

ELS Newsletter

The 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). We rejoice that we have been united by our Lord with these brothers and sisters in Christ and look forward to working together offering each other fraternal support. Please pray for them as they faithfully seek to serve the Lord in their part of the world, while enduring persecution at the hands of the heterodox church body from which they have separated. Prof. Thomas Nass (WELS), the international Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference president, has been notified of this action and the doctrinal statement and constitution of the ELDK was sent to him for future reference and possible ELS sponsorship into the CELC. The Due Diligence Panel which brought the recommendation for this action was dismissed with thanks. An advisory ELS-ELDK Liaison Committee (EELC) has been appointed to establish our relationship for this coming year: Revs. James Braun (chair), David Jay Webber (primary liaison), Karl Anderson, Sean Scheele and Mr. Chris Hoffman.

Prayer for Missions

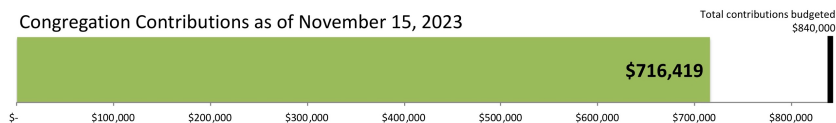
Heavenly Father, bless the proclamation of your Word through the pastors in the Lutheran Mission of Salvation-India. May your people be strengthened and edified and the pure Gospel be shared with many among the millions who live there. May the message of Jesus crucified to redeem lost sinners bring hope and comfort to the people of this nation. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Upcoming Events

December 25 – Christmas Day

January 4 – Missions Advancement Project Board of Directors

January 5 – Synod Review Committee



To receive this newsletter directly to your email visit els.org/subscribe



Evangelical Lutheran Synod
6 Browns Court
Mankato, Minnesota 56001
elsynod@blc.edu

December 2023

Dear Members and Friends of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod,

It was common, when we had gathered for our candlelight services on Christmas Eve at Parkland Lutheran Church, Tacoma, Washington, that the serenity of the evening was broken by the sound of emergency vehicle sirens. The church is located along a busy four-lane state highway, and speeding through it could be police responding to the scene of a crime or serious accident, an emergency medical issue in one of the nearby homes, or a fire caused by some holiday decorations. It was especially disturbing when the air horn of the fire truck blared in rapid succession—all speaking needed to pause until it passed.

It usually occurred to me in that contemplative setting that this was an audible reminder of why it was that God sent His Son to rescue us from this broken world corrupted by our sin. So, while it may seem to be a rude interruption, it helps us all the more to consider the reasons for the Son of God to enter our world. What we are recounting and celebrating in regard to our Savior's birth is underscored by this obvious ongoing need in all of our lives.

May all your Christmas observances help you to reflect on what great things God has done for you by sending His Son:

How silently, how silently That wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming, But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still, The dear Christ enters in.

ELH #137, v.3

In Jesus' name,
Glenn Obenberger

Anniversary

On Saturday, September 23, 2023, Trinity Lutheran Church, Brewster, Massachusetts, observed the 50th anniversary of its incorporation. The Reverend President Glenn Obenberger preached on 1 Peter 1:22–25 with the theme: “God’s Never-Ending Story Continues by His Life-Giving Word.” Former TLC pastor, the Reverend David Jay Webber, was the lector. The day was blessed with special music from the TLC choir and an orchestra, organized by former TLC pastor, the Reverend James Krikava, played as well. Valerie Hayes, great-granddaughter of the congregation’s founder, the Reverend Christian Moldstad, accompanied the service. Following, a catered dinner was served during which greetings were read from several pastors who had a TLC connection.



Our Bethany Lutheran College

The 2023 Minnesota District Lutheran Teachers’ Conference was held on the Bethany Lutheran College campus over fall break on October 19 and 20, 2023. The conference’s theme was Stand Firm With Joy (2 Cor. 1:20-22). Over 300 Lutheran teachers, ranging from early childhood through high school from both ELS and WELS schools attended various keynote and breakout sessions pertaining to their areas of interest. We pray that this conference was helpful to our Lutheran teachers to grow in their faith, and in their profession, so they may continue to teach children about their Savior, Jesus Christ.

Program Adjustments at Bethany Lutheran College

Just over a year ago, our Bethany Lutheran College Board of Regents asked the college administration to present them a sustainable financial plan for Bethany with annually balanced operating budgets for each of the next five years. This directive was also supported by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Board of Trustees and the 2023 ELS Convention delegates who resolved “that the Board of Regents take the actions necessary to ensure the continuing solvency of our college.” After a full study of enrollment trends and a financial analysis of each of the college’s academic and co and extra-curricular programs, Bethany has announced new program adjustments. Please read the entire message from President Gene Pfeifer at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/12hQpacOyVw4u2FPWj0nVohfkp15GZIRF/view?usp=sharing>.

ELS Military Monument Update

Most sections of the ELS military monument have been completed. But, there is room for hundreds more pavers. Pavers are granite stones 8” by 16” with four lines for information. Each paver tells a life story.

One man named on a paver served in 1865. Another person fought in the Spanish-American War. Many people are listed who fought in WW-I or WW-II in Europe or the Pacific. Others fought in the conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Some pavers list the major battles where people fought. Other stones are to remind people of those who were killed in action (KIA), missing in action (MIA), or were prisoners of war (POW). There were many who were wounded and received the Purple Heart metal or received other honors. Men and women of various ranks and from almost every branch of the armed services are included on current pavers.

How many more untold stories of veterans or active duty personnel could be remembered on future pavers? The cost is \$250 per paver, which helps to support upkeep of the monument. You may obtain order forms at els.org/monument or contact Rev. Ken Mellon at kenmellonj1@gmail.com.