

President's Newsletter



Office of the President

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ELS Website

The ELS website has been redesigned and updated. The updated site offers a few new features, such as the option of audio on our Daily Devotions. Finding a church has also been made easier for smartphones. We welcome you to explore the site at www.els.org

Statistical Reporting

Statistical reports for 2022 are due February 15. You can complete the reporting form online: els.org/statistics. **Board and committee secretaries** also are reminded that any corrections or additions to the "Addresses of Board and Committee Members" as it is printed in the *Synod Report* also should be submitted at this time.

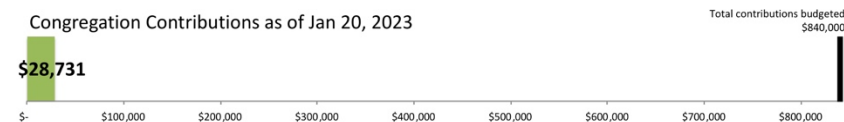
Reminder from the Planning and Coordinating Committee

In your congregational planning for 2023 consider this recommendation from the 2022 *Synod Report*, p. 124:

1. Every congregation of the synod is encouraged to have at least one annual Synod Mission Festival Service to increase awareness of the work of the synod and the need of reaching the lost with Jesus and His love. Such services can have a special theme such as world outreach, home outreach, synod work, etc.
2. Every congregation of the synod is encouraged to conduct a "Bethany Sunday" throughout the year promoting the close connection between every congregation and school and the "One Thing Needful" at Bethany Lutheran College.

Upcoming Events

- February 3 – Doctrine Committee
- February 7 – Board for Christian Service
- February 7 – Committee for Archives and History
- February 9 – Board of Trustees
- February 10 – Synod Review Committee
- February 13–14 – Board of Regents
- February 15 – Planning & Coordinating Committee
- February 16–17 – Board for Home Outreach
- February 22 – Ash Wednesday
- April 1 – BORAM reports due



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February 2023

Dear Members and Friends of the ELS:

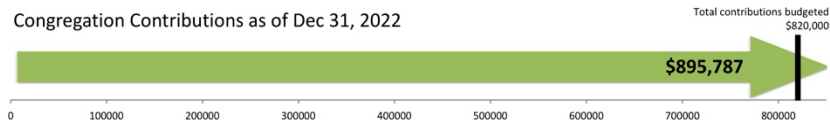
February 22 is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. You may wish to consider what took place the day before Palm Sunday when Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus' feet (Jn. 12:1–8). Jesus tells us that she did this in preparation of Jesus' burial. It was shortly before this when her brother Lazarus was in his tomb for four days, but Jesus raised him to life. So, even though Judas and the other disciples tried to shame her for this act, she remained resolute in her proper worship of her Savior, the Lord of Life, who came to die in her place. May your Lenten worship be marked by such humble faith. As always: there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

O Lord Jesus Christ, our merciful Savior, grant, we humbly ask You, that our souls may be profited by devout meditation on Your holy Passion. Fill our hearts with Your Holy Spirit, that, like Mary of Bethany, we may with a humble and contrite heart seek and find comfort in Your love, and present to You as an acceptable offering the willing service of our lives, renouncing the world, and, following Your footsteps, bearing patiently all our crosses. Bless us through the remembrance of Your Passion, for Your holy name's sake, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, now and forever. Amen. (*The Lutheran Liturgy, companion altar book for The Lutheran Hymnal, p. 106*)

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2022 ELS Budget

By God's grace through His generous people, we surpassed the 2022 goal for congregational giving of \$820K by \$75K! This excess of the budgeted income was once again designated in 2022 to be given to our Bethany Lutheran College for its operating budgetary needs. In part, this "overage" was a result of a \$57K gift by Hope Lutheran Church, Portage, Indiana, which closed its doors in early 2022. The members of Hope Lutheran recognized that they were unable to give much in previous years to our joint work in the ELS. At the sad time of its closure, the congregation desired to contribute to this important work together. In addition to this, Hope members voted to support both ELS home and world missions with the monetary assets from its remaining properties for Gospel support. As we continue to seek to do the will of our Lord in our work through the ELS, we trust He will provide as He has in the past. Our new challenge for the 2023 budget is a \$840K goal in congregational giving.



Our Bethany Lutheran College

A large scale renovation of Bethany's Luther Hall (the original academic building connected to Old Main) has been completed. Two floors of Luther now are home to Bethany's Career Development Office, Student Health Services, International Student Offices, The Ada Stokes Writing Center, the Academic Resource Center, and a student fitness facility and lounge. The renovation brings all of Bethany's student service departments now under one roof in a central location.

Progress continues to be made on the new Bethany Activity Center. This new multi-purpose recreational building houses a 200 meter track, jumping and vaulting areas, and an infield with artificial turf. There will also be workout facilities, locker rooms, and a large multipurpose room that can be used for events and gatherings.

These construction projects, blessings from our Lord, have been supported by many ELS churches and members. Thank you for helping Bethany serve students in a college setting rooted in the values of Christianity and Confessional Lutheran doctrine. Additional funding is still needed to bring the Activity Center project along to completion. To learn more visit the Building Bethany webpage at blc.edu/buildingbethany or call the college's Advancement Office at 800-944-3066.

The ELS Assignment Committee Meets April 21

This spring we should have three candidates of theology from Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary to be placed in their first call on May 10. We should also have one vicar to be placed under the supervision of one of our pastors in the parish for the coming school year. If there are ELS congregations seeking either a candidate or a vicar, please submit requests soon (deadline Feb. 28). A candidate request should be sent to the office of the synod president (a blank call with the usual supporting documents including cover letter, salary and benefits package—at least according to the home missionary scale see *Synod Report 2022*, Res. #3, p. 95, should all be sent with a formal request from your calling body). A vicar request should be sent to the office of the BLTS president.

Visitations

The ELS Circuit Visitors were given three assignments by the synod in the strategic plan "Tell of Jesus and His Love." The first two have been accomplished ahead of time: providing our pastors a sermon critique form to be used at conferences (and promote their use in our various circuits) and producing a "Definition of Excellence in Preaching and Teaching" (this was sent out to the pastors). The third is that the CVs (and ACVs) conduct at least one visitation at every ELS congregation by 2025. Such visitations have been a critical part of the health of the Church since the time of the Reformation, however individual congregations along with their pastors need to request this from their respective Circuit Visitor. Please consider requesting this fraternally helpful visitation.

Installation at Carthage, Missouri



L to R: Pastors Theodore Gullixson, Edward Lehmann, Charles Huebner, Daniel McQuality, Micah Ernst, Aaron Schumann, and Justin Hieb.