology. I worked for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency from 1979 to 2016. I was the supervisor of the technical team in the watershed department at retirement. Qualifications for office: I have been interested in doctrinal studies for the past 30 years.

## BOARD FOR HOME OUTREACH – TYPE A MEMBER

3 positions: 1 clergy, 1 clergy or lay, 1 lay

### *Type A members*

2025

Rev. Timothy Erickson  
Rev. Aaron Hamilton  
Mr. Chan Smith

2026

Rev. Samuel Gullixson  
Mr. Mark Perlwitz

2027

Mr. Neil Shaffer  
Rev. Luke Ulrich

### *Type B members\**

2025

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2026

Rev. Benjamin Wiechmann

2027

vacant

*Advisory:* Evangelism and  
Missions Counselor

### ***Lay (2-year):***

Mr. Dean Shoop\*(appointed)— Age: 69; Home Congregation: Mt. Olive; Years in the ELS: 44; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 3; Education and Vocation: MBA-Minnesota State-Mankato, MS-Madison, BA-Augsburg, AA-Bethany; Qualifications for office: Retired Business Professor-Bethany Lutheran College (38 years). Current member on Board of Home Outreach. Former member of ELS Board for Christian Service. Former financial secretary, stewardship, hot lunch financial coordinator at Mt. Olive.

Mr. Steve Anderson—Age: 64. Congregation: Holton, Holton, MI. Years in ELS: 64. Education, Vocation, and Qualifications: Has over 40 years of experience in various local congregation positions (Chairman, Treasurer, Sunday School Superintendent, Principal, Building Committee). Serves as Plant Controller at Anderson Global since 2021; Plant Controller at Schlumberger 2018 to 2021; Director of Controlling at SAF-Holland 1994 to 2018. Served in private manufacturing companies with responsibilities in ERP Systems, External Audits, Tax, Manufacturing costing, monthly and annual reporting, budgeting, and long-range forecasting. Has an accounting background and has passed the CPA exam.

### ***Clergy (3-year):***

Rev. Timothy Erickson\*— Age: 74; Home Congregation: Hartland Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hartland, MN; Years in the ELS: 74 as member, 47 as pastor; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 1; Education and Vocation: A.A. Bethany Lutheran College, B.A. Mankato State College, M.Div. Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary; Qualifications for office: served as missionary for 36 years.

Rev. Noah Thompson— Age: 34; Home Congregation: River Heights Lutheran Church (East Grand Forks, MN); Years in the ELS: 7; Education and Vocation: Majored in Biology with a Minor in Chemistry at Bethany Lutheran College, Master of Divinity at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary; Qualifications for office: Has served at River Heights Lutheran for six+ years; conducts regular adult instruction classes consisting mainly of parents with children and younger adults; organized and hosts a homeschooling co-op hosted by River Heights Lutheran; teaches at the local Classical Conversations Chapter; organized a study group for college students (held on campus or at the church); served as adjunct professor at Bethany Lutheran College while in seminary.

### ***Clergy or Lay (3-year):***

Rev. Kurtis Freimuth—Age: 44; Home Congregation: Peace Lutheran Church, Deshler OH; Years in the ELS: 8 years as pastor; Education and Vocation: BS in Education, Valparaiso University; M.Div., Bethany Lutheran College; Qualifications for office: Avid reader of outreach and evangelism books. As a student, I canvassed and built altar materials for ELS mission congregation in Clermont FL; Served as chairman of Evangelism at Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Crown Point (IN); helped recommend and canvass Lafayette, IN in the WELS; Planned Mission Trips to: Bangkok, Thailand (2022), Seoul, South Korea (2025); Worked with the Friends Network in planning mission trips and supporting missionaries in the field. Designed and executed local evangelism programs such as: Easter Community Outreach Program, Vero Beach, FL; How and Who to Canvass Program, Kissimmee, FL with help of Bethany Students; Invite Your One Program - Deshler, OH; Backpack Blessing Program - Deshler, OH; Cookies for Christmas Outreach – Deshler, OH

Rev. Samuel Schmeling— Age: 46; Home Congregation: Zion Lutheran Church, Tracy, MN; Years in the ELS: born and raised; Education and Vocation: Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary; Pastor

## BOARD FOR WORLD OUTREACH

3 positions: 1 clergy or lay, 2 lay

2025

Mr. Matt Lukasek  
Mr. Justin Marthaler  
Rev. Daniel Ruiz

2026

Mr. Dan Browning  
Rev. John Petersen  
Rev. Steven Sparley

2027

Rev. Timothy Bartels  
Mr. Enrique Carhuayo  
Rev. Jacob Kempfert

### *Clergy or Lay (3-year):*

Rev. Daniel Ruiz\*— Age:35; Home Congregation: Faith Lutheran Church; Years in the ELS: 35; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 3 years; Education and Vocation: MDiv & Pastor, Bachelors – Major Sociology, Minor Religion; Qualifications for office: Cuban heritage, grew up in Spanish speaking home, able to communicate in Spanish; able to do clerical work; have travelled to South America and the Caribbean.

Rev. Peter Heyn—Age: 44; Home Congregation: Christ the King Lutheran; Green Bay, WI; Years in the ELS: 17; Education and Vocation: B.S., University of Wisconsin-Madison (double major - Secondary Ed & History); M.Div, Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary; Qualifications for office: Grew up and lived in Bogota, Colombia while father served as world missionary (2 1/2 years), Studied abroad in London, UK for one semester while attending UW-Madison; Taught 1 1/2 years as a substitute teacher in Madison Metropolitan School District; Taught Vacation Bible School in Ukraine in the summers of 2008 and 2009, Served as temporary pastor at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Brisbane, Australia for 10 weeks (Summer 2012), Pastor at Peace Lutheran Church (Lakeland, FL) from 2012-2015; Pastor at Peace Lutheran Church (Deshler, OH) from 2015-2019; Served as a home missionary in San Angelo Texas for five years (2019-2024), Guest lecturer at Hyderabad and Rajahmundry seminaries in Lutheran Mission of Salvation-India (Sept. 2023); Has served on Board for Apologetics for past two years (2023-2025); Proficient in Spanish

