

Last Year's Congregation Contributions

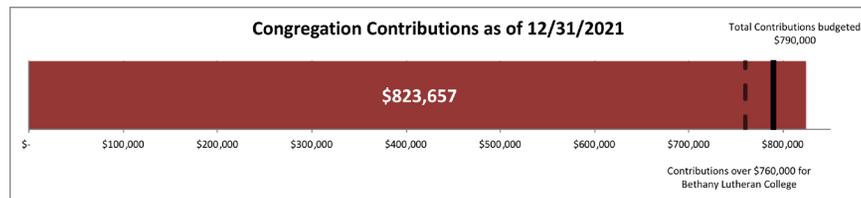
Our synod treasurer reports:

The results are in and the congregational synod offering record that was set in 2019 ... has been swapped with a new 2021 record of \$823,656.98. Congratulations! All glory be to God.

Indeed, God be praised for the generosity of His people. Your gifts have benefited the work of Bethany Lutheran College with an additional \$63,500+!

This is a tremendous blessing as operation deficits have been a challenge for Bethany Lutheran College in the recent past and likely will continue to be in the future. Our boards of regents and trustees, along with the administration of Bethany, will need to lead us to meet this challenge, so that our college will continue to thrive to God's glory and welfare of His kingdom. Pray for them that while keeping faithful to our Lord and His Word, new and innovative ways may be found to move beyond this recurrent threat.

In 2022 our synodical budget goal is taking another leap of \$30,000, going from \$790,000 to \$820,000. May God graciously work among us that we all continue to meet these shared goals with joy and by our prayers and generous gifts.



Ad Hoc Sunday School Committee

The president was directed by the 2021 convention to appoint an *ad hoc* committee concerning Sunday School to identify reasons for the decline in attendance and seek solutions and alternatives to provide a thorough biblical education among the children of ELS congregations. It met virtually on January 14 for their initial meeting. The chairman is Rev. Jeffrey Hendrix, other members are Revs. Patrick Ernst and Nate Abrahamson, Vicar Colin Anderson, Mr. John Moldstad and Dr. Ryan MacPherson. It will report to the 2022 convention.

Upcoming Events

February 3 – Committee for Archives and History
February 4 – Synod Review Committee
February 7–8 – ELS Board of Regents
February 9 – Planning & Coordinating Committee
February 10 – Board of Trustees
February 15 – Statistical reports due
February 24–25 – Board for Home Outreach
March 14–15 – Doctrine Committee

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President's Newsletter



Office of the President

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February 2022

Dear Members and Friends of the ELS:

Greetings to you in this blessed season of God made manifest in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation!

In these days in our flesh of the body have you become COVID weary? How could you not? Is there a light at the end of the tunnel?—"probably" and "no." Probably this virus and its variants will eventually wane in its virulency and severity, since this is the nature of all such outbreaks in history. Therefore, the restrictions that have even affected our houses of worship in different ways depending on our locations will also likely be lifted. For this we all continue to pray. But there is no light at the end of the tunnel in regard to disease and death in this broken world. Yet we have hope in this life because God came in the flesh to take on our illnesses and bear our diseases (cf. Mt. 8:17). We trust that Jesus came to rescue us from all such difficulties. We know we will enter the kingdom of God through much tribulation. But the suffering of this Holy One sent by God alone earns everlasting life without pain and sorrow for us. Encourage one another in these days of our sadness and struggles with the good news of deliverance in Christ Jesus our Lord.

O Savior, child of Mary,
Who felt our human woe;
O Savior, King of glory,
Who dost our weakness know:
Bring us at length we pray
To the bright courts of heaven,
And to the endless day.

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming, v. 4

In Jesus' name,

Glenn R. Obenberger

Yelm Decommissioning

After publication of the announcement of the Service of Deconsecration and Disposition of Our Redeemer in Yelm, Washington (announced for December 29), the date was moved back to January 9. Pres. Obenberger preached the sermon and Pastor Jesse Jacobsen conducted the Rite. Pictured below are the 1) the recessional with the various articles from the altar, pulpit, baptismal font, etc. and 2) the final Benediction after the church doors were ceremonially locked. We thank the Lord for the many souls who have been baptized, confirmed in their baptismal faith, fed and nourished, and laid to rest at Our Redeemer in Yelm. The congregation is planning to merge with Parkland Lutheran Church in February and plans will start in earnest to organize a mission south of Parkland.



Larry Wentzlaff

Larry Wentzlaff, who recently retired as our synod's Evangelism and Missions Counselor, was hospitalized with COVID pneumonia on January 17 because his oxygen levels were too low. When a high-pressure oxygen mask did not improve his vitals, he was placed on a ventilator early Tuesday morning. The doctors expressed a grim outlook for his survival. However, God heard the prayers of his saints and mercifully intervened.

Wednesday and Thursday saw great improvement in Larry's condition. The oxygen level provided by the ventilator was reduced to the lowest level. On Friday, January 21, Larry was taken off the ventilator, and he was even able to sit unassisted on the edge of the bed Friday afternoon. He is still weak but recovering. Please continue to pray for his speedy recovery.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, you watch over our lives and, just as no sparrow falls apart from your will, you preserve our lives according to your gracious will. Thank you for the mercy you have displayed in the improving health of our brother, Larry Wentzlaff. We ask you to continue to strengthen his body and grant him a full and speedy recovery. Use this trial to draw and his family closer to you that they would be more confident of your love and mercy in Jesus. Amen.

Ukraine

"Master, you are the God who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything in them. By the Holy Spirit ... you said: Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers are gathered together against the Lord and against his Anointed One." Acts 4:24-26

Prayer: A ruler has gathered his army against the country of Ukraine. Lord, if it is your will, protect the country from invaders and keep its people safe. We thank you for nearly 30 years of Gift of Life being able to provide humanitarian and lifesaving services in Ukraine while supporting the Gospel message of the "Anointed One," Jesus. If it is your will, continue to guide Gift of Life and allow it to prolong its operations. We know that all things are under your control. Help us to remain faithful servants confessing by the power of the Holy Spirit that you alone are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Amen.

"People ... were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did whatever your hand and your plan had decided beforehand should happen." Acts 4:27-28

As of January 26, 2022, the situation remains tense and fluid. As "Wardens" for the U.S. Embassy, we are kept well informed. While not rushing off at this time, departure will most likely be from Lviv, two and a half hours away. We are packed and able to leave quickly. The land border crossing with Poland is presently closed due to Covid. For several weeks Gift of Life has been getting prepared for cyberattacks (computer viruses and power grid) with water, fuel, propane, reserves of cash, and computers backed up daily. All staff have been encouraged to have ample food staples and cash available. Meetings with staff occur often.

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified ... because the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

Nicholas and Kerry Laper, Gift of Life, Ternopil, Ukraine

Statistical Reporting

Statistical Reports for 2021 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.

LYA Convention 2022

LYA Convention will be happening in 2022! Here is some preliminary info: "Out of Zion," July 28-31 at Dixie State University (Utah Tech University), St. George, Utah. We will be making a trip to Zion National Park during the convention. The cost will be \$200. The Board for Youth Outreach has subsidized the price in order to encourage as many to attend as possible! Registration will be opening on Tuesday, February 8. Note that every church needs to send at least one youth leader/chaperone of the same gender as the students. If your church is unable to send a youth leader/chaperone, consider partnering with another congregation.