

Book of Reports and Memorials

May 2015

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD
Waukesha, Wisconsin

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
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Foreword

Convention theme

The theme of the 2015 WELS convention is “One in Christ,” emphasizing our unity in faith, in mission, and in Christian love for one another. Convention worship, essays, and decisions will focus and explore all of the facets of our unity, created and maintained by the Holy Spirit through the Means of Grace.

Major items for consideration at the 2015 convention include the proposed ministry plan (budget) for 2015–17, the progress made in implementing the synod’s long-range plan, and a consideration of recommendations to be brought by the Ad Hoc Commission 2. Reports and recommendations from all synodical boards and commissions will be shared and discussed.

The *Book of Reports and Memorials*

This *Book of Reports and Memorials* (BORAM) is intended to summarize, both for convention delegates and for the synod’s entire constituency, the business that will come before the convention. It contains reports from all synodical entities, describing the synod’s activities during the past year and providing information about current efforts and future plans. It also contains memorials, which are formal requests to the convention to address specific issues.

Floor committees

The convention’s business will be addressed by 27 floor committees. Each committee is assigned specific matters to address or a task to perform during the convention. The floor committees, along with their chairmen, are listed on p. 1.

Floor committees will function during the convention as determined by their assignment. Meeting rooms are assigned to committees as needed. Floor committee chairmen are responsible for scheduling the times of the floor committee meetings and for seeing to it that his committee is provided with the informational resources it needs to complete its work. Advisory delegates are available to the committees as resources.

Delegates

All voting delegates are assigned to floor committees. Voting delegates are expected to attend convention sessions unless their floor committee is scheduled to meet during sessions. Advisory delegates may attend floor committee meetings upon invitation of the floor committee or by mutual agreement. Floor committee chairmen may at any time request that the committee conduct its work without the presence of advisors.

Memorials

A memorial is a formal request for the synod to take specific action. Some memorials will be assigned to the floor committee already dealing with the subject matter or area addressed by the memorial. Miscellaneous memorials dealing with issues not specifically assigned to a floor committee will be addressed by Floor Committee #22. All printed memorials can be found beginning on p. 201.

Sometimes memorials are submitted after the deadline for inclusion in BORAM. These are referred to as “unprinted memorials” because they are not printed in BORAM. Instead, they are printed and distributed to delegates during the summer and are assigned to appropriate floor committees for the same kind of consideration received by memorials printed in BORAM.

May God bless our gathering in Saginaw, to his glory and for the good of his kingdom!

Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president

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For more information on the synod convention, visit www.wels.net/2015synodconvention.

Convention floor committees

Committee	Assignment	Chairman
#1	President's Report	Pastor Jon Zabell
#2	Conference of Presidents	Pastor Bradley Bode
#3	Commission on Inter-Church Relations	Pastor Paul Janke
#4	Ministry of Christian Giving	Pastor Robert Koester
#5	Communication Services	Pastor Philip Kieselhost
#6	Synodical Council	Pastor James Seelow
#7	Support Services (Financial Services, Human Resources, Technology)	Teacher Frederick Uttech
#8	WELS Historical Institute and WELS Archives	Pastor James Janke
#9	Christian Aid and Relief	Pastor Aaron Christie
#10	Finance and budget	Pastor Heath Butler
#11	World Missions, Joint Mission Council	Pastor John Boggs
#12	Home Missions	Pastor Timothy Bode
#13	Ministerial Education	Pastor Jason Zahn
#14	Congregation and Ministry Support Group A (Worship, Evangelism, Congregational Counseling)	Pastor Jeremiah Gumm
#15	Congregation and Ministry Support Group B (Special Ministries, Adult Discipleship, Youth and Family Ministry)	Pastor Michael Helwig
#16	Congregation and Ministry Support Group C (Lutheran Schools)	Teacher Carl Hochmuth
#17	Northwestern Publishing House and Publication Coordinating Commission	Teacher James Brandt
#18	WELS Church Extension Fund	Mr. Joel Rhoads
#19	WELS Foundation and WELS Investment Funds	Mr. Tom Maenpaa
#20	WELS Benefit Plans (VEBA and Pension)	Mr. Brandon Hughes
#21	Ad Hoc Commission 2	Pastor Charles Vannieuwenhoven
#22	Miscellaneous memorials	Pastor Robert Dick
#23	Constitutional Matters	Pastor Dan Simons
#24	Elections	Teacher Robert Klindworth
#25	Membership and attendance	Pastor David Kipfmiller
#26	Resolutions	Dr. Martin Moldenhauer
#27	Steering	Pastor John Guse

Congregation and District Ministry

The Congregation and District Ministry portion of the synod's ministry financial plan (budget) includes the Conference of Presidents (COP) and all entities overseen by the COP. These include:

Conference of Presidents

- Regular and special meetings of the Conference of Presidents and the Assignment Committee
- Travel and other expenses related to the district presidents' work
- Pastoral assistants provided to the congregations served by the district presidents
- Partial cost of the vicar program

Support Committee

Grants and assistance provided to needy retired called workers and their spouses

Commission on Inter-Church Relations

- Regular meetings of the commission
- Travel expenses related to inter-church relations
- Annual support for the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC)
- Financial support for sister church bodies as appropriate

Ministry of Christian Giving

- Administration and staff salaries and office expenses
- Salaries and travel expenses for Christian giving counselors
- Expenses of counselor training and consultation
- Cost of promotions and appeals

Communication Services

- *WELS Connection*, *WELS Connection Close-up*, "Together," partial funding for *Forward in Christ* editorial staff, *WELS Annual Report*
- *Book of Reports and Memorials*, *Report to the Twelve Districts*, *Proceedings*
- Content production and management of WELS' Web presence, including www.wels.net and social media outlets
- Graphic design services to all areas of ministry
- Coordination of public responses and communications of the synod

Synod Nominating Committee

Selection of nominees for convention elections

Congregation and Ministry Support Group

- Commission on Worship
- Commission on Evangelism
- Commission on Special Ministries
- Commission on Lutheran Schools
- Commission on Youth and Family Ministry
- Commission on Adult Discipleship
- Commission on Congregational Counseling

Synod convention

District ministries and functions

- Costs related to the functions of the districts, district praesidia, and circuit pastors
- District conventions and other meetings
- District committees

Conference of Presidents

Floor Committee #2

The Conference of Presidents (COP) is composed of the 12 district presidents, elected by their respective districts, as well as the synod president and the two vice presidents, all of whom are elected by the synod convention. The synod president serves as the chairman of the COP. The synod secretary, while not a member of the COP, attends all COP meetings and serves as the secretary of the COP.

The COP meets in person three times annually for regular face to face meetings, and in New Ulm and Mequon at the time of assignments of ministerial candidates. Between regular meetings the COP meets monthly via teleconference. The Conference of Presidents is entrusted with the following broad responsibilities:

- Overseeing all matters of doctrine and practice to insure that the synod, its congregations, its called workers, and other affiliated entities remain faithful to the Scriptures and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- Working to maintain and strengthen the synod's unity in doctrine and practice and in its purpose and mission.
- Assisting congregations in the calling process by providing candidates for divine calls and appropriate advice.
- Providing counsel to congregations either directly or through the circuit pastors of the district.
- Overseeing the various ways in which the congregations and individual members provide financial support for the work of the synod, including the ongoing instruction in Christian stewardship, encouragement of Congregation Mission Offerings, and planning for special offerings that may be held periodically.
- Overseeing and serving as the calling body for the work of the Ministry of Christian Giving, as well as for all units of the Congregation and Ministry Support Group. It also oversees the other areas included in Congregation and District Ministry, including Communication Services, the Commission on Inter-Church Relations, and the Support Committee.
- Communicating and promoting the synod's mission and ministry in the districts.
- Overseeing the planning of the synod convention.

The COP spends significant time at each meeting reviewing issues relating to calls and vacancies, addressing issues that affect congregations and called workers, and discussing specific matters of doctrine and practice. The group functions primarily as a "conference" to provide a forum for district presidents to confer with each other and to provide and receive guidance and input from one another.

The COP works in close cooperation and consultation with the Synodical Council (SC). Three district presidents, along with the synod president and two vice presidents, serve as members of the SC.

Doctrine and practice

Each district president, along with his district officers, is entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing doctrine and practice in his district, including carrying out discipline of called workers when Christian love and faithfulness to God's Word require it. To assure as much consistency as possible, the COP devotes considerable time in its meetings to discussing practical situations, providing a forum for mutual advice and encouragement.

Occasionally, the COP as a group addresses doctrinal issues or matters of practice that affect the entire synod. This may involve clarifying and communicating doctrinal positions, addressing specific issues after in-depth study, and producing (or overseeing the production of) documents that summarize scriptural doctrines and evangelical practice.

While the COP is fully committed to the biblical principle of Christian freedom in matters of adiaphora (things neither commanded nor forbidden by Scripture), it continues to encourage called workers and lay leaders to exercise their Christian freedom with wisdom, brotherly love, and extensive consultation with others in our fellowship who may be affected. The COP continues to encourage open and brotherly discussion of such things as worship style, outreach efforts, and congregational organization. The COP believes that such discussion, when done in a spirit of Christian love and based on an ongoing study of the Scriptures, is essential to maintaining our synodical unity, a correct understanding of Christian freedom, and our clear identity as a confessional Lutheran church body.

Procedures for addressing issues of doctrine and practice within WELS

The Conference of Presidents (COP) is responsible for "supervising, maintaining, and strengthening synodical

unity of doctrine and practice.” The unity we enjoy in WELS, given by the Spirit through the Word, is fostered and strengthened through doctrinal studies and statements produced or authorized by the COP to address particular issues. The Doctrine Committee assists the COP by taking the lead in producing statements that address doctrinal and practical issues.

The COP has recognized its responsibility in this area of its work and has maintained a high standard in producing and approving doctrinal studies and practical policies. But while the COP is responsible for supervising, maintaining, and strengthening unity of doctrine and practice, a practical reality for members of the COP and the Doctrine Committee is that due to the press of other duties and responsibilities, the amount of time needed to produce sound, scriptural study documents or doctrinal statements can be unduly extended.

In addition, there are brothers within our fellowship with recognized gifts in areas of doctrine or practice (WELS parish pastors, professors, teachers, etc.) who could be helpful in addressing certain issues.

To provide assistance in addressing doctrinal and practical issues in a timely manner and in keeping with the gifts the Lord provides to his Church, the COP has concluded that at times it can better carry out such work through the use of ad hoc committees appointed to address a specific subject, rather than the appointment of a standing doctrinal commission or by assigning the work to the Doctrine Committee of the Conference of Presidents.

Updating of the document *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*

The COP has been working on a revision and expansion of the 1989 COP document entitled *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*. The purpose of the review was to address certain topics and circumstances that may not have been addressed in the original document. Once completed, the document will be made available in both electronic and printed formats. In connection with this discussion, the COP also resolved to develop study materials on the topic of sexual ethics as a means to help pastors deal with these issues in their ministries.