### *Lay (3-year):*

Mr. Matthew Lukasek\*— Age: 46; Home Congregation: Peace Lutheran, North Mankato, MN; Years in the ELS: 13; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 2; Education: Attended St. John's Lutheran Church (WELS) in Sparta for grades K-8 and was confirmed. Attended Onalaska Luther High School (WELS) for grades 9-12; Received an Associate's Degree in Pre-Engineering from Bethany Lutheran College in 1998; Received a Bachelor's Degree in Composite Materials Engineering from Winona State in 2002; Vocation: Engineer. I have extensive experience in contract manufacturing, specifically in electronic assemblies; I have filled many roles such as technical support for production, technical support for customers, supervisor, and manager. I currently work as the Engineering Manager for Kato Cable in Mankato. Qualifications for office: Served on numerous boards and committees at different churches; Experience in making various processes more efficient; Good written and verbal communication skills

Mr. Daniel Lauth— Age: 56; Home Congregation: First Trinity, Marinette, WI; Years in the ELS: 20+; Education and Vocation: Manufacturing Engineering by vocation. Associate degree in Plastic Mold Design, associate degree in Machine Design, Tool and Die Design, certificate in Supply Chain Management and Design for 6 sigma Black Belt.—Mechanical Designer for Durr Systems, DePere, WI 1988-1998; Off-Shore Logistics Coordinator for Durr Systems, DePere WI 1998-2008; Operations Manager for Durr Systems, Pune India from 2008 to 2010; Plant Manager for Durr Systems, DePere, WI 2010-2020.; Production Engineering Manager – Durr Systems, DePere, WI 2021-to present. Qualifications for office: Synodical Delegate for Christ the King and First Trinity Congregations; Vice President Christ the King Congregation; Treasurer Christ the King Congregation; Sunday School Superintendent Christ the King; Board of Elders Christ the King and St. Paul's Green Bay (WELS); My occupation has taken me to China (50+ trips over 10 years), Hong Kong, Taiwan, Czechia and throughout eastern and western Europe, Australia, Japan and my family and I lived in India for 2 years. In India, I was responsible for helping set-up the Durr engineering office in Pune. During my time at Durr and multiple ELS and WELS congregations I have managed budgets, generated capital expenses, managed capital expenses, helped negotiated union contracts, I have experience with rental property, and I currently manage 20+ people working in different locations in the US/Canada and continue to utilize and direct a design team of 9 people out of our Durr Pune, India office.

***Lay (3-year):***

Mr. Justin Marthaler\*— Age: 49; Home Congregation: Holy Cross Lutheran, Madison, WI; Years in the ELS: 7; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 1; Education and Vocation: B.S. Computer Science, Concordia University Wisconsin. Currently working as Network Administrator/IT Coordinator for engineering firm. Qualifications for office: Heart for international missions and education. Currently serving on BWO and have field visit experience and international travel experience. Serve on local congregation school board. Manage projects and budgets at current employer.

Mr. Randy Voelker—Age: 69; Home Congregation: King of Grace, Golden Valley MN; Years in the ELS: 35; Education and Vocation: Retired – Insurance; various roles including management; Qualifications for office: Strong interest in assisting in the spread of the Gospel to the unchurched in our world

**BOARD FOR YOUTH OUTREACH**

4 positions: 3 clergy, 1 lay

2025

Rev. Jeff Hendrix  
Rev. Josh Mayer  
Mr. James Sundby

2026

Mr. Chris Hoffman  
Rev. Kyle Madson

2027

Mr. Benjamin Faugstad  
Rev. Tony Pittenger

***Clergy (1-year):***

Rev. Abraham Faugstad\*(appointed)— Age: 29; Home Congregation: King of Grace Lutheran Church, Waukon; Years in the ELS: 29; Education and Vocation: BA in Chemistry and a minor in Mathematics from Bethany Lutheran College, M.Div. Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary; Qualifications for office: Counselor at Camp Indianhead, Resident Assistant at Bethany Lutheran College, Resident Assistant at the Beacon (WELS Campus ministry at MSU), active with youth in congregation, participates in circuit youth events and Camp Indianhead.

Rev. James Kassera— Age: 40; Home Congregation: Divine Mercy Lutheran, Weatherford, TX; Years in the ELS: 14; Education and Vocation: BA – Psychology from BLC; MDiv – from BLTS; Qualifications for office: Father of 5 children, the oldest of which are entering the teens years and attending national youth gatherings. Parent of two children with disabilities and special needs which need to be consider in all event plannings. Served at Co-director of Camp Indianhead, MN from 2015-2017. In this role he managed the finances, created logos and promotional materials, and developed activates and schedules. Regularly attends the national youth conventions (LYA); serving as presenter, preacher, and/or group leader. In his community, James has volunteered as a coach and organizer for various youth sports organizations, gaining experience in working with youth and families from a wide range of cultures and religious experience.

***Clergy (3-year)***

Rev. Joshua Mayer\*— Age: 36; Home Congregation: Redeeming Grace Lutheran Church, Rogers MN; Years in the ELS: 15 years; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 1; Education and Vocation: Vocation: Minister of the Gospel. Education: BA from Bethany Lutheran College and MDiv from Bethany Lutheran Seminary. Qualifications for office: Josh Mayer's passion for youth ministry goes back to his work as a summer camp counselor during his years at Bethany Lutheran College. Today he brings that same energy and passion into youth ministry both at the congregational and synodical levels. His experience also includes serving as the co-director for Camp Indianhead MN since 2018, and serving as the chairman for the Board of Regents of West Lutheran High School in Plymouth, MN since 2021.

