

# President's Newsletter



Office of the President

Glenn R. Obenberger

6 Browns Court Mankato, Minnesota 56001  
507-344-7356 glenn.obenberger@blc.edu

March 2023

## Dear Members and Friends of the ELS:

My childhood hero was Davy, Davy Crockett. Therefore, March 6th has always been a notable day for me to "Remember the Alamo!" Those of you from Texas also commemorate this event since it was a battle that in part bought time for General Sam Houston to muster his army for the eventual showdown at San Jacinto against the weakened army of General Santa Anna.

Christians in the United States today have been observing an ongoing assault upon the freedoms to practice our religion as directed by our Lord. Many of our fellow citizens are becoming increasingly intolerant of the Christian Church for its perceived bigotry. We serve a God who loves and saves all people. Our culture once generally agreed that many sins condemned in the Bible were harmful to our society, but now these vices have been rebranded as virtues and are demanded never to be condemned. The preaching of salvation from all such sins is offensive to many of our neighbors in our country, with the result that this kind of talk is unwelcome and even, in some cases, forbidden.

Our general, so to speak, against the enemies of the Church—sin, death and hell—is the King of kings Christ Jesus, who has promised the Church will always be sustained against all Her enemies. Revelation speaks of the Church in the end as two witnesses, small and appearing dead, but yet alive. "Remember Jerusalem!"—Calvary and the empty tomb—is our battle cry until Jesus returns. The enemies of the human race have been defeated in Him. Thus we have forgiveness, life and salvation in His name and continue to declare it to our neighbors.

Glenn R. Obenberger



Prior to their quarterly meeting, the Board of Trustees held a retirement dinner for Keith Wiederhoeft on February 8. Pictured are President Glenn Obenberger, Joni Wiederhoeft, Keith Wiederhoeft, Vice President Michael Smith, and Secretary Craig Ferkenstad.

## Board and Committee Reports

The deadline for items for publication in the 2023 *Book of Reports and Memorials* is April 1. Completed reports are to be mailed to the synod's secretary. Requests for presentation time during the synod convention program must be directed to the president of the synod prior to April 15. **Board and committee secretaries** are reminded that any corrections or additions to the "Addresses of Board and Committee Members" which is printed in the *Synod Report* also should be submitted at this time. We thank the many congregations that have completed their statistical reporting for 2022. If you have not already reported, you can complete the statistical reporting form online: [els.org/statistics/](https://els.org/statistics/)

## Upcoming Events

April 1 – BORAM reports due



To receive this newsletter directly to your email visit [els.org/subscribe](https://els.org/subscribe)

## Our Bethany Lutheran College

Kevin (Xu) Watchman, a freshman at Bethany Lutheran College (BLC) from China, was confirmed in Bethany's Trinity Chapel on January 13, 2023. Participating in Kevin's confirmation were Mount Olive Lutheran (Mankato) Pastor Luke Ulrich, Bethany Seminary President Tim Hartwig, and Reverend Don Moldstad, Bethany's Director of Campus Spiritual Life (Chaplain). Upon his confirmation, Kevin joined Mount Olive Lutheran Church (ELS) where he had been attending since beginning at Bethany. Kevin learned of BLC, and its special, Christian higher educational mission, from a Bethany alumna from China. We wish God's blessing on Kevin, and all of the BLC students who've learned of God's plan for salvation for all people while attending, and pray their faith is nourished and strengthened during their time at our college.



## Could Your Congregation Benefit From Developing a VTO?

In January, Christ Lutheran Church & School in Port Saint Lucie, Florida had three days of training from **Grace In Action** to develop a comprehensive strategic plan. 6-year, 3-year, 1-year and 90-day goals were developed into a **VTO (Vision Traction Organizer)** for the teachers, pastors and leaders to use at monthly meetings. Everyone involved was pleased with the training and excited for the plan.



Could your congregation benefit from developing a VTO? Could it be a tool that aids your congregation in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus? It has been observed that congregations that have undergone this training have appreciated having a workable plan to overcome challenges and take hold of opportunities, seen increased participation from members, and have enjoyed measurable results.

If you would like more information about this process, please contact the Evangelism and Missions Counselor, Rev. Brad Kerkow at [brad.kerkow@blc.edu](mailto:brad.kerkow@blc.edu).

## Installation

On Sunday afternoon, January 29, 2023, members and friends of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Scottsdale, Arizona, gathered for a 4:00 p.m. festival service for the installation of Redeemer's new full-time pastor, Rev. Aaron J. Hamilton, and to welcome him and his family to the Valley.

Rev. Jesse Jacobsen from Lakewood, Washington, preached the sermon for the occasion, and Rev. Timothy Buelow, circuit visitor and pastor at Our Saviour's, Lake Havasu, performed the Rite of Installation.

It was a joyous day worshiping with our brothers and sisters throughout the Valley, with many pastors from the ELS and WELS participating, and 85 worshipers in attendance. A catered meal hosted by Redeemer's Ladies Guild was served after the service. Pastor Hamilton's ministry now officially begins in Arizona. Thanks be to God for all His blessings!

Left to Right: Allen Schroeder (WELS), James Ruppel, Tom Naumann (WELS), Jon Buchholz (WELS), Timothy Buelow, Aaron Hamilton, Jesse Jacobsen, Noah Willitz (WELS), John Ehlers (WELS), Ross Else (WELS), David Clark (WELS)