Fellowship practices in our schools

A special Fellowship Study Committee was appointed to address questions related to fellowship practices in our schools. The committee developed a “toolbox” of materials and resources for addressing fellowship issues in schools. This has been forwarded to high schools in our fellowship. The main item in the toolbox is a thorough Bible study of the doctrine of fellowship. It is the recommendation and encouragement of the COP that the schools develop a plan and provide an orderly process for those responsible to work through the study materials. The COP also determined that the materials be provided to Martin Luther College so that they can be used for instructional purposes to ensure that future called workers have a working understanding of the foundational principles of fellowship.

Process for regaining eligibility to serve as a called worker

The COP addressed the process by which called workers who have lost their eligibility to serve in the public ministry can seek to have that eligibility restored. In the case of pastors, this status of being eligible for a divine call into the pastoral ministry is referred to as *candidatus reverendi ministerii* (CRM). In the case of teachers, this status is referred to as “eligible and available” (E & A) for a divine call into the teaching ministry. Decisions are made on the basis of the current and past circumstances, letters of recommendation, and steps taken by the former called worker to resolve any outstanding issues that may be a hindrance to serving. Guiding the final decision is a commitment to be sure that biblical qualifications for the public ministry are met.

Previously, the decision whether or not to restore a person’s eligibility to serve in the public ministry was solely the responsibility of the praesidium of the district where the worker had previously served.

Because such decisions do not affect only one district but in fact may have an impact on any district of the synod (since eligibility implies that a worker can serve anywhere), the COP has added a step to the process for restoring CRM or E & A status. When a district president receives a formal request for restoration of eligibility, he reviews the information with his district praesidium. He then brings the matter to the entire COP for advice and input. Once that advice and input is given, the district president, together with the rest of the district praesidium, makes the final decision. This process provides broader input and a synodwide perspective prior to a decision.

The adopted procedures are:

Pastors

The Conference of Presidents has set up an evaluative process for re-entry into the pastoral ministry when there has been a resignation or termination of a divine call for cause or for the good of the

ministry. This process will address those resignations or terminations of a divine call for which pastors lose their *candidatus reverendi ministerii* (CRM) status. The following process is designed to allow consideration of a request for reinstatement of status in a way that addresses the needs and concerns of the applicant, the church and/or school involved, and the synod.

1. Men who have resigned or whose calls have been terminated may apply for reinstatement of CRM status after one year. A year is generally allowed to pass after a resignation or termination so that the items which need to be addressed may be addressed. After that period of time the re-entry process may begin.
2. A return to the public ministry is initially to be handled by the district praesidium where the resignation or termination took place. When there is such a desire to return to the public ministry, a signed request should be submitted by the applicant to the district president.
3. The district praesidium will announce the request to the pastors of the respective district.
4. Letters of reference and recommendation from certain suggested individuals will be requested by the district praesidium. The applicant may also choose to select others whom he would want to correspond with the praesidium on his behalf. Please take special note of the following items regarding these letters:
 - The praesidium must receive copies of the letters the applicant writes requesting such references and recommendations. All letters must be dated and bear the applicant's signature.
 - Those letters must contain the applicant's authorization for the individuals to correspond with the praesidium and to discuss the request and any pertinent information with the praesidium.
 - The letters must also authorize those the applicant contacts to bring to the attention of the praesidium any items or issues which need to be resolved, addressed, or laid to rest.
 - Those writing may also have comments which they want to make regarding the applicant's past service as well as thoughts about his possible future service in the public ministry of WELS.
5. Upon receipt of the aforementioned materials, the praesidium will schedule a meeting with the applicant to address his request.
6. During the CRM application process it is strongly encouraged that the applicant will complete an assessment through a licensed therapist with full disclosure of results to the district praesidium. The district president can make this mandatory.
7. Additional evaluative procedures may be required (for example, medical or additional psychological evaluations, a written assignment, and/or field service).
8. Once the evaluative process is completed and the information is digested, the praesidium will bring the matter to the Conference of Presidents for its counsel.
9. Once the district praesidium has received the input and counsel of the Conference of Presidents, it will make a final decision.
10. The final decision will be conveyed by the district president to the applicant, the district, and the Conference of Presidents.

Teachers and staff ministers

The Conference of Presidents has set up an evaluative process for re-entry into the public ministry when there has been a resignation or termination of a divine call for cause or for the good of the ministry. This process will address those resignations or terminations of a divine call for which teachers and staff ministers lose their E & A status. The following process is designed to allow consideration of a request for reinstatement of status in a way that addresses the needs and concerns of the applicant, the church and/or school involved, and the synod.

1. Workers who have resigned or whose calls have been terminated may apply for reinstatement of E & A status after one year. A year is generally allowed to pass after a resignation or termination so that the items which need to be addressed may be addressed. After that period of time the re-entry process may begin.
2. A return to the public ministry is initially to be handled by the district praesidium where the resignation or termination took place. When there is such a desire to return to the public ministry, a signed request should be submitted by the applicant to the district president.
3. Letters of reference and recommendation from certain suggested individuals will be requested by

the district praesidium. The applicant may also choose to select others whom he or she would want to correspond with the praesidium on their behalf. Please take special note of the following items regarding these letters:

- The praesidium must receive copies of the letters the applicant writes requesting such references and recommendations. All letters must be dated and bear the applicant's signature.
 - Those letters must contain the applicant's authorization for the individuals to correspond with the praesidium and to discuss the request and any pertinent information with the praesidium.
 - The letters must also authorize those the applicant contacts to bring to the attention of the praesidium any items or issues which need to be resolved, addressed, or laid to rest.
 - Those writing may also have comments which they want to make regarding the applicant's past service as well as thoughts about his or her possible future service in the public ministry of WELS.
4. Upon receipt of the aforementioned materials, the praesidium will schedule a meeting with the applicant to address his or her request.
 5. During the E & A application process it is strongly encouraged that the applicant will complete an assessment through a licensed therapist with full disclosure of the results to the district praesidium. The district president can make this mandatory.
 6. Additional evaluative procedures may be required (for example, medical or additional psychological evaluations, a written assignment, and/or field service).
 7. Once the evaluative process is completed and the information is digested, the praesidium will bring the matter to the Conference of Presidents for its counsel.
 8. The praesidium will make a final decision and inform the applicant, the Commission on Lutheran Schools, the district, and the Conference of Presidents.

Free conferences

In recent years there has been an increased interest in free conferences. For that reason, it may be good to review guidelines that the COP provided in 2012.

A simple definition

Historically, a free conference is a gathering in which people belonging to different church bodies come together to discuss doctrine and practice. Participants come, not as official representatives of their church bodies, but as individuals who are interested in assessing where doctrinal agreement may exist and where there are differences in doctrine. Meant as a forum for an open discussion of doctrine, free conferences are conducted outside the framework of fellowship. A free conference does not include joint prayer, worship, or a celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Convocations intended to share methodologies would by definition not be considered free conferences.

Some encouragements for those considering attending or organizing free conferences

The Lord desires that we seek to extend our fellowship. Free conferences may clear up misunderstandings that we have of those in other church bodies or that they may have of us. While there may be more outward reasons to organize free conferences currently, there will always be wisdom in discussing doctrine with others. A free conference provides an excellent opportunity to testify to the truth and to see where there may be an opportunity to extend our fellowship.

Out of love for God's Word and for the people within our fellowship, those who organize free conferences will want to identify it clearly as a free conference. While the conference may address one specific teaching of Scripture and thus provide a unifying theme to the gathering, the term "free conference" should always be highlighted. In addition, because free conferences have not been held or attended frequently among us in recent history, the organizers will want to explain carefully what a free conference is and means to be. They will make it clear that fellowship will not be expressed by an invocation, joint prayer, worship, or a celebration of Holy Communion.

Those who are interested in organizing a free conference, whether national or regional, would preserve good order by informing the presidents of the districts in which they serve and the district in which the gathering will be held. Doing that earlier rather than later in the process would demonstrate concern for carrying out such a meeting in a fitting and orderly way. The district president may be aware of other gatherings that are being considered and could provide useful

counsel. The district presidents would inform the synod president and Conference of Presidents regarding the free conference.

Those who attend free conferences, whether national or regional, will want to take the time and effort to explain to their calling bodies their purpose in attending, lest souls be unnecessarily offended. Men who attend free conferences should also make their circuit pastors aware of their attendance.

Organizers of free conferences will want to take great care in selection of presenters for the gathering. While we may seek to understand better the doctrine of another church body, the primary purpose of a free conference is not to offer a forum for propagation of falsehood, but to offer a forum for discussion of the truth. The goal is ultimately that the truth be extended.

Assignment of ministerial candidates

In its role as the Assignment Committee of the synod, the COP continually monitors the number of candidates graduating from Martin Luther College (MLC) and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS). The vast majority of assignments are made in May, with a smaller number assigned in December at the time of mid-year graduation at MLC. In 2014 all seminary graduates were assigned. Seventy-eight teacher candidates were assigned in May; six candidates waited for assignment at a future date. One mid-year graduate from MLC was assigned last December.

The Assignment Committee also assigns third-year seminary students to their place of vicarage. These assignments are made by the COP after extensive consultation with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and the Board for Home Missions. Since the vicar year is actually a part of the seminary's program of education, great care is taken to ensure that the candidates are placed in locations where they can receive thorough training in the practical aspects of the pastoral ministry. Candidates who are identified as having gifts for evangelism/outreach are often assigned to supervising pastors with proven gifts for the same so that the vicar's evangelism/outreach gifts may be further developed. The Vicar in Missions program has worked well to provide outreach-ready graduates for assignment.

Continuing education for called workers

Acting on a recommendation from the Ad Hoc Commission, the 2009 convention called for the establishment of a flexible program of continuing education for called workers. The Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee began to develop such a program shortly thereafter. Significant progress has been made and is outlined on p. 13.

Reformation 2017

A special committee has been making plans for a synodwide celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. Plans include special publications, a video, and a proposed gathering of called workers and lay members in Milwaukee. The COP has been kept informed of these plans, and the details of the celebration will be publicized as they are finalized. For more information, see the report of the Reformation 500 Committee on p. 58.

Funding for the synod's mission and ministry

While the Synodical Council (SC) is responsible for formulating and recommending the synod's ministry program and the budget that supports it, the COP is responsible for funding the ministry program adopted by the synod in convention.

The COP operates under the principle that the foundational support for the mission and ministry of the synod is the Congregation Mission Offering (CMO). Other sources of financial support, such as gifts from individuals, bequests, grants from foundations, etc., are great blessings and play an important role in providing the resources necessary to carry out the synod's work. Gifts from these sources can vary widely from year to year; CMO, on the other hand, has been a more consistent and predictable source of financial support.

The COP worked to encourage congregations to increase their commitments in 2014 and to meet or exceed those commitments by the end of the year. When those commitments fell short of the goal set by the 2013 convention by about \$1.2 million, the Synodical Council carried out its responsibility to outline where program reductions would need to be made. To avoid making these significant cuts in ministry, the COP decided last spring to ask congregations to reconsider their commitments and to increase them if possible. Congregations responded to that encouragement; CMO commitments were increased by nearly \$500,000. A second blessing came when actual mission offerings exceeded the increased commitment amount by \$80,000. We thank God and his people for the results. While not covering the entire shortfall of \$1.2 million, the added offerings enabled the Synodical Council to make reductions in the plan that had a relatively small impact on ministry programs.