Rev. Andrew Soule

***Clergy (3-year):***

Rev. Jeff Hendrix\*— Age: 37; Home Congregation: Faith Lutheran Church, Oregon, WI; Years in the ELS: 13 total; 9 as pastor; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 3 terms; Education: MDiv, Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary; MA in Digital Storytelling, Ball State University; BA in Communication, Bethany Lutheran College. Vocation: Husband to Carla; Father of five; Pastor of Faith Lutheran; and Headmaster for Sursum Corda Classical School; Qualifications for office: Served as Superintendent & Director for Camp Lor-Ray for 7 years; Founder & Headmaster of Sursum Corda Classical School; Director of Lutheran Youth Association (LYA) 2024; Manager for ELS Young Branches Digital Videos & Media content; Helped with publications,

design, or social media for Honor Choirs & LYA Conventions since 2015; Author of various youth Bible Studies; Currently authoring a few children's books; Secretary of the ELS Board of Youth Outreach; Chairman of the ELS Subcommittee on Sunday School Attendance; MDiv thesis at seminary was on the history of ELS Summer Camps and Lutheran Youth Conventions.

Rev. Nate Abrahamson—Age: 39; Home Congregation: Abiding Shepherd; Years in the ELS: 13; Education and Vocation: B.A. Broadfield Social Studies Bethany Lutheran College (2008), M.Div Bethany Lutheran Seminary (2012), Associate Pastor; Qualifications for office: Has served as the Director of Camp Rise (formerly known as Camp Indianhead-WI) since 2015. Served as a camp counselor for 11 years prior to becoming camp director. Has organized and led a weekly youth ministry for over 18 years (2006-2011 CROSSED Youth Ministry at Peace Lutheran, North Mankato. 2011-Current E.P.I.C. Youth Ministry at Abiding Shepherd). Served on ELS Sunday School committee. Organized more than a dozen area teen retreats. Regular leader and dj at L.Y.A Conventions. Creates devotional content on platforms popular with youth such as Tik Tok, Snapchat, Instagram & Youtube.

### ***Lay (3-year)***

Mr. James Sundby\*—Age: 54; Home Congregation: Parkland Lutheran Church, Tacoma; Years in the ELS: 54; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 1; Education: Associate of Arts, Bethany Lutheran College, 1991; Bachelor of Arts, Pacific Lutheran University, 1994; Vocation: Bar/Restaurant Manager, Timeout Alehouse (Federal Way, WA); Qualifications for office: 25+ years as a board member and active volunteer for Camp 4-Star, an annual summer camp for children of local ELS/WELS churches; Previous PLC Sunday School teacher/superintendent; Many years of youth coaching in the ELS schools and for recreational teams; Currently one of the youth leaders for Parkland Lutheran Church LYS; Incumbent member of PLC elders

Mr. Dan Gerds—Age: 42; Home Congregation: Mt. Olive, Mankato; Years in the ELS: 23; Education and Vocation: Secondary Education 5-12 Social Studies and 5-8 English, MSU-Mankato, 2005; Bookstore Manager, BLC, 2018-present; Admissions Counselor, BLC, 2011-2018; Dorm Parent at BLC, 2008-2010; Academic Advisor for TRIO program at MSU, 2007-2010; Educator at JWP High School 2005-2007; Qualifications for office: Mt. Olive's Church Council, 2020-2021; Mt. Olive's Board for Education, 2014-2021; Mt. Olive's Board for Youth and Parish Outreach, 2010-2012; WELS Campus Ministry Committee for The Beacon at MSU, 2005-2008; Youth Sports Coach (Basketball, baseball and softball), 1998-present

## **BOARD FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOLS**

3 positions: 1 clergy, 2 clergy or lay

### 2025

Rev. Jesse Jacobsen  
Mr. Kenneth Meyer  
Mr. Chris Poetter

### 2026

Rev. Michael Dale  
Mr. Todd Knutson  
Mr. Shu-Ting Lai

### 2027

Rev. Christopher Dale  
Mr. Nathan Rovey  
Rev. Joshua Skogen

*Advisory:* Coordinator  
of Education of Bethany  
Lutheran College,  
ELS treasurer

### ***Teacher (3-year):***

Mr. Chris Poetter\*— Age: 65; Home Congregation: Peace Lutheran Church; Years in the ELS: 9 years; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: serve one term; Education and Vocation: BS in education from Wisconsin Lutheran College, and Masters in Education from Lesley University. Qualifications for office: I spent 35 years in education as a teacher, athletic director, Coach, and a principal at WELS and ELS Lutheran Schools. The congregations which I served were: California Lutheran HS, St. Mark's Lutheran Church and School in Watertown, WI, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church and School in Des Moines, WA, Holy Cross Lutheran Church and School in Madison, WI, and Peace Lutheran Church and School in Kissimmee, FL.

Mr. Jacob Beilke— Age: 40; Home Congregation: Mt. Olive Lutheran Church; Years in the ELS: 22; Education and Vocation: Bethany Lutheran College (AA), Martin Luther College (MS in Elementary Education with a Social Studies Emphasis). Elementary Teacher at Mt. Olive Lutheran School; Qualifications for office; I have served as a Lutheran Elementary School teacher for 12 years and 3 years as public elementary/middle school teacher. The last 3 years have been at Mt. Olive. I have served in many different settings including inner-city Milwaukee, Beijing, China, and Mankato/New Ulm Public Schools. I have served in administrator roles in two different schools. I was a mentor teacher/teacher coach for 1 year at Atonement Lutheran School and I was Principal at Rising Eagles School in Beijing, China. I regularly have had clinical, early field experience, and student teachers from Bethany, Martin Luther College, and Wisconsin Lutheran College. I have had a variety of

Professional Development and training in Education strategies and practice. Including a conference from the authors of the Teaching Book, “Teach Like a Champion” held in Buffalo, NY. Recently, my focus and passion has been Lutheran Theology, Hymnology and Apologetics. I regularly listen to podcasts focused on these three topics and regularly attend the Apologetics Conference at Bethany Lutheran College in the summer. In the last 3 years I have completed online courses on Apologetics (from 1517.org), C.S. Lewis, and Marxism, Communism, and Socialism (the last two courses were from Hillsdale College).

***Lay (3-year):***

Mr. Kenneth Meyer\*— Age: 73; Home Congregation: Peace Lutheran Church, Kissimmee FL; Years in the ELS: 25; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 5; Education and Vocation: MBA Kansas State University, Contracting; Qualifications for office: Served in the Army for 21 years and as a Department of Defense Contracting Officer and Program Manager. Held multiple leadership positions at Peace Lutheran Church-Kissimmee and with the National Contract Management Association (NCMA).

Mr. Aaron Kreuter — Age: 39; Home Congregation: King of Grace, Golden Valley, MN; Years in the ELS: 9 years; Education and Vocation: *Education:* J.D., 2011, University of Minnesota Law School; B.S. Business Administration, 2008, University of Minnesota; *Employment:* I am Corporate Counsel at Transportation Funding Group, Inc. TFG is a commercial finance company started and owned by my family. I serve as legal counsel and help oversee company operations. Qualifications for office: I do not have any specific experience on a school board or other educational committee. My background as an in-house attorney has given me experience with a variety of organizational and commercial financial transactions. With regard to educational background, as a graduate of WELS-affiliated primary and secondary schools (Timothy Lutheran Elementary – St Louis Park, MN; West Lutheran High School – Plymouth, MN), I have experienced first-hand how vital Lutheran education is.

***Clergy (3-year):***

Rev. Jesse Jacobsen\*—Age: 53; Home Congregation: Christ Ev. Lutheran Church, Port St Lucie, FL; Years in the ELS: 26; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 2; Education and Vocation: BA – Northwestern College, Watertown, WI; M.Div. – Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary; STM – Christ School of Theology, ILT, Brookings SD; Grace Lutheran Church, Madison, WI; Bethany and Concordia Lutheran Churches, The Dalles and Hood River, OR, with Columbia Lutheran School, The Dalles, OR; Lakewood Lutheran Church and School, Lakewood, WA; Christ Lutheran Church and School, Port St Lucie, FL.; Qualifications for office: Participated in homeschooling three children, parochial school startup in Oregon with service as teacher and principal, service as pastor at two churches with established parochial schools.

Rev. Paul Lange— Age: 59; Home Congregation: Holy Trinity – Oconomowoc (Okauchee), Wisconsin; Years in the ELS: 13; Education and Vocation: Bachelor of Science in Education - Dr. Martin Luther College – New Ulm, MN, 1988; Master of Divinity – Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary – Mankato, MN, 2014; Fifth & Sixth Grade Teacher – Centennial Lutheran Church and School (WELS) – Milwaukee, WI, 1988-1993; Sixth – Eighth Grade Teacher, Principal – St. John’s Lutheran Church & School (WELS) – Neillsville, WI, 1993-2002; Staff Minister (Children’s Ministries, School, Evangelism & Outreach, Adult Education) – St. John’s Lutheran Church (WELS) – Burlington, WI, 2002-2009; Pastor – Abiding Word Lutheran Church (ELS) – Bowling Green, OH), 2014 -2021; Pastor – Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (ELS) -Oconomowoc, WI), 2021 – current. Qualifications for office: Have served as teacher and principal in Lutheran elementary schools. Have served as a pastor of a congregation with a preschool and elementary school.



## BOARD ON APOLOGETICS

2 positions: 1 clergy or lay, 1 lay

2025  
Dr. Doyle Holbird  
Mr. Allen Quist

2026  
Rev. Shawn Stafford  
Mr. Donald Kleman

2027  
Rev. Peter Heyn  
*Advisory: president*

### *Clergy or Lay (3-year):*

Rev. Dr. Doyle Holbird\*— Age: 66; Home Congregation: Peace, North Mankato; Years in the ELS: 17; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 1 term; Education and Vocation: Ph.D. Professor at Bethany Lutheran College; Qualifications for office: An interest in apologetics.

Mr. Michael Mahnke— Age: 65; Home Congregation: Holy Cross Lutheran, Madison, WI; Years in the ELS: 32; Education and Vocation: BA (Double major: German Literature/Theatre & Drama), University of Wisconsin-Madison; Course work toward MS (Christian Studies), Liberty University; Honor Graduate (German), Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center; Owner Emeritus & Consultant, Roundhouse Marketing Services; Qualifications for office: Chair/Member, Holy Cross Lutheran Board of Elders (20+ years); Congregation President, Holy Cross Lutheran; Completed select course work at Liberty University – Greek Language Tools, Introduction to Hermeneutics; Former U.S. Army Officer – Captain, Military Intelligence branch; Local Advocate – Lutheran Military Support Group; Have studied and continue to refer to the following works: The Proper Distinction Between Law & Gospel (Dr. C.F.W. Walther); Christian Dogmatics/ Christliche Dogmatik (Franz Pieper); Taegliches Handbuch (Johann Friedrich Starck)

Rev. Paul Webber— Age: 38; Home Congregation: Concordia, Eau Claire; Years in the ELS: 37 as member, 11 as pastor; Education and Vocation: B.A. History, Bethany College 2009; M.Div, Bethany Seminary 2013; S.T.M., Institute of Lutheran Theology 2023; Qualifications for office: One of the focuses of my postgraduate studies was on apologetics, especially the relationship between science and the scriptures, and the relationship between the scriptures and confessional subscription. I served as a pastor in Utah for 9 years, and was blessed to catechize many adult converts to Christianity.

### *Lay (3-year):*

Mr. Allen Quist\*—Age: 80; Home Congregation: Norseland; Years in the ELS: 77; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 3; Education and Vocation: MS Mankato State University, BD Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, researcher and writer; Qualifications for office: Have written and published 5 books on apologetics.

Mr. Dan Maas—Age: 74; Home Congregation: Mt. Olive Lutheran Church Mankato, MN; Years in the ELS: 54 yrs.; Education: Martin Luther Academy New Ulm, Mn. 1964-1968; Northwestern College Watertown, Wisc. 1968-1969; Bethany Lutheran College Mankato, Mn. 1969-1970; Mankato State College Mankato, Mn. 1970-1973 B.S. Biology; Hennepin County General Hospital Minneapolis, Mn. 1973-1974; B.S. Medical Technology MT (ASCP); Vocation: Medical Technologist 1974-2020 Retired in 2020; Qualifications for office: Church related service: Mt. Olive Luth. Church; Board of Directors; Board of Deacons; Evangelism Committee; Personal Interest in & regular attendance at events sponsored by The Center For Apologetics And Worldviews ELS

## BOARD FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE

1 position: 1 lay

2025  
Mr. Robert Reid

2026  
Mr. Kirk Campbell  
Rev. James Kassera

2027  
Mr. Dennis Behr  
Rev. Erich Hoef

### *Lay (3-year)*

Mr. Robert Reid\*— Home Congregation: Norwegian Grove, Gaylord MN; Years in the ELS: many; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 1; Education and Vocation: Graduated high school, then trained as Air Force jet engine mechanic. Tool and die training at Mankato community college. Worked as a toolmaker. Qualifications for office: Veteran. Served during Vietnam-era in Air Force. Liaison for LMSG. Member of Honor Guard. Past post commander for American Legion. Incumbent to office.