The vast majority of congregations provide financial support for the synod's work through CMO and other gifts. There are a number of congregations, for various reasons, that provide no CMO support for the work we do together as a synod. The district presidents and circuit pastors will continue to encourage these congregations to participate in the joy of supporting our synod's work to the extent that they are able.

Overall, support from congregations has remained virtually flat for the past eight years. This lack of growth in CMO presents continuing challenges not only to expand our work together but also to maintain current levels of ministry. The COP will continue to encourage congregations to recognize the importance of CMO and to respond with Spirit-worked generosity.

Status of the synod's combined capital debt and recommendation

In 2007 all capital debt of the synod was combined into a single total. The total debt at that time was \$22.4 million. The 2007 convention resolved to begin the effort to eliminate the debt through a special offering called the Year of Jubilee. The offering officially concluded in 2009 with gifts of \$4.3 million. An annual budgetary allocation of \$1.6 million, along with continuing gifts from individuals and congregations, has been used to amortize the debt. This will enable the debt to be completely eliminated by 2019.

As of the 2015 convention, the remaining debt is expected to have been reduced to about \$4.7 million. Recognizing that an early elimination of the debt would make the \$1.6 million annual debt payment available for mission and ministry and other needs, the 2013 convention approved a recommendation from the COP to undertake a special debt elimination effort beginning with this convention. This special offering will come to a conclusion at the 2016 district conventions.

150th anniversary at Luther Preparatory School

The COP authorized Luther Preparatory School (LPS) to undertake an effort to gather a special offering in conjunction with its 150th anniversary celebration this year. The effort is being carried out by LPS in collaboration with the Ministry of Christian Giving and is focusing on individual gifts rather than congregational offerings. LPS has designated the offering to be used for long-term financial assistance to students and to refurbish the LPS chapel.

Congregation and Ministry Support Group

Since 2009 what had been the Board for Parish Services has been restructured into the Congregation and Ministry Support Group (CMSG). The most significant change in the restructuring was the placement of the various commissions of the CMSG under the direct supervision of the COP. This change has been highly beneficial, since the COP now has a better understanding of the work being carried out and is in a better position to promote and support it. Directors of CMSG entities that are served by full-time directors (Lutheran Schools, Worship, Evangelism, Special Ministries, Congregational Counseling) are called by the COP, and commission members are appointed by the COP. Each of these groups will report to this convention.

The Commission on Congregational Counseling (CCC) was first established by the 2009 restructuring. Pastor Jonathan Hein serves as the director of the CCC. A notable feature of this position is that Hein remains in the congregation he serves rather than being based at the Center for Mission and Ministry, with the synod providing him with a full-time pastoral assistant. The intent of having the director remain in the congregation is to keep him closely connected to congregational life and to allow him to put into practice the kinds of programs that he may be promoting. Hein is serving a second one-year call, enabling the COP to evaluate whether the position and the current arrangement should be made permanent.

Conference historians

In the interest of preserving vital matters of church history throughout the synod, the COP discussed the need for having each conference of the synod appoint a conference historian. The implementation of this plan was left to the discretion of each district president.

Staff ministers

The COP agreed that staff ministers are those called workers other than pastors or teachers who serve the congregation in Means of Grace ministry. Congregational workers who serve in capacities other than Means of Grace ministry are to be hired rather than called and will not be designated as staff ministers. Staff ministers will be listed in a separate category in the synod yearbook, with separate sections for male and female workers, as is the case with teachers.

Calls issued by the COP

Teacher Thomas Plitzuweit, associate director of Lutheran Schools

Pastor Jonathan Hein, director of the Commission on Congregational Counseling (1 year)

Teacher James Rademan, director of Lutheran Schools

Teacher Ken Proeber, interim associate director of Lutheran Schools

Staff Minister Bradley Price, director of WELS Prison Ministry

Limited or provisional calls issued for one year by the COP

It has been the policy of the COP to issue one-year calls to Christian giving counselors who are serving in a semi-retired position and to issue provisional calls to counselors who are pursuing synod certification as staff ministers.

The following individuals were called by the COP as semi-retired Christian giving counselors:

Pastor James Liggett

Pastor John Graf

Staff Minister Gerald Heckmann

Pastor David Waege

Pastor David Dolan

Pastor Steven Staude

Staff Minister Harold Mears

Revisions to the bylaws

The COP is recommending one change to the synod bylaws and one change to the constitution of the districts.

The change to the bylaws is necessary to clarify some of the definitions regarding male and female staff ministers.

These changes bring the wording of the bylaws dealing with staff ministers into parallel with the wording for pastors and teachers. Additions are underlined. Deletions are indicated by a strikethrough.

These recommended changes will be addressed by Floor Committee #23 (Constitutional Matters).

WELS Bylaws, Section 1.00—Definitions

(d) “Staff Minister” means any male who is synodically certified and listed on the most current synodical roster of “Staff Ministers—active” or “Staff Ministers—retired” who is holding a permanent call. Male staff ministers are included in the male teachers category in all articles and bylaws.

Male staff ministers who still have a program of education to complete and female staff ministers listed in the most current synodical roster titled “Female Staff Ministers—active” and “Female Staff Ministers—retired” are also included in Sections 8.20 and 8.60.

The second change removes the requirement for the district president to issue letters of transfer for pastors and male teachers when those called workers move to another district. Current methods of reporting moves from one district to another make the issuing of such letters unnecessary. The requirement to issue such a letter when a worker moves to a synod in fellowship with WELS remains in place.

Constitution for the Districts, Article VII, Section 1—Rights and Duties of Officers

The president shall be responsible for the supervision of doctrine and practice within the district. The president shall represent the district, shall supervise the execution of its resolutions and shall sign documents issuing from the district. The president shall provide for the ordination of such candidates for ministry who shall have graduated from the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Seminary or such who shall have otherwise qualified and who shall have received and accepted a call from within the confines of the district. He shall also authorize the installation of other pastors and of male teachers called by congregations within the district. He shall issue letters of transfer to such pastors and male teachers as shall enter another church body in fellowship with the synod ~~or another district of the synod~~.

Our thanks and our welcome

Pastors Douglas Engelbrecht (Northern Wisconsin District), Peter Naumann (Dakota-Montana District), and Theodore Lambert (Pacific Northwest District) have completed their service on the COP. We invite all members of the synod to join us in thanking God for their faithful service and in praying for his continued blessings on them and their families.

The COP also welcomed three new members to replace those who departed. Pastor Douglas Free was elected president of the Dakota-Montana District, Pastor John Steinbrenner was elected president of the Pacific Northwest District, and Pastor Joel Zank was elected president of the Northern Wisconsin District. We pray that God will give them wisdom, courage, and a pastor's heart as they serve as district presidents and members of the COP.

A look ahead

The COP will continue in its role of providing supervision of doctrine and practice, as well as in assisting congregations in the calling process.

In addition, the COP will:

- Monitor the progress of the Hymnal Project and provide input and suggestions to the director.
- Develop materials to assist pastors as they address the topic of sexual ethics.
- Encourage congregations to grow their Christian stewardship and in their financial support of the synod and its mission. At its January 2015 meeting, the Conference of Presidents approved a plan to conduct a review of the structure and function of the Ministry of Christian Giving in early 2016.
- Look for ways to assist the synod in maintaining its identity as a confessional Lutheran synod and to communicate our synod's beliefs to the outside world in a clear and loving manner.
- Work with the Commission on Congregational Counseling and other entities of the Congregation and Ministry Support Group to help congregations grow stronger and healthier through the Means of Grace.

One in Christ

The COP invites all members of the synod to join in thanks to a gracious God, who has blessed our synod with his pure Word, who has permitted us both to hear and proclaim the saving gospel, and who has united as one in Christ—in faith, in mission, and in Christian love.

Rev. Mark Schroeder, reporter

Rev. Mark Schroeder, president and chairman

Rev. James Huebner, first vice president

Rev. Joel Voss, second vice president

Rev. Jon Buchholz, Arizona-California District

Rev. Charles Degner, Minnesota District

Rev. Douglas Free, Dakota-Montana District

Rev. John Guse, South Atlantic District

Rev. Donald Patterson, South Central District

Rev. Herbert Prahl, Western Wisconsin District

Rev. David Rutschow, Southeastern Wisconsin District

Rev. John Steinbrenner, Pacific Northwest District

Rev. John Seifert, Michigan District

Rev. Donald Tollefson, North Atlantic District

Rev. Earle Treptow, Nebraska District

Rev. Joel Zank, Northern Wisconsin District

Rev. Robert Pasbrig, recording secretary

WELS Support Committee

Floor Committee #2

Our calling

“Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you” (Hebrews 13:7). The Support Committee has been Reestablished by the synod to carry out Christ’s love for the faithful servants of the church who are now retired but do not have the financial resources to meet normal living expenses. The committee works to identify those individuals and/or their surviving spouses who have needs and provide them with the level of financial support that allows them to live with dignity and in reasonable comfort. Requests for support need to be made and approved in order for assistance to be provided. Application forms are used to determine the level of need when requests are made.

The following considerations affect the financial assistance the Support Committee provides:

- The fund is not an entitlement program.
- The fund is not an extension of the synod’s pension plan. The financial assistance received is a charitable gift from the synod to those in need.
- The fund is not established to provide temporary assistance for those who resigned from the ministry.
- The fund does not grant financial assistance to those who need assisted living and nursing home care.
- The fund is not intended to be the main source of income. Assets and other means of income are expected to be used first, with Support Committee income supplementing those resources.

Our current situation

The committee is composed of five district first vice presidents of WELS. The first vice president in every district is the contact person for the Support Committee. The Support Committee looks to local pastors, circuit pastors, and district officers to be alert to possible circumstances of need on the part of retired called workers and their surviving spouses living in their district. These pastors inform the retired called worker/spouse needing help of the possibility of receiving financial assistance from the Support Committee and, if needed, communicate this situation also to the chairman of the Support Committee. In 2014 there were 28 family units throughout the synod receiving support. The amount budgeted to provide support for these family units was an expenditure of \$250,000 for the year. Sometimes during the course of a year new requests are made to the Support Committee. We thank our Lord for enabling our synod to take care of all those who needed assistance in 2014.

A look ahead

The Support Committee continues to provide assistance to retired called workers and/or their surviving spouses as long as synod finances make it possible. At the beginning of 2015 there were 28 family units receiving support, calling for a monthly expenditure of \$19,670 and an annual budget for approving requests of \$236,040. In some cases the requests needed to be reduced or declined because of budget constraints. The Support Committee budget is no longer able to cover the cost for subscriptions to *Forward in Christ*, *Meditations*, and *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*. The Support Committee thanks Northwestern Publishing House for covering the costs of these subscriptions in 2015 to provide support recipients with the periodicals requested.

Rev. Mark Johnston, reporter

Rev. Mark Johnston, chairman

Rev. Steven Degner

Rev. Michael Jensen

Rev. Joel Leyrer

Rev. Donald Sutton

Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee Floor Committee #2

Our calling

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. . . . Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress” (1 Timothy 4:12,15).

There should be a marked difference between newly graduated public ministers, gratefully grasping in their hands their first call into full-time public ministry, and veteran teachers, staff ministers, or pastors who, after decades of service in the ministry lay down their call into public ministry as they reach retirement.

And that difference shouldn’t just be in hair turned gray and energy levels reduced. If all has gone well, as we apply Paul’s words to that public minister, those decades of ministry from young adulthood to old age are to be marked by a growing maturity in faith in Christ, in life lived that more clearly confesses that faith, and in ministry skills and abilities that have steadily matured and developed year by year in the midst of gospel ministry.

WELS has much to be thankful for in the quality of our pre-ministerial training for those who aspire for service as a teacher, staff minister, or pastor. But all of those advantages can easily be turned to naught if newly minted ministers of the gospel function as if they are a finished product as they cross the commencement stage at Martin Luther College or Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

Instead, gospel ministry deserves to be adorned by “progress.” Like Timothy, there is a need for called workers, for the sake of their own souls and the souls of those they serve (1 Timothy 4:16), to show progress “in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity,” and in all the commensurate skills for ministry that provide avenues for such love and faith to express themselves in their day to day callings.

In other words, an excellent pre-ministerial training is meant to be adorned, for the sake of the gospel, with striving for continued spiritual and professional growth throughout the years of ministry. The measureable outward differences of age and energy level between a recent graduate and a retiring called worker are intended to be matched at least equally by the differences that could be noted if we could as easily measure growth in faith and ministry skill in our called workers. For the sake of their own souls and the souls of others, such is the progress that Paul urges for those in public ministry. The gospel ministry deserves no less.

How important that we all serve as encouragers and enablers to called workers to strive for the blessing of such progress. First, those called workers’ calling bodies are key partners in helping their workers follow the path of ministry-long progress. Calling bodies are short sighted on what yields healthy public ministry if they thoughtlessly keep their called workers so busy they have no time to devote to nurturing their own souls in the gospel. Calling bodies are working against the strength of the gospel ministry in their midst if they carelessly fail to provide the time and money needed to make it easier for their workers to devote themselves to developing their God-given talents and skills. Investing in the continued spiritual and professional growth of called workers is investing in gospel ministry.

As important as it is for calling bodies themselves to value and support such progress for their public ministers, it is also important as a church body that we provide resources and opportunities to assist called workers in this gospel-focused pursuit of progress in faith and ministry. Beyond the congregation, there are many in our synod charged with being part of supporting WELS called workers in their individual and corporate pursuit of spiritual and professional growth. The district presidia, circuit pastors, and mission counselors are key encouragers toward growth in the called workers they serve. Our synod’s Congregation and Ministry Support Group (CMSG) is another vital part of that support system. Our two terminal schools, Martin Luther College (MLC) and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS), form another part of what supports growth among our workers. As calling bodies and elements of our synodical structure work together, the goal is to provide a broad and strong support system that encourages each called worker toward ministry-long spiritual and professional growth.

Our synod has established the Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee (CECW) in order to coordinate our church body's resources that are aimed at providing opportunities for, and encouragement toward, such ministry-long progress for all in the public ministry of the WELS. The CECW works under the Conference of Presidents (COP) to encourage congregations to invest in the spiritual and professional growth of their current workers. The CECW also seeks to provide a measure of coordination for the many different continuing education efforts provided by our synod. This report by the CECW summarizes the continuing education work that is being coordinated first for our teachers/staff ministers and then for our pastors.

Continuing education for our teachers and staff ministers: Current situation and look ahead

Recent participation

The CECW is thankful for recent indicators that more teachers, staff ministers, and laypeople are using the continuing education services available to them. In a 2014 survey of PreK-12 WELS teachers, 27 percent reported that their participation in continuing education increased over the past three years. Indeed, participation in all forms of Martin Luther College continuing education increased from an annual average of 780 to 1,200 seats in recent years. Additionally, of the 1,000 participants at last summer's National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts, more than 200 were teachers.

Variety

Through Martin Luther College (MLC), WELS members have access to a wide range of ministry-focused, flexible, convenient, and affordable continuing education services. MLC has more than 180 offerings available including blogs, seminars, webinars, inservices, courses for credit, certificate programs, and a graduate degree. Continuing education is offered online, at satellite locations, and on the MLC campus, with costs from \$20 per person to \$290 (graduate) per credit. MLC provides professional development in areas of early childhood, educational technology, leadership, spiritual growth, instruction, licensure, special education, staff ministry, and synod certification.

Graduate degrees

Since 2005 MLC has been providing a ministry-focused graduate degree. The Master of Science in Education degree has areas of emphasis in leadership, instruction, educational technology, and special education. As of January 2015, 121 graduate students were enrolled (46 principals) and 63 had received their degree (28 principals).

- **Special Education License:** At the time of this writing, the special education emphasis was being reviewed by the Minnesota State Board of Teaching for licensure.
- **Master of Science in Educational Administration:** Designed specifically for WELS principals/early childhood directors. At the time of this writing, it was being considered for approval by the Higher Learning Commission.
- **Master of Arts in Theology:** In development.

New teacher induction

New teacher induction helps new teachers transition more quickly from a beginning teacher to veteran. Begun in 2008 as a pilot project by the Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS), the program has expanded to all 12 WELS districts as a joint MLC/CLS venture. Prof. Jon Schaefer of MLC coordinates the program, and he and Teacher Kathy Horn provide training for new mentors. As of this writing, 105 beginning teachers were being guided by 68 trained mentors. The goal is to provide every May 2015 teacher assignment with a trained instructional mentor.

Leadership training

Existing principals and early childhood directors are supported through 10 Leadership Institute Modules sponsored by the CLS and the Master of Science in Education leadership emphasis provided by MLC. The following are also being offered/developed to help Lutheran schools transition from assignment of novice teachers as principals to calling from a pool of fully trained educational leaders.

Revised Principal/Director Apprentice Program

Twelve principal apprentices (first- and second-year MLC graduates assigned to principal positions) and one first year early childhood director received apprentice mentoring from instructional mentors through the Commission on Lutheran Schools during the 2014–15 school year. An Antioch II Foundation grant will allow expansion of the program for 2015–16. It is planned that all newly assigned principals and early childhood directors will be considered apprentices and will be mentored by a trained and experienced principal or director. The two-year relationship between mentor and apprentice is designed to provide support and coaching to assist our newly assigned leaders in the development of necessary leadership skills.

Principal Training Program

Congregations with a middle- to upper-grade vacancy are encouraged to request a three-year principal-in-training assignment. The local principal, who has received training as an instructional mentor and coach, serves as the mentor for the newly assigned teacher for the three-year period. The newly assigned teacher moves from being mentored as a beginning teacher to actually taking a leadership role in the host congregation under the mentorship of the congregation's principal. The goal is that during the three-year timeframe, the newly assigned teacher grows as a teacher and also receives on-the-job principal training. The principal-in-training returns to the assignment committee after the third year to be assigned as a principal. The mentor continues to provide support to the now newly assigned principal during his first year of service at his newly assigned congregation. At the time of writing, this new first year pilot program had one participant. The Conference of Presidents and the CLS are actively seeking new participants each year to grow our pool of experienced principals.

Leadership Candidate Training Program

The goal of this program is to provide leadership training to young experienced teachers not currently serving as principals or early childhood directors to prepare them to one day serve in those roles. From June 2015–June 2016 up to ten male teachers and ten female teachers will engage in leadership training experiences and develop and execute a leadership project under the direction of veteran principals and early childhood directors serving as mentors. Applicants were selected based on their aptitude to one day serve as a school leader. We pray this program will provide the trainees with increased competence and confidence to willingly serve if called to a new leadership role.

Master of Science in Educational Administration Degree

A new MLC graduate degree provides thorough preparation in all aspects of WELS school leadership for both principals and early childhood directors. The program meets both national and newly developed WELS principal and early childhood director standards and addresses the unique challenges faced by Lutheran schools today. It is intended for three audiences: a) the veteran principal/director without formal leadership training, b) principals-in-training and apprentices in transition to veteran leaders, and c) current teachers such as those identified in the candidate leadership training program who wish to prepare for school leadership positions. At the time of writing, the degree program was under consideration by the Higher Learning Commission.

Early childhood ministry

Due to the rapid expansion of WELS early childhood ministries, many existing early childhood teachers need support in areas of early childhood pedagogy, outreach, and synod certification. Online and satellite courses have been developed to meet the need for short, flexible, convenient, and affordable professional development in the above areas.

Early Childhood Educator Series

Eleven one- or two-credit online and satellite courses cover all aspects of developmentally appropriate early childhood teaching. When taken to achieve a Child Development Association (CDA) credential, state grant money is often available. These courses are designed for existing teachers and do not lead to a degree, but the CDA credential is recognized in some way in all 50 states.

Early childhood synod certification

18 credits are offered in the foundations of God's Word and Lutheran early childhood ministry. These courses are designed for teachers without synod certification.

Early childhood outreach essentials

Four one-credit online and face-to-face satellite courses help early childhood educators connect students and families to Christ and the local congregation. Designed for all early childhood teachers and directors.

Cooperative ventures

Various synodical agencies are cooperating to provide the following new continuing education opportunities for called and lay leaders:

- **Evangelism Certificate:** The Commission on Evangelism and MLC offer a series of three one-credit courses leading to an evangelism certificate. Designed especially for lay leaders.
- **Chaplain Certificate:** This program prepares and qualifies pastors and lay workers for ministry in a variety of institutional or specialized settings.
- **Elder/Geriatric Care:** As congregations see an increase in ministry to the elderly, the Commission on Special Ministries, Martin Luther Elder Care Ministry, and MLC have developed a new course to prepare members to assist in a congregation's ministry to the elderly.

- **American Sign Language:** In development with the Commission on Special Ministries and MLC, this course helps lay and called workers make worship meaningful for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Conferences

Teachers and staff ministers have a variety of ways to grow professionally through WELS-sponsored conferences.

The National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts

Teachers were able to gain continuing education units for select workshops at the National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts sponsored by the Commission on Worship. Fifteen of some 60 sessions qualified for these credits. Of 1,000 participants at the conference, more than 200 were teachers.

WELS National School Leadership Conference

The WELS National School Leadership Conference is designed for WELS/ELS members working in the field of education at early childhood, elementary, and secondary levels. The conference provides a large-scale opportunity to come together to learn from God's Word, from experts in education, and from each other. The conference is sponsored by the Commission on Lutheran Schools and is held during the summer once every three years. Worship services, a pre conference, three keynotes, and more than 40 breakout sessions are offered to educators and school leaders in early childhood, elementary, and high schools levels who desire to grow and strengthen their leadership skills.