Mr. James Bina— Age 77; Home Congregation: King of Grace, Golden Valley MN; Years in the ELS/WELS: 54 years; Education and Vocation: University of Minnesota, 1970, B.S. in History; American Institute of Property & Liability Underwriters (C.P.C.U.), 1975; Property & Casualty insurance broker, 1970–2017; Principle, President Horizon Agency, Inc., 1982–2006; Retired 2017. Qualifications for office: Past director of Trustees at King of Grace Lutheran Church—5 years; Director Wunderlich-Malec Engineering, Inc.—2018 to present; Familiarity with property & casualty insurance (but not life or health ins.).

## COMMITTEE ON WORSHIP

1 position: 1 clergy

2025

Rev. Peter Faugstad

2026

Mr. John Baumann  
Rev. Mark DeGarmeaux

2027

Rev. James Braun  
Dr. Eric Harstad

### *Clergy (3-year):*

Rev. Peter Faugstad\*— Age: 43; Home Congregation: Saude (rural Lawler, IA), Jerico (rural New Hampton, IA), Redeemer (New Hampton, IA); Years in the ELS: ordained in 2009, accepted as permanent member in 2010; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 3 terms; Education and Vocation: Graduate of Bethany Lutheran College (2005) and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary (2009); Pastor at Parkland Lutheran Church, Tacoma, WA (2009-2016); Pastor at Saude, Jerico, and Redeemer Lutheran Churches (2016-present); Qualifications for office: As chairman of Committee on Worship oversaw the digital reproduction and reprinting of the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* in 2017 and the addition of many worship resources to the synod website; currently overseeing work on an ELH Supplement and an ELH Altar Book.

Rev. Timothy Buelow— Age: 64; Home Congregation: Our Saviour Lutheran, Lake Havasu City; Years in the ELS: 16; Education and Vocation: Northwestern College, Watertown, WI, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, Biblicum Bible Institute, Sweden, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Pastor at Our Saviour, LHC; Qualifications for office: Have led worship for 37 years from TLH, LW82, CW93, ELH, CW21, German Hymnal of the Wisconsin Synod 1917, and the Hymnal of the Church of Sweden. Served as Michigan District Worship Coordinator for WELS. Prepared all worship for 2 CELC conventions (Gothenburg and Seoul). Presented twice at the National Conference on Worship, Music and the Arts for WELS. Taught the Theology and Practice of Worship to seminarians at Biblicum in Sweden. Served for 10 years on the Rites Committee of the WELS Hymnal Project for CW21. Translated with my wife Sara a number of hymns into Swedish and from Swedish into English. Published with my wife a Swedish Hymnal Supplement for the Lutheran Confessional Church of Sweden and helped start and consult for their worship and hymnal committee.

## COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNICATION

1 position: 1 clergy or lay

### *Elected Positions:*

2025

Mr. David Norris

2026

Mr. Philip Wels

### *Appointed Positions:*

2025

Rev. James Braun  
Mr. Lance Schwartz

### *Clergy or Lay (2-year):*

Mr. David Norris\*— Age: 54; Years in ELS: 34; Home congregation: Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Mankato, MN; Education & Vocation: B.F.A. Graphic Design, current Director of Visual Communication at BLC; Qualifications for Office: Over 24 years of experience in graphic design, photography, and working with web, social media, and video for Bethany Lutheran College in the Office of Institutional Communication. If incumbent, number of consecutive terms served: Served two terms.

Mr. Matthias Leyrer— Age: 36; Home Congregation: Mt. Olive; Years in the ELS: 15; Education and Vocation: B.A. Communications, Bethany Lutheran College; Qualifications for office: Decade plus in Communication related fields.

## EQUALIZATION COMMITTEE

1 position: 1 lay

2025

Mr. William Anderson

2026

Mr. Shaun Grabow

2027

Rev. Roger Holtz

### *Lay (3-year):*

Mr. Seth Ferkenstad— Age: 37; Home Congregation: Mt Olive Lutheran Church, Mankato MN; Years in the ELS: 37; Education and Vocation: Bethany Lutheran College, BA in Administration, Mathematics Minor, 2009; Minnesota State University, BS in Accounting, 2010; Currently serving as VP of Finance for Storm Equipment; Qualifications for office: Licensed CPA in state of MN since 2012 (spent 7 years in public accounting as a manager performing audits, business tax returns, personal tax returns, payroll, Research and Development tax credit calculations, and more); Entire professional career (15 years) has been spent in finance and accounting; Proficient in Microsoft suite of products (Word, Excel, Powerpoint, etc.); Proficient in Quickbooks; Served for a few years (3 I think) as treasurer at Norseland Lutheran Church; Have attended a handful of Synod Conventions serving as a page; Have attended a handful of Synod Conventions as a delegate; Currently serving (this is year 6) as Treasurer for the Mankato Area Foundation and chairman of the Board of Finance; Currently

serving (this is year 4) on Mt Olive's Board of Education with a focus as a liaison between that board the Board of Budget and Finance

## PLANNING AND COORDINATING COMMITTEE

1 position: 1 lay

Officers of the synod  
Chairman of:  
Board of Regents  
Doctrine Committee  
Board for Home Outreach  
Board for World Outreach  
Board for Youth Outreach  
Board for Lutheran Schools  
Board for Christian Service  
Committee on Worship

2025

Mr. Ronald Younge

2026

Mr. Bill Bohning

2027

Mr. Steve Anderson

### *Lay (3-year):*

Mr. Ronald Younge\*—Age: 82; Home Congregation: Mount Olive Lutheran Church; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: I believe 3; Education and Vocation: Masters of Science 43 years at BLC 21 as Vice President for Academic Affairs; Qualifications for Office: Experience in Educational Administration, Life-long member of ELS

Mr. Kermit Traska— Age: 76; Home Congregation: Holy Cross; Years in the ELS: 42; Education and Vocation: BS Science and Natural Resources UW-Stevens Point 1970; taught high school Biology for three years; Wisconsin State Park program for 28 years working up from park superintendent, to district state park supervisor and then Section Chief for State Park Operations. Thoughts of Faith Board of Directors 1995 to 2002 and Administrator 2002 to 2009. Qualifications for office: 1982 to 2000 member Faith Lutheran Church Oregon, WI serving as Congregation President from 1992 to 1998. Year 2000 to present member of Holy Cross Lutheran Church Madison, WI serving six years as elder and now four years on Stewardship and Finance Committee. Have previously served two terms on the ELS Planning and Coordinating Committee and one term on the ELS Board of Appeals. Since 2000 have attended and participated in many of the ELS Conventions.

## BOARD OF APPEALS

6 positions: 4 clergy, 2 lay

2025

Rev. Mark Bartels  
Rev. Mark Faugstad  
Rev. Aaron Ferkenstad  
Rev. Samuel Gullixson  
Mr. Dan Johnson  
Mr. Paul Tweit

2026

Mr. Karl Bloedel  
Rev. Tom Heyn\*  
Mr. Andrew Overn  
Mr. Neil Shaffer  
Rev. Joshua Skogen\*  
Rev. Steve Sparley\*

2027

Rev. Timothy Erickson\*  
Rev. Peter Faugstad\*  
Dr. Joshua Mears\*  
Mr. Jeremy Merseth  
Rev. Alex Ring\*  
Rev. Bernt Tweit

### *Clergy (3-year):*

Rev. Mark Bartels\*—Age: 65; Home Congregation: Holy Cross, Madison WI; Years in the ELS: 37; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 1; Education and Vocation: Pastor in the ELS; Qualifications for office: 37 years of pastoral ministry.

Rev. Nicholas Proksch—Age: 40; Home Congregation: Mt. Olive, Mankato, MN; Years in the ELS: as a pastor, 15 years; Education and Vocation: Professor of New Testament, Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

### *Clergy (3-year):*

Rev. Mark Faugstad\*— Age: 60; Home Congregation: Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, Port St. Lucie FL; Years in the ELS: 56; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 1; Education and Vocation: BA Bethany Lutheran College, M Div. Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary; Qualifications for office: Served as pastor of Lengby Lutheran Parish 4 years. Served as teacher and assistant pastor at Christ Ev. Lutheran Church and School 10 years. Previously Circuit Visitor alternate and now Circuit Visitor for Circuit 1.

Rev. Erwin Ekhoft— Age: 74; Home Congregation: King of Grace, Golden Valley, Minnesota; Years in the ELS: 49; Education and Vocation: Liberal Arts from Northwestern College, Bethany Seminary Graduate in 1976, retired clergy since 2020.; Qualifications for office: Presently serving on the Board of Regents as chair of the Finance and Audit Committee, member of the Advancement Committee, member of the Investment Committee, member of the Regents-Trustee subcommittee, member of the President's Advisory Committee for Seminary and College, member of the Seminary Committee; chaired the Presidential Search Committee. Served on various boards and committees throughout the synod while I was in the active ministry.

***Clergy (3-year):***

Rev. Aaron Ferkenstad\*— Age: 45; Home Congregation: King of Grace; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 1; Education and Vocation: B.A. in Liberal Arts from BLC; M.Div from BLTS. Parish pastor. Qualifications for office: Practiced through pastoral ministry in the ability to hear two sides of a story and in distilling a main point of contention.

Rev. Larry Wentzlaff— Age: 69; Home Congregation: Peace Eagle Lake; Years in the ELS: 30; Education and Vocation: M- Div Pastor (retired).

***Clergy (3-year):***

Rev. Samuel Gullixson\*— Age: 44; Congregation: Parkland Evangelical Lutheran Church and School, Tacoma, WA; Years in the Ministry: 14; Year joined ELS (as a pastor): 2010; Synod positions held in the past: Circuit 11 Alt. Visitor, BHO since 2022, Board of Appeals; If incumbent, number of consecutive terms served: 1. Other qualifications (relevant education, work, experience): Have served at both a small rural parish and a larger urban parish with the various situations that arise in both. My congregation has been in a partnership with the BHO and so have experience on both sides of working with the BHO.

Rev. Timothy Zenda— Age: 55; Home Congregation: Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Princeton, MN; Years in the ELS: 28; Education and Vocation: Tim Zenda graduated from Northwestern College (WELS) on May 28, 1994, with a Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree. He attended Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary and graduated on June 21, 1998, with a Master of Divinity degree. He was ordained and installed at Our Savior's Lutheran Church on July 12, 1998, where he continues to serve as pastor to this day. He was married to Sue (Neyhart) on June 25, 1994, and they have three adult children. He served for a number of years as the supervising pastor of Princeton Evangelical Lutheran School. Qualifications for office: His years of experience in the parish and supervising a CDS.

***Lay (3-year):***

Mr. Dan Johnson\*— Age: 56; Home Congregation: Norseland Lutheran Church; Years in the ELS: 45; If the incumbent, number of consecutive terms in current office: 1 term in appeals; Education and Vocation: attended seminary for 1.5 years. Groundskeeper; Qualifications for office: Having a large family has helped me deal with many personalities and different points of view.

Mr. Joe Ringen— Age: 35; Years in ELS: 35; Home congregation: King of Grace Lutheran Church, Golden Valley, MN; Education & Vocation: Education: Bachelor of Arts, Music – Bethany Lutheran College '12; Master of Business Administration, Management – Strayer University '18; Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter (CPCU) – The Institutes '23; Occupation: Claims Support Manager – Western National Mutual Insurance, Edina MN; Qualifications for Office: Director – Board of Youth, King of Grace (Current). As Director of my congregations Board of Youth, I have the opportunity to be on my church council and contribute in the decision-making process of my church. As Claims Support Manager in my career, I am tasked with managing a team of employees, which carries with it the duty of using judgment while considering company procedures when faced with disciplinary actions of my employees. As a lifelong member of the ELS, as well as an alumnus of Bethany Lutheran College, I have had the opportunity to learn the doctrine of our synod from many wise and learned people.

***Lay (3-year):***

Mr. Paul Tweit\*—Age: 83; Home Congregation: Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Mankato MN; Years in the ELS: Lifetime; If the incumbent number of consecutive terms in current office: One; Education and Vocation: Retired; Qualification for office: Fair and open minded.

Mr. Nathan Rovey— Age: 55. Home Congregation: Our Saviour, Lake Havasu City, AZ. Years in ELS: 41. Education & Vocation: Education: B.S. in Agronomy with Agricultural Business Curriculum University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ. Self-employed at Rolanco Farms. Our family has produced cotton, alfalfa, small grains, and various vegetable on 3500 acres of irrigated farmland since 1968. Qualifications for Office: Has served his congregational as an Elder; Secretary; President; School Board Member; School Board Chair; ELS Board for Lutheran Schools. Has also served on various federal, state, university and private boards and committees. Incumbent: 3 terms.

# A PRIMER ON PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

The synod conducts its business on the basis of “Parliamentary procedure” or “Roberts Rules of Order,” a traditional set of rules for various kinds of assemblies. The objectives of this procedure are to insure the smooth conduct of business and protect the rights of both the majority and the minority; **the majority rules and the minority has a right to be heard.**

Most procedures are very simple.

- For a decision to come before the assembly, it must be in the form of a motion. This may come from a committee (a committee report is a seconded motion) or a member of the assembly.
- No individual can make a motion unless recognized by the chair. The member will ordinarily make the motion at the microphone.
- In order for the motion to be considered it must be supported (seconded) by one other member of the assembly. In our proceedings, we permit the second to be called from the floor. Following the second, the chair calls for discussion. Only a few motions are not debatable.
- When the list of speakers is exhausted, or the assembly terminates discussion, the chair calls for a vote.
- In the course of discussion of a motion, any member of the assembly can propose an amendment. If seconded, the assembly decides whether or not to accept the amendment. If it is accepted, the discussion is on the amended motion. If the amendment is defeated, the discussion returns to a discussion of the main motion (as it was before amended).
- In the discussion of any motion, the speaker, after being recognized by the chair, is expected to state first whether he favors or opposes the motion before making his speech.
- Speakers are expected to address the chairman, not the assembly or any individual in the assembly.

*As the convention conducts its business, two procedures have in the past proved prone to misunderstanding and confusion. In the interest of a common understanding and efficiency, proper procedure for each of these situations is laid out below.*

## ENDING DEBATE (“CALLING THE QUESTION”)

Ideally, everyone who wishes to speak to an issue has the opportunity to do so, and the chair should try to see that this is the case. Sometimes, when debate has gone on for a while and speakers seem to be repeating points already made, the assembly can bring debate to a close and move to a vote even though there is still a list of speakers who want the floor. *Ending debate should be a rare occurrence, and always done in an orderly fashion.*

First, note that it is not orderly for a member of the assembly to shout “Question” in an attempt to end debate. The Chair will not recognize such an action as a motion to end debate. It is only a signal that some in the assembly are getting impatient. The Chair may ask, “Are there any more speakers?” If there are, they should be given their opportunity to speak, even if someone shouted “Question.”

*Here is the proper way to end debate before all speakers who wish to speak have had a chance to do so.*

*Discussion on “resolution x” has gone on a long time, and speakers are starting to be repetitive.*

Member who wishes to end debate is recognized by Chair (might involve waiting a turn on the speaker list).

Member says, **“I move to end debate.”**

*[The member may not give a speech and then move to end debate. This must be the only thing the member says.]*

*[The member may use traditional language: “I move the previous question.” Saying “I call the question” is understood, although it is not proper parliamentary language. Saying “I move to end debate” is most clear.]*

Anyone in the assembly may **second** the motion.

**Chair: “It is moved and seconded that we end debate on this question and vote immediately. This motion cannot be discussed and requires a two-thirds majority to pass. A “yes” vote means you wish to end the debate and vote on [resolution x.] A “no” vote means that you want debate on [resolution x] to continue. All in favor of ending debate and voting immediately please raise your hand. (tellers count) Those opposed to ending debate and voting immediately raise your hand. (tellers count)”**

NOTE: this is NOT a vote on [resolution x], but only a decision whether or not to vote immediately on [resolution x] with no more debate.

If the motion passes, the Chair immediately presents [resolution x] for a vote. If the motion fails, speakers may continue to discuss [resolution x].

## AMENDMENT BY REPLACEMENT (“SUBSTITUTE MOTIONS”)

Removing a motion from the floor by replacing it with an entirely new motion is a procedure which, while permissible, should be used only rarely and with great care for the following reasons:

- It easily becomes a confusing procedure, and confusion leads to frustration and unhappiness in the assembly.
- It subverts due process, since the motion on the floor has gone through examination, discussion and approval by a floor committee, while the substitute has not.
- The assembly has the motion on the floor before them in print, while often the proposed substitute is only read orally.
- Often a proposed substitute motion merely reverses the intent of the motion on the floor. Rather than proposing a substitute motion, the same effect can be achieved more easily and with less confusion by simply voting down the motion on the floor. [In cases like this, the Chair has the right to rule the proposed substitute motion out of order.]

For these reasons, “substitute motions” should be discouraged. It is more fair, clear, and straightforward to oppose a motion by simply speaking and voting against it, instead of by trying to substitute another motion for it.

*If a “substitute motion” is proposed, the following is the procedure:*

The proposed new motion should be carefully crafted in advance by its supporters. Nothing is more confusing than trying to adjust the wording of a proposed substitute motion on the convention floor before it is even officially before the assembly.

The member who wishes to propose the substitute motion is recognized by Chair (might involve waiting a turn on the speaker list).

The member says, “**I move that we replace the motion before us with the following motion.**” He then distributes printed copies of the proposed substitute motion, and reads it.

[This motion means, “**I move that we discard the motion we have been discussing, and instead discuss the new motion that I am presenting.**”]

Anyone in the assembly may **second** the motion.

NOTE that making the motion to substitute **DOES NOT place the substitute before the assembly for discussion**. The assembly must first decide by vote whether or not it wishes to stop discussing the motion on the floor, and instead start discussing the proposed substitute. That is to say, only if the motion to replace is passed is the proposed substitute motion before the assembly for discussion.

Chair: “**It has been moved and seconded that we discard [resolution x, the one currently on the floor] and instead discuss [the proposed substitute]. A “yes” vote means we will stop discussing [resolution x] and instead start discussing [the proposed substitute]. A “no” vote means we will continue discussing [resolution x]. Is there any discussion?**”

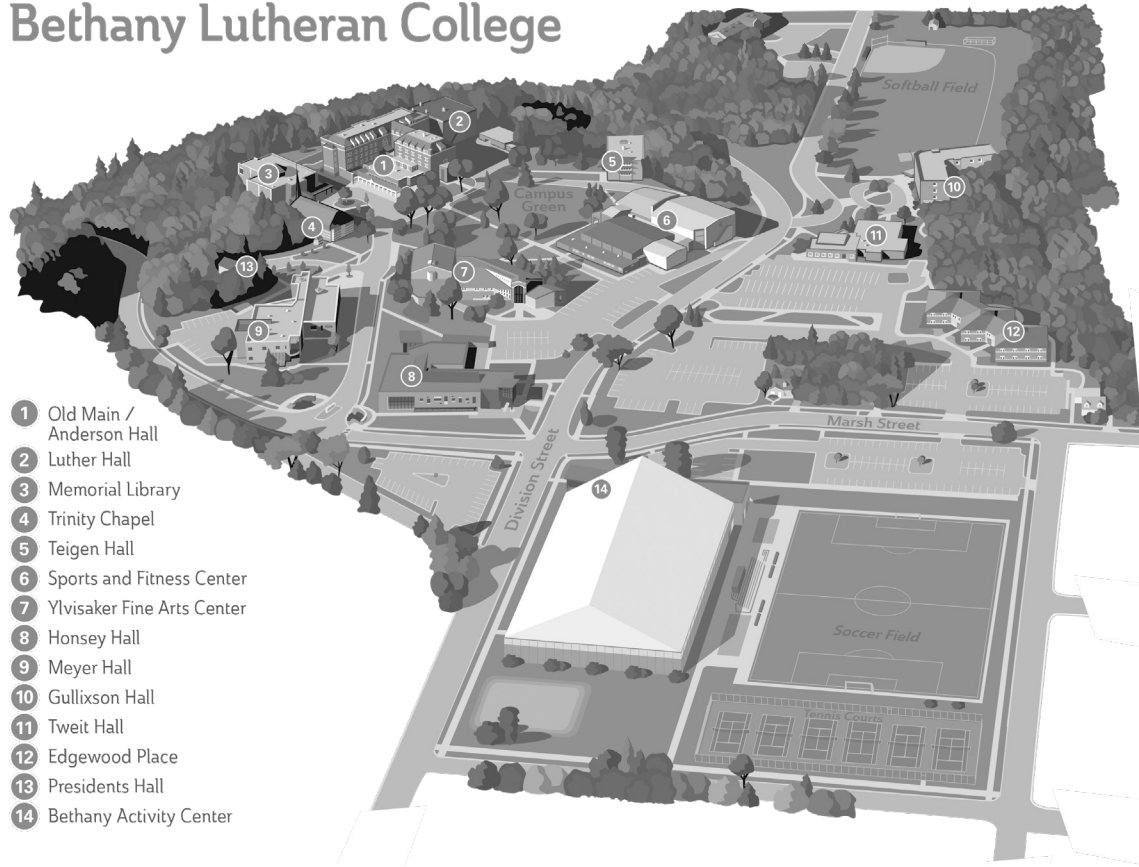
NOTE that discussion at this point **must be confined to whether or not to stop speaking on the current issue and instead start speaking about the proposed substitute**. There should be **NO DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE** at this point, because the assembly has not yet agreed to place it on the floor. While this might be a difficult distinction to maintain, the Chair must try hard to maintain it. The proposed substitute motion should not be discussed before the assembly decides by its vote to discuss it.

When discussion ends, the Chair says, “**We are ready to vote on the motion to replace the motion on the floor. A majority vote is needed to pass this motion. All in favor of discussing [the proposed substitute] say aye. All in favor of continuing to discuss [resolution x] say no.**”

If the motion passes, the item currently under discussion [resolution x] disappears, and instead the substitute is on the floor for discussion and an eventual vote. NOTE that successfully substituting one motion for another does not mean the proposed substitute motion is passed. It is now only before the assembly for discussion. It must be passed by a separate vote.

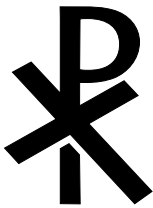


# Bethany Lutheran College



- 1 Old Main / Anderson Hall
- 2 Luther Hall
- 3 Memorial Library
- 4 Trinity Chapel
- 5 Teigen Hall
- 6 Sports and Fitness Center
- 7 Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center
- 8 Honsey Hall
- 9 Meyer Hall
- 10 Gullixson Hall
- 11 Tweit Hall
- 12 Edgewood Place
- 13 Presidents Hall
- 14 Bethany Activity Center

✂ Duplicate or Cut



## DELEGATE'S CREDENTIALS

*(Please type or print clearly)*

Delegates are to present these credentials, in person, to the Credentials Committee upon arrival at the convention (**do not mail in advance**):

This is to certify that: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Delegate Name

has been elected by \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Congregation  
 Church Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Church City & State

to serve as its representative at the Annual Convention of the *Evangelical Lutheran Synod*, to be held to June 15–19, 2025 in Mankato, Minnesota, at Bethany Lutheran College

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Secretary of the congregation's voters' assembly

Check one of the following:

- The above delegate has been assigned to a committee in the *Book of Reports and Memorials*.
- The above delegate has not been assigned to a committee in the *Book of Reports and Memorials*.