Ongoing challenges

While this report shows God's tremendous blessing, challenges remain. Nearly 1,500 WELS teachers completed a 2014 continuing education survey. Even though 92 percent stated they desire to serve better in their call and 74 percent wanted to take a course, only 35 percent did. Additionally 14 percent said their continuing education participation decreased. Their challenges are insufficient time (79 percent) and money (71 percent). WELS teachers are busy with many responsibilities beyond the classroom, and few schools (6.5 percent) provide the funding level approved by the 2013 synod convention of \$1,000 annually. The most common annual support is \$250 to \$499 (23 percent) with 10.5 percent of calling bodies providing no funding at all. Our teachers are between a rock and hard place—told to grow continually but not given the resources to do so. The Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee urges this convention to consider how best to enable called workers to meet the need to grow professionally.

Mutual CLS/MLC goals still to be accomplished

There are several goals still waiting to be accomplished that relate to continuing growth for those called to leadership positions in our schools:

- Establish a process for WELS Administrative Certification.
- Establish a school leadership candidate training program to identify, encourage, and begin training qualified teachers for the WELS principal/director role.
- Provide a system of coaching support for principals/directors in this priority order:
 - a. first-time principals/directors,
 - b. principals transitioning to more complex settings,
 - c. principals in crisis, and
 - d. veteran principals who are already healthy.
- Solidify the Leadership Institute Modules as a tool for strengthening principals/directors.

Continuing education for our pastors: Current situation and look ahead

While many avenues for continuing education for our pastors are available, the CECW focuses on continuing education opportunities for our synod's pastors primarily through the work of the Congregation Ministry and Support Group (CMSG) and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS).

The CMSG has as its primary goal providing training and resources to strengthen the gospel ministry of our congregations through their lay leaders, but there is much reported elsewhere in this book under the various units of the CMSG that provides ministry impacting growth opportunities for our synod's pastors. Here is a brief sampling of such opportunities for growth for our synod's pastors provided by the CMSG:

- National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts sponsored by the Commission on Worship;
- chaplain training developed by the Commission on Special Ministries and administered through Martin Luther College; and
- ministry evaluation tools provided by the Commission on Congregational Counseling.

At WLS, the work of providing continuing education opportunities for WELS pastors has been a part of the seminary's assigned task for more than a century. For example, for more than a century the faculty has produced *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, a professional journal aimed at providing spiritual and professional growth for pastors. In addition, for more than four decades, the seminary has held an annual summer quarter on its campus in Mequon as well as sending out its professors upon request all around the synod to teach and make presentations at gatherings of pastors and other called workers.

In 2010, the seminary sought to signal a renewed emphasis on providing such continuing education resources for our synod's pastors by establishing Grow in Grace: the Institute for Continuing Education at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. The seminary's continuing education work through Grow in Grace has been able to move ahead through several generous grants received from foundations and individuals.

Here are the mission and vision of Grow in Grace:

- The vision of Grow in Grace is that pastors in fellowship with WELS will find Grow in Grace a welcome partner in planning and implementing their pursuit of personal spiritual growth and professional lifelong learning.
- The mission of Grow in Grace is to advance the cause of the gospel in the 21st century by making ministry impacting continuing education resources available and accessible and by connecting pastors with partners who will encourage them in their spiritual and professional growth.

Under God's blessing, Grow in Grace seeks to reach that vision and accomplish its mission under four broad goals. Below are those goals and a brief summary of the current activities and future plans (God-willing) under each goal.

Curricular resources

Develop and/or deliver affordable, ministry impacting curriculum resources in the four theological disciplines offered by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (biblical, historical, systematic, and practical).

- WLS currently offers for-credit courses on campus (during Summer Quarter and Winterim), online (fall, spring, and summer semesters), and at satellite locations around the synod.
- In 2014, WLS's faculty and governing board approved a revision to the Master of Sacred Theology (STM) program that seeks to offer even more ministry related courses that provide pastors with opportunities to focus their growth in specific areas of study that match their spiritual gifts/interests and the ministry needs of their current place of service.
- WLS currently offers a scholarship program that matches dollar for dollar whatever a calling body contributes toward tuition for any for-credit course taken on campus, online, or at a satellite location. Although a long-term funding solution for these scholarships remains an unmet challenge, it is hoped that these matching grants can continue to be offered as WLS partners in this way with calling bodies.
- Seminary professors also offer shorter presentations (called Pastors Institutes) by request to circuits, conferences, and districts.
- Grow in Grace plans to work with more circuits, conferences, and districts to provide opportunities for more formal growth (in particular, satellite summer quarter courses) that are geographically closer to where pastors are carrying out their ministry.
- Grow in Grace also plans to help more pastors become comfortable utilizing the blessings of online courses, which allow pastors to avoid the cost in time and dollars of traveling to a course location.

Mentoring for new pastors and continued support for experienced pastors (Pastor Partners)

Provide formal and informal collaborative opportunities for called workers to learn from one another, as well as celebrate ministry milestones with their peers.

- This part of the work of Grow in Grace goes by the name Pastor Partners. There are two key emphases of Pastor Partners. The first is providing mentors for recent WLS graduates. The other is providing celebrations of ministry that assist pastors and their spouses to celebrate key ministry milestones.
- To help newly graduated pastors make the most of their first three years of ministry, a mentoring initiative was developed in 2010. For the first three years of ministry, trained pastors/mentors seek to help new pastors develop strong patterns for spiritual and professional growth that can prove a blessing throughout every year of ministry. The final goal as mentoring draws to a close is to assist the young pastor to strengthen relationships with his circuit pastor, other ministry peers, and lay leaders. Here is the growth in the mentoring initiative since its inception:

Year	Number of WLS graduates	Number requesting mentors	Pastors serving as their mentors
2011	41	19 (46% of graduates)	8
2012	29	22 (76% of graduates)	16
2013	35	29 (83% of graduates)	22
2014	23	22 (96% of graduates)	22

- The delegates at the 2015 convention will be asked to consider a resolution asking the synod to formally adopt this mentoring initiative for new pastors.
- Once the mentoring initiative is well established, Grow in Grace will investigate the wisdom of expanding support for pastors similar to the mentoring initiative by providing trained pastor/coaches for experienced pastors who would like to work with such a coach.
- In April 2015, two retreats were held simultaneously in San Antonio, Texas. Many pastors and their wives from the WLS class of 2005 enjoyed the fourth annual Renewed in Grace retreat. This retreat focuses on pastors (and spouses) who have recently celebrated 10 years in ministry. The retreat is built around Bible studies and workshops designed to strengthen joy in ministry for those serving God's people. At the same location, the second annual Finishing Well in Grace retreat was also held. This retreat focuses on pastors (and spouses) who have recently celebrated 25 years in ministry. This year those invited to the retreat were from the WLS class of 1990. Bible studies and workshops, focused on the blessings and challenges of this unique stage of pastoral ministry, were the centerpiece of this retreat.
- In addition to the 10- and 25-year retreats, the long-term goal is to provide two other annual retreats for pastors and spouses—at the conclusion of mentoring (Begun in Grace, scheduled to begin in 2016) and at retirement (Completed in Grace, scheduled to begin in 2018).

Evaluating ministry

Develop and/or deliver fresh and relevant resources that a pastor can use to assess his ministry faithfulness and plan for spiritual and professional growth in partnership with lay leaders and ministry peers.

- In 2011 an essay and resource packet were developed entitled *Ordained for a Life of Growth*. This packet was distributed to all circuit pastors. The circuit pastors were encouraged to study and discuss the essay (and the accompanying planning resources) with the pastors of their circuit. The goal was to help more pastors develop an annual pattern of planning for spiritual and professional growth. A survey conducted by Grow in Grace revealed that 82 percent of WELS pastoral circuits made use of those offered resources.
- In 2013 an essay with accompanying resources was developed entitled *Reclaiming Our Christ-Centered Lutheran Devotional Heritage*. This packet sought to help pastors (and other called workers) to strengthen their personal devotional life of Word and prayer by emphasizing devotional life primarily as a gift of God's grace in which he serves us.
- In 2015 a third package, *Fan God's Gifts into Flame*, is ready to be shared with the synod. This packet seeks to help pastors (and other called workers) to recognize how God has uniquely wired them for growth. The package also walks pastors (and other called workers) through a process that helps them to partner with family, ministry peers, and lay leaders in planning for growth spiritually in their callings as royal priests (spouse, parent, etc.) and in their calling as public ministers.

All three of these essays and resource packets have also been turned into workshops that can be scheduled by circuits, conferences, or districts. The second and third of these packages (*Reclaiming Our Christ-Centered Lutheran Devotional Heritage* and *Fan God's Gifts into Flame*) are also offered as for-credit courses as electives in Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's STM program either in Mequon or at satellite locations. With the completion of this third resource package, Grow in Grace plans to survey pastors to see if there remains a need to continue to produce such packages emphasizing particular areas of ministry-long spiritual and professional growth.

Encouraging informal learning

Develop and/or deliver ministry impacting informal learning resources that enable individual pastors and/or groups of pastors to carry out spiritual and professional growth.

The vast majority of opportunities for spiritual and professional growth have nothing to do with credits and classrooms, degrees or diplomas. Those credits and courses are often called the more formal side of continuing education. However, opportunities for more informal growth can appear far more regularly in pastors' schedules as well as arising as particular challenges of ministry confront those pastors and their congregations. These growth opportunities are also found whenever ministry peers gather for study. Such gatherings range from less structured

study groups of two or three pastors to the more structured gatherings of circuits, conferences, and districts. It is a goal of Grow in Grace to help pastors make the most of all such individual and corporate opportunities. Three particular encouragements for such informal learning are presently being pursued.

1. Regularly on the Grow in Grace website, the growth plans of a pastoral circuit are featured. As study plans, meeting agendas, and other ideas for spiritual and professional growth are shared, the goal is to develop bit by bit a clearinghouse of ideas for how pastoral circuits can pursue spiritual and professional growth.
2. Almost every week a new book review is posted in PDF and MP3 format on the Grow in Grace website. These book reviews, called *The Shepherd's Study*, are put together by a group of pastors who have organized themselves so as to produce reviews of books in every area of theological study.
3. Every other month, as a new issue of *Preach the Word* (a bimonthly preaching newsletter produced by the Commission on Worship) arrives in pastors' mailboxes, the Grow in Grace website continues to keep up to date a searchable database for all the volumes of *Preach the Word* that allows pastors and other interested readers to search for articles by author, subject, or Scripture reference.

Much more could be done to support this more informal side of spiritual and professional growth. A task force appointed by resolution of the 2013 synod convention will be reporting to the 2015 convention. Among the recommendations of the Continuing Education of Called Workers Task Force will be ideas for helping to support and encourage this informal side of growth (see p. 20).

Closing thoughts

In all that has been described under the work of the CECW, it is the prayer of the committee that God will bless these efforts to assist all our called workers in their progress in spiritual and professional growth. The ultimate goal of such growth is to display the splendor of Jesus' gospel to sheep already in the fold and to sheep not yet in Jesus' flock. Strengthening of gospel ministry to eternal souls is the heart of what spiritual and professional growth is all about.

Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee

Rev. James Huebner, chairman and first vice president of WELS

Rev. Bryan Gerlach, coordinator of WELS Congregation and Ministry Support Group

Prof. Richard Gurgel, director of continuing education, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Teacher James Henrickson, coordinator of Growing Educators in Ministry, Lutheran Schools

Prof. John Meyer, director of graduate studies, Martin Luther College

Prof. Lawrence Olson, director of staff ministry, Martin Luther College

Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of WELS Board for Ministerial Education

Teacher Jim Rademan, director of WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools

Continuing Education of Called Workers Task Force Floor Committee #2

Our calling

The 2013 synod convention directed the synod president to appoint a special task force to develop a continuing education process for pastors and staff ministers “so that progress toward professional growth for pastors and staff ministers can be more formally encouraged and reported.” Since that time the committee has met almost monthly to consider how we as a synod can better accomplish that task.

Our current situation

Tools to help encourage and report growth

The committee has designed and implemented a website with tools that pastors and staff ministers can use to better evaluate their unique gifts, personalities, and skill sets that God has given; how they can consider what they are doing for personal, professional, and especially spiritual growth; and what they might do better or differently in the future. The committee has also created tools where such growth plans and accomplishments could be easily reported to circuit pastors for encouragement. That website has been field tested by a handful of circuits and is currently under review for revisions.

“Four Branches Review” monthly e-newsletter

The committee has also begun plans for a monthly e-newsletter that will share short articles reviewing each of the four branches of theology: biblical theology (with the nuance of a Greek or Hebrew word or phrase coming up in the lectionary), historical theology (applying lessons learned from the history of the Church to the Church today), systematic theology (reviewing the articles of our faith in their practical application to heart and life), and practical theology (encouraging biblical models of leadership, counseling, evangelism, and education). This short newsletter will work in tandem with the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, where further reading can be done by those interested in pursuing a topic presented in greater detail. Prof. John Brug has agreed to serve by giving theological oversight to the newsletter. As of this writing, we are waiting to hear back from a potential editor-in-chief who would, with the help of Grow in Grace, coordinate a schedule for authors and compile the articles for publication.

Ministry realignment tools

The committee is also hoping to put together a toolkit for pastors to use that might include a text study, sermon outline, written sermon, Bible class, and hymn suggestions that a pastor could either use himself, or, better still, give to an elder to read near June 24 (the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist) and June 25 (the Feast of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession). This would free the pastor to spend some time that week reviewing his ordination vows and his gifts and plan for future personal, professional, and especially spiritual growth.

A look ahead

The task force is not able to have quality materials ready for release by July 2015. We respectfully request that our appointment be extended so that what is released during the upcoming biennium will be the best that we can offer.

Rev. Rob Guenther, reporter

Rev. Rob Guenther, chairman

Prof. Richard Gurgel

Mr. Lowell Holtz

Prof. Lawrence Olson

Rev. John Seifert

Staff Minister Brandon Steenbock

Rev. Brad Wordell

Translation Liaison Committee

Floor Committee #2

Our calling

The Translation Liaison Committee (TLC) was established in November 2013 by the Conference of Presidents to carry out a resolution of the 2013 WELS convention. Four professors and three parish pastors were appointed, and the TLC held its first meeting in December 2013. The purpose of the TLC, according to the convention resolution, is “to evaluate major Bible translations; to communicate with their editors and publishers; to offer, when appropriate, suggestions to improve such translations; and to share its findings with the synod at large” (2013 *Proceedings*, p. 68).

Our current situation

Contacts with the HCSB

The first activity of the TLC was to contact the publishers of the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB), because we heard that a revision of the HCSB was going forward. This inquiry blossomed into a number of personal contacts with HCSB representatives over the following months:

- In January 2014, two members of the TLC (Pastor Geoffrey Kieta and Prof. Thomas Nass) met with leaders of the HCSB at the LifeWay headquarters in Nashville, Tenn., to learn about the plans of the HCSB.
- In May 2014, three members of the TLC (Pastors Brett Brauer and Geoffrey Kieta and Prof. Thomas Nass) shared the TLC recommendations on “global issues” with the translation in person with HCSB leaders in Nashville.
- In November 2014, two members of the TLC (Pastor Geoffrey Kieta and Prof. Paul Zell) had extended visits with HCSB representatives at the convention of the Evangelical Theological Society in San Diego, Calif.
- E-mail exchanges took place throughout the year.

Throughout all of these contacts, we have been impressed with the hospitality of the HCSB leaders and their willingness to spend time with us and to welcome input from us.

HCSB plans

What we have learned about the HCSB is that Broadman & Holman Publishers is taking a top-to-bottom look at the HCSB with a view toward improving it in whatever way it can. An oversight committee is at work and, though dates cannot be shared, a revision will be coming sometime in the next few years.

What is especially noteworthy is that the publishers have stressed that they want the HCSB to be a Bible translation that serves Christians of many denominations, including Lutherans. They want to remove barriers to widespread use. As proof of their interest in Lutheranism, they have put two confessional Lutherans on the nine-person oversight committee—Prof. Andrew Steinmann of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod and Prof. Andrew Das of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Input on “global issues” in the HCSB

Upon the invitation of HCSB leaders, the TLC first wrote up recommendations dealing with “global issues” in the HCSB—issues that are not limited to one passage or context. In May we shared 56 pages of recommendations on such topics, commenting on the plan of salvation page, the Tetragrammaton, the use of “slave” and “Messiah,” and other things. Our work is available for anyone to view on the WELS website at www.wels.net/tlc.

Of course, we don’t know to what extent the HCSB oversight committee will follow our recommendations, but we can say that the HCSB overseers received our recommendations graciously—even eagerly. We got the impression that they have heard some of the same concerns from others, and there is a good possibility that some changes will be made that will make the translation more suitable to use in WELS.

Input on individual passages in the HCSB

Following the writing and delivery of our recommendations on “global issues,” the TLC was invited to share translation suggestions also on individual passages of the HCSB. We have been working as zealously as we can to do that since May 2014. As of the writing of this report, the TLC has drafted about 600 translation recommendations on individual passages, and we expect to prepare many more before the April 30, 2015, deadline for all submissions.

It should be said that most of our suggestions are minor matters, the sorts of things that a committee like ours could come up with for any translation. But since the HCSB is serious about trying to improve its translation and has been open to our input, we have been trying to cover the entire HCSB with a careful reading and to write up whatever we think could be improved, even if it amounts to minor polishing.

In order to help in this effort, the TLC has employed the assistance of a number of others. We would like to thank publicly the following for reading a portion of the HCSB and writing up translation suggestions for the TLC: Pastor Phil Arnold, Prof. Forrest Bivens, Pastor Aaron Dolan, Pastor Paul Janke, Pastor Robert Meiselwitz, Prof. Mark Paustian, Prof. John Schmidt, Pastor Daniel Witte, Prof. Paul Wendland, and Pastor James Westendorf.

When we are finished with our recommendations on individual passages, we intend to make them available for all who are interested, as we did with the global recommendations. You may look for something on our website later in the year.

When the revised HCSB appears

It remains to be seen what the revised HCSB will look like when it is published. It is the opinion of the TLC that WELS should plan on taking a good look at the revised HCSB when it appears.

When the HCSB was scrutinized in the “Review of the 102” in 2012–13, there were many positive comments about the HCSB. There were also negative comments, with numerous reviewers suggesting that the HCSB needed a good editing or revision. Maybe if a good revision is accomplished, the HCSB will be a translation that can see wide use in WELS. Perhaps it could be a translation that WELS could coalesce around in the future. Time will tell.

The 50th anniversary of the New International Version

As part of its assignment, the TLC plans to interact, when appropriate, with publishers of any Bible translation that is of interest to WELS. Because of the prominent use of the New International Version (NIV) in our midst, the TLC sent two members (Pastor Geoffrey Kieta and Prof. Paul Zell) to attend the 50th anniversary banquet and program for the NIV, held in San Diego at the convention of the Evangelical Theological Society in November. (The publishing of the NIV started in 1973, but the first translation conference that laid plans for the NIV took place 50 years ago, in August 1965.)

It turns out that there was no major news about the NIV shared at this gathering. The chairman of the Committee on Bible Translation (CBT), Douglas Moo, said that the CBT continues to receive input on the translation decisions they have made and to meet regularly, but they have not set a date to begin another revision. Though electronic media are ideally suited for continuous updates, Moo stated that most people still buy paper Bibles. Consequently there is a need for “stability” in the existing text of the NIV, and it is important not to publish revisions too frequently.

Since there has not been any pressing need, the TLC has not given any special attention to the NIV to this point.

The English Standard Version

In addition to making contact with HCSB and NIV representatives in San Diego in November, our TLC members also searched out representatives of the English Standard Version (ESV). A representative of Crossway Books indicated that there may be a further revision of the ESV undertaken in a few years, but if so, it would not even be as extensive as the revision published in 2011, which was very modest. A consistent message has been given by ESV leaders that they do not want to “destabilize the text.”

As with the NIV, the TLC has not devoted any time so far to the ESV.

A look ahead

With all of our HCSB recommendations, the first 16 months of the TLC have been intensely busy. We have held more than 30 meetings in that time. Thankfully, we have been able to meet with Google Hangouts at no cost to the synod, so our only expense has been our travel to meet translation representatives.

We would like to believe that giving recommendations to the HCSB is the sort of work that WELS intended with the establishment of the TLC. During our translation discussion from 2011–13, we as a synod wrung our hands over some of the changes we saw appearing in the published Bible translations. The TLC was formed to see if WELS could have some input with Bible publishers. Even if the HCSB does not see widespread use in WELS, we hope that we may have done something to make it a better vehicle for communicating God’s Word.

After our recommendations to the HCSB are completed, we are not sure what should occupy our attention next. As a new committee, we welcome the advice and input of others. Please share your ideas with any member of the committee about how we may be as useful as possible.

Prof. Thomas Nass, reporter

Prof. Thomas Nass, chairman
Rev. Glenn Schwanke, secretary
Rev. Brett Brauer
Prof. Kenneth Cherney Jr.
Prof. Joel Fredrich
Rev. Geoffrey Kieta
Prof. Paul Zell

Commission on Inter-Church Relations Floor Committee #3

Our calling

The WELS Bylaws charge the Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR) to “serve under the Conference of Presidents by representing the synod in doctrinal discussions with other church bodies who are, or are not, in fellowship with the synod” and to “keep itself informed on the doctrinal trends in other church bodies.” This function is in keeping with the object and purpose of the synod: to “extend and conserve the true doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church” (WELS Constitution, Article IV).

To carry out our calling, the CICR meets twice each year as a commission, including regular meetings with the Doctrine Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), for theological discussion, information sharing, and mutual encouragement. The CICR has also assisted individuals and churches that are seeking to take confessional Lutheran stances around the world. Finally, commission members stay abreast of happenings in other Lutheran church bodies through periodical reading and with visits to church conventions, conferences, and symposia.

Our current situation

The Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference

The Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) consists of confessional Lutheran church bodies throughout the world, including WELS. God has truly blessed the CELC since its organization in 1993. Membership has grown from the 13 member churches present at the first convention to 29 member synods today, including 22 full members and seven associate members. CICR members have consistently participated at CELC triennial meetings through their attendance and through their service as elected officers of the conference.

The eighth triennial convention of the CELC was held in Lima, Peru, May 30–June 2, 2014. The members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Peru were gracious and capable hosts. ELS missionary David Haeuser and Pastor Steven Petersen, administrator for the ELS Board for World Outreach, were instrumental in making arrangements for the convention. The theme of the convention was “We Are God’s Workmanship—Created in Christ Jesus for Good Works.” Participants heard and discussed five essays on sanctification.

Each member synod of the CELC and a few non-member visitors gave 10-minute PowerPoint presentations on the work of their respective churches. It was heartening for the delegates to see and hear what the Holy Spirit is accomplishing through churches in our fellowship around the world (Acts 15:3). Prof. Kenneth Cherney also reported on the work of the THETA Commission, which helps facilitate advanced theological training for national leaders and serves as a clearinghouse for such programs worldwide. He provided various examples, including the fact that GRATSI (Greater African Theological Studies Institute) in Central Africa will grant a Bachelor of Divinity degree through Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) with a curriculum that was developed with strong input from the churches in central Africa.

Five churches were accepted as associate members at the convention: the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church of Albania, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Finland, Christ Evangelical Lutheran Ministries (CELM) from India, the Lutheran Mission of Salvation—India (LMSI), and the Christian Church of the Lutheran Reformation of the Republic of Chile.

The following elections also took place: Pastor Daniel Koelpin (WELS), president; Prof. Gaylin Schmeling (ELS), vice-president; Pastor Timothy Buelow (ELS), secretary; Pastor Michael Duncan (WELS), Planning Committee; Pastor Larry M. Schlomer (WELS), Planning Committee.

We are thankful that regional meetings of the CELC are scheduled to take place in 2015: Africa (April), Europe (June), and Asia (October). These regional meetings give our sister churches in those areas additional opportunities to encourage one another in their mission and ministry.

The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany (ELFK) will host the 2017 convention at the Gymnasium St. Augustin in Grimma, where Lutheran pastor and hymn writer Paul Gerhardt was a student. Since 2017 will mark the 500th anniversary of Luther's posting of the 95 Theses, the 2014 CELC delegates authorized the writing and distribution of a new set of 95 Theses for the anniversary, presenting all the Lutheran fundamentals but also including topics directed toward religious challenges in our contemporary society. It was proposed that if these "95 Theses for the 21st Century" are approved at the 2017 convention in Germany, they could be translated and circulated in all CELC churches and read publicly on Oct. 31, 2017, in CELC churches around the world. Prof. Thomas Nass (WELS) and Pastor John Moldstad (ELS) will be heading the 95 Theses project with additional appointees from around the world to be added by the planning committee.

Additional information about the CELC can be found on the CELC website at www.celc.info. Included on the website are the *Proceedings* from the 2014 convention with the full text of the five essays. The website also has pictures from the 2014 convention, information about each of the member churches, and PowerPoint presentations that could be used to introduce people to the CELC and its member churches.

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod

The ELS is our American sister synod with which we have been in fellowship since its organization in 1918. Presently the ELS has about 19,000 souls in roughly 130 congregations. The CICR maintains contact with the ELS in a variety of ways in order to express and foster our unity in faith.

Pastor Steven Lange attended the 2014 ELS Convention as the official CICR observer. The delegates re-elected Pastor John A. Moldstad to a four-year term as president and Pastor Glenn Obenberger to a four-year term as vice president. WELS President Mark Schroeder greeted the convention on behalf of WELS and highlighted the areas of cooperation between WELS and the ELS, as well as the ongoing discussions between WELS, the ELS, and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). Pastor Thomas Rank of Scarville, Iowa, presented the convention essay, "Engaging Others with Jesus in Times of Trial." He highlighted the inescapable reality of suffering in our sinful world and the importance of relying on the revealed God in these times rather than attempting to delve into God's hidden will and work.

Several CICR members joined other WELS representatives to meet with ELS leaders at the Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum, held at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry, on Oct. 20–21, 2014. Forum participants spent several hours discussing essays written and presented by both WELS and ELS pastors, including a presentation by Prof. Thomas Nass on the history of relations with the Church of the Lutheran Confession dating back to the days of the Synodical Conference. They also received updates on the mission and ministry of each synod. As always, it was encouraging to recognize the fundamental unity of doctrine and practice that is present among the leaders of our two synods and to rejoice in the work that our Savior is graciously doing among us and through us. The next meeting of the forum was scheduled for Oct. 17–18, 2016, in Mankato, Minn. Pastor Daniel Basel (ELS) continues to serve as forum chairman; Teacher James Rademan (WELS) was elected secretary for the next four years.

Pastor Lange is slated to attend the 2015 ELS convention. The CICR is scheduled to meet with the ELS Doctrine Committee in September 2015.

Baltic and Eastern Europe

The CICR maintains direct contact with the Confessional Lutheran Church in Latvia through its contact man, Pastor Jonathan Balge. Understandably, the Christians in this sister church are concerned about the geo-political situation in their part of the world. We continue to pray for them and for their gospel work in God's kingdom.

Beginning in January 2014, WELS became the primary ministry partner of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church (ULC), as a result of an agreement with the ELS. In view of this new arrangement, the role of contacting the ULC was shifted from the CICR to the WELS Board for World Missions.

Scandinavia

The CICR continues to promote contact and communication with sister churches in Sweden, Norway, and Finland. That work is especially carried out through our new CICR contact man to Scandinavia, Prof. Keith Wessel, who plans to make a trip to Scandinavia in the summer of 2015 to get a firsthand look at the ministry being carried out there.

The Lutheran Confessional Church (LBK) in Sweden celebrated its 40th anniversary in July 2014. This church has had its share of difficulties over the years, but it continues to persevere as an active voice for the gospel in Sweden. Prof. John Brug represented WELS at the anniversary convention. The LBK–Sweden elected Pastor Ingvar Adriansson as its new chairman and resolved to produce its own hymnal.

Germany

The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany (ELFK) is a church body of nearly 1,250 members in 16 parishes. The CICR, through its Germany contact man, seeks to maintain and strengthen the ties of fellowship between WELS and the ELFK. Prof. John Brenner is currently serving as contact man.

Among other things, the 2014 ELFK convention authorized the calling of a missionary to northern Germany. Besides congregational work, the ELFK continues to publish printed material and hopes to complete a hymnal project by the end of 2015.

A seminary summer quarter has been instituted by the ELFK to host European pastors in our fellowship. In 2014 Prof. Bill Tackmier taught two courses; Prof. Paul Wendland is scheduled to present in 2015. Two ELFK students, Louisa Klärner and Anna Bergert, are currently enrolled at Michigan Lutheran Seminary. The Germany Support Fund provides financial assistance for educational activities like these.

Czech Republic

Prof. Bill Tackmier visited the Czech Evangelical Lutheran Church in June 2014. This was the first time that a CICR member visited the church, which has three congregations with two national pastors. This church was planted by ELS missionaries, and it operates Martin Luther School in Plzen. Information about the Czech church was published at the end of the 2015 WELS Yearbook, where other CELC churches are listed. Hopefully WELS members are aware of these listings, so they visit churches of our fellowship when traveling abroad.

Portugal

Prof. Kenneth Cherney serves as the contact man to our sister church body in Portugal, the Lutheran Church of Portugal (ILP). The Antioch II Foundation has supplied a two-year grant to support the work of Pastor Artur Villares, who has put together an aggressive ministry plan for gospel outreach in Portugal. Another generous donation was given to assist in a new Brazilian missionary initiative by Pastor António Canoa to be jointly overseen by WELS and the ILP.

Puerto Rico

It is the responsibility of the CICR to maintain contact with our sister church in Puerto Rico, the Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Church. The CICR does this through Pastor Timothy Satorius, a liaison who makes periodic visits. A 50th anniversary celebration of the work in Puerto Rico was held on Oct. 30–Nov. 2, 2014. Visiting dignitaries in attendance for the weekend were: Pastor Dan Koelpin (CELC), Pastor Larry Schlomer (BWM), former Puerto Rico missionaries Pastor Ralph (and Roxanne) Martens, Pastor John (and Barbara) Strackbein, Pastor Paul (and Carol) Hartmann, Pastor Ron (and Karen) Baerbock, Pastor Steve (and Brenda) Wagenknecht, and Pastor Tim (and Lorna) Satorius. The Puerto Rico church is small, with three congregations and two national pastors. But there is a good group of young people, and two Puerto Rican men are looking to finish their theological training.

Japan

The CICR has assumed responsibility for contacting the Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church in Japan (LECC), since the BWM has ended its mission work there. The LECC numbers 366 souls in six congregations. It is a doctrinally strong church, but recently it has been faced with a shortage of pastors. Former missionary Kermit Habben has agreed to be a liaison with the LECC for the CICR, and in that capacity he visited Japan in 2014 and is planning another visit in 2015. Oversight of the Japan Fund has been transferred to the CICR, and with that fund we hope to cover our contact expenses and to offer limited aid.

Hong Kong

In November 2014 the CICR received a request from the South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM) in Hong Kong that the CICR work with its members to establish an official fellowship relationship with WELS, with a view toward membership in the CELC. The CICR looks forward to receiving a statement of faith from SALEM and to working with its members.

“Guidelines for the CICR and the BWM”

As directed by the 2013 WELS convention, the CICR and the BWM reexamined and slightly revised the “Guidelines for the CICR and the BWM in Working with Churches that Desire to Enter or Have Entered into Fellowship with WELS.” These guidelines seem to be working well, and there is a good working relationship between the CICR and the BWM. When a church requires the regular, ongoing assistance of WELS mission personnel and WELS budgetary funds, then the church falls under the purview of the BWM. Independent churches fall under the purview of the CICR.

Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod

The CICR continues to monitor developments in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS). Another informal meeting between leaders of WELS, the ELS, and the LCMS was held in December 2014, where the doctrine and practice of church fellowship was the main topic. A special effort was made to understand one another’s perspectives on this biblical teaching and to defuse any caricatures of theological positions that may have developed before and after the dissolution of the Synodical Conference in the 1960s. Another meeting is planned for December 2015. As it has done in the past, the CICR will also plan to send an observer to the 2016 LCMS convention, scheduled to be held in Milwaukee.

Lutheran Church of Canada

Through Pastor Harland Goetzinger, the president of WELS–Canada, the CICR was informed about the Lutheran Church of Canada (LCC), the sister synod of the LCMS in Canada. Goetzinger attended the LCC convention and had a get-acquainted visit with LCC President Robert Bugbee.

Church of the Lutheran Confession

On Jan. 30, 2015, representatives from the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC), the ELS, and WELS met for doctrinal discussions at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry. This was the first meeting between representatives of these three synods since 1990. It was called by the synod presidents with the encouragement of the appropriate synod committees, upon the request of a grassroots group of pastors from all three synods in the Mankato, Minn., area.

The meeting was cordial and productive. The participants shared perspectives on the history of the relationship between the three synods. The participants also discussed the “Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship Between Church Bodies,” a document that was prepared in 1990 during the last round of doctrinal discussions. A reconciliation is not expected to come about easily or quickly between the CLC and ELS/WELS. But attendees found it was useful to hear firsthand how the situation looks from the perspective of others and to discuss what it would take to overcome the breach that has separated the synods.

Representing the CLC were Pres. Michael Eichstadt, Pastor Paul Nolting, and Pastor Bruce Naumann; representing the ELS were Pres. John Moldstad, Prof. Gaylin Schmeling, and Prof. Erling Teigen; and representing WELS were Prof. John Brenner, Prof. Thomas Nass, and Pres. Mark Schroeder. Only one of these participants was involved in the 1990 meetings, so this meeting brought together a new generation of leaders who have not discussed the issues together before.

A second meeting was planned for April 17, 2015, in Eau Claire, Wis., to continue the discussions. The second meeting will focus more pointedly on the “Joint Statement” of 1990 and will begin the discussion of other topics of concern.

Pastor Ben Tomczak attended the 2014 convention of the CLC in Eau Claire, Wis., as a representative of the CICR. A report from his attendance can be found in *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Winter 2015, pp. 58-61.

Other churches

The CICR continues to track exciting developments particularly in Asia and Africa, as people in those regions of the world demonstrate increasing hunger for the living bread and water that only Jesus provides through the eternal gospel of forgiveness. Especially the CICR has been intrigued to learn about the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia, led by Pastor Kebede Yigezu. This church has been visited by WELS mission personnel, and Pastor Kebede will be attending the CELC regional meeting in Africa in 2015.

CICR special funds

The CICR now oversees six special funds that are used to cover our contact expenses and to help sister churches in specific areas. The funds are the Baltic Eastern Europe Fund, the Germany Support Fund, the Japan Fund, the Portugal Fund, the Puerto Rico Fund, and the Scandinavia Fund. Gifts to these funds are encouraged from school groups, women's groups, individuals, and others. Gifts may be sent to the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry and will be received with thanks from the CICR.

A look ahead

This year CICR personnel will serve as convention observers in various places. The commission sees attendance at these gatherings as opportunities to express interest in what is happening in other churches and to keep ourselves informed about events and activities in their midst. CICR personnel will also continue monitoring various Lutheran publications to stay informed on the Lutheran scene in North America and around the world.

Prof. Thomas Nass's 23 years of faithful CICR service, both as a parish pastor and professor, will officially come to an end with the 2015 WELS convention. He served the last eight years as CICR chairman and will be replaced by another member of the Martin Luther College faculty, as appointed by the WELS Conference of Presidents. Prof. John Brenner was elected to serve as the new CICR chairman; Pastor Bart Brauer will become the new vice-chairman. Prof. Paul O. Wendland has been relieved of his official advisory status to the CICR, due to the press of his duties as seminary president. We heartily thank both him and Prof. Nass for their dedicated service to the commission and synod.

Rev. Peter Prange, reporter

Prof. Thomas Nass, chairman
Prof. John M. Brenner, vice chairman
Rev. Peter Prange, secretary
Rev. Jonathan Balge
Rev. Bart Brauer
Prof. Kenneth Cherney Jr.
Rev. Steven Lange
Prof. Bill Tackmier
Rev. Benjamin Tomczak
Prof. Keith Wessel

Advisory:

Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president
Rev. James Huebner, WELS first vice president
Prof. Paul O. Wendland, president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Ministry of Christian Giving Floor Committee #4

Our calling

WELS Ministry of Christian Giving (MCG) serves on behalf of the Conference of Presidents to encourage every WELS member to "excel in the grace of giving" through Christ. We consider it a privilege to help God's people make gifts to Jesus for his work in their congregations, synod, and other WELS organizations.

The MCG assists the Conference of Presidents with its responsibility to fund the synod. This funding is provided through Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) as well as direct gifts to WELS from individuals and foundations.

- In the area of CMO, our efforts are focused on supplying congregations with ministry opportunities and needs as well as stewardship training resources.
- In the area of direct gifts from individuals, we regularly mail and e-mail appeals for support of synodical ministries.

We also provide information to donors about estate planning and other planned giving options that allow them to give in a way that is beneficial for them, their families, and the ministries close to their hearts. The MCG offers 17 Christian giving counselors (12.8 full time equivalents due to 7 of the counselors being semi-retired) across all 12 districts of WELS to assist prospective donors with gifts of any kind. These services are free and confidential.

- Gifts from foundations often result from consultation between the MCG director, other synod leaders, and the foundations regarding funding of new ideas and enhancements to ministry.

Our current situation

Per the direction of the 2013 synod convention, the special synodwide offering to eliminate the remainder of the synod's debt is being launched at this convention and will conclude at district conventions in 2016.

Other recent developments:

- When Congregation Mission Offering subscriptions decreased for 2014, the Ministry of Christian Giving worked with the President's Office and Communication Services to revisit these subscriptions with congregations. God blessed the effort with nearly \$500,000 in additional subscriptions and more than \$50,000 in one-time gifts. Ultimately, congregations increased their 2014 offerings 1.3 percent over 2013.
- We reduced our 2014–15 ministry plan by \$80,500 (4.78 percent of budget) as part of the Synodical Council's \$825,000 budget reduction plan in response to reduced 2014 CMO subscriptions. We are committed to working with a reduced printing allowance and no contingency funds for the next two fiscal years.
- We continue assisting our ministerial education schools with their capital campaigns. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's 2013–14 *Heritage and Hope: Remembering . . . Rejoicing* 150th anniversary celebration surpassed its campaign goal, gathering just over one million dollars. Luther Preparatory School is currently celebrating the 150th anniversary of ministerial education on its Watertown campus with the *LPS 150: Lives Prepared for Service* campaign. Thank offerings totaled about \$500,000 as of March 2015.
- Through face-to-face visits and presentations, our Christian giving counselors invite faith-prompted support of the WELS Operating Fund, the Congregation and Ministry Support Group, Home and World Missions, the ministerial education schools, Christian Aid and Relief, and the WELS endowments.
- Congregations and individuals gave \$129,000 in special offerings as part of the *Come Follow Me* Walking Together emphasis developed by the MCG and the Congregation and Ministry Support Group.
- The 2005 synod convention asked the Ministry of Christian Giving to work toward building up \$300 million in WELS endowment funds. By early 2015 WELS received \$19.6 million in gifts with another \$55.7 million expected from deferred gifts arranged by donors working with Christian giving counselors. In 2014 a distribution of \$658,000 was made from these WELS endowments, including \$370,000 to Missions and \$287,000 to Ministerial Education.
- During each of the past six fiscal years, Christian giving counselors have averaged (per full-time equivalent) 282 face-to-face donor visits and have nurtured on average (per full-time equivalent) \$500,000+ in immediate gifts (not including gifts to congregations or collaborative partners) and \$2,000,000+ in deferred expectancies. We praise the Lord for blessing our efforts and, more importantly, prompting and enabling God's people to honor him with generous gifts for his kingdom endeavors!
- In fiscal year 2013–14, WELS Christian giving counselors (12.8 full-time equivalents) conducted 3,256 free, confidential visits with God's people that helped facilitate \$4.6 million in gifts received for WELS and \$26.7 million in deferred expectancies for congregations, synod, and other WELS organizations.
- In fiscal year 2013–14, Ministry of Christian Giving mailings helped facilitate \$829,000 in immediate support for WELS.
- In partnership with WELS Foundation, the Ministry of Christian Giving mailed its first appeal promoting the deferred gift annuity opportunity for those 45-65 years old in 2014. We are sending our second annual deferred gift annuity appeal in 2015.
- The MCG worked with Technology to optimize the WELS online donation site for mobile devices and to provide users of the WELS and ministerial education school online donation sites with the option to make gifts in tribute to loved ones, including sending e-cards to notify others about the tribute gifts.
- In conjunction with WELS Foundation, the MCG conducted its annual WELS Development Training. Eighteen Christian giving counselors and other WELS development personnel participated. Lord-willing, the training will be offered again Jan. 13–15, 2016.

A look ahead

Following are our goals and plans for 2015:

- God-willing, as of the convention we will have called a new Christian giving counselor for the Southeastern Wisconsin District to replace deferred gifts specialist Mr. Jim Schwartz, who retired from his service to the district in March 2015. We thank the Lord for his service, and we ask our Savior to bless the labors of his successor.
- As of the convention, we will have worked with the Technology office to mobile-optimize the online giving sites for our ministerial education schools. We will have also worked to utilize our online donations software system so that data from e-appeals will automatically feed into our database.
- The MCG will have assisted Martin Luther College with its first online giving day in May.
- The MCG is working with WELS Communication Services to update the ministry's presence on www.wels.net. This includes moving resources for congregational leaders from Connect to the new [wels.net](http://www.wels.net) site. The updated website will make it easier for users to find financial resources by topic rather than searching by area of ministry.
- We are updating our congregational planned giving manual, which is a guide to help churches encourage planned gifts for the benefit of Christ's kingdom.
- At its January 2015 meeting, the Conference of Presidents approved a plan to conduct a review of the structure and function of the Ministry of Christian Giving in early 2016.

The Ministry of Christian Giving is privileged to serve God and you by helping to fund the ministries that touch the hearts of WELS members. We are happy that these gifts in response to Christ's love are helping us as a synod to fulfill our calling of proclaiming Jesus' name to more and more people.

Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, reporter

Rev. Kevin Schultz
 Mr. Robert Trojan
 Mr. Robert Tupper
 Mr. Mark Handeland

Advisory:

Rev. Kurt Lueneburg

Communication Services Floor Committee #5

Our calling

Communication Services exists to assist the Conference of Presidents in communicating WELS' mission to the members of the synod. It is responsible for a clear and consistent communication of the synod's mission from the synod's national offices—and for exploring, supporting, and expediting innovative media usage, shared communication, and similar improvements on a continuing basis for WELS ministries and congregations. It is also responsible for reviewing and authorizing all new communications originating in the synod's national office. The current staff consists of five full-time equivalents and one part-time equivalent.

Our current situation

The Communication Services staff is focused on working on the synod's major communication initiatives. The most important initiative is to coordinate the various WELS communications platforms so that they have a single, recognizable look and feel. The department's goal is also to layer key communications to address key topics simultaneously across main communication channels. WELS members should notice the same topics being discussed from different angles in each of these platforms each month. The mailed monthly appeal from the Ministry of Christian Giving also follows this theme.

Here are the annual ongoing projects:

- *WELS Connection*, the monthly video viewed in more than eight hundred congregations is entering its 29th year of providing stories that highlight the important work happening as a result of our Congregation Mission Offerings.

- *WELS Connection* Close-up, the print companion piece to the video presentation, has a print run of 123,000 per month and showcases the area of ministry of the month.
- *Forward in Christ*, WELS' official monthly magazine with a print run of 37,000, celebrated its 100-year anniversary in 2014 and continues to address important issues facing Christians today.
- "Together," a bi-weekly e-newsletter, is e-mailed to more than 9,000 subscribers the first and third Tuesday of each month. Stories are posted on wels.net, and more than three hundred congregations also use the print version as a bulletin insert. This newsletter reports on synod news and events about which every WELS member should know.
- The synod's official website, www.wels.net, had more than 535,000 unique visitors during 2014. The annual number of page views continues to reach new heights at more than 3.7 million. About 30 percent of users access the site via a mobile device.

Communication Services' goal is to work with each area of ministry and subsidiary to identify their priorities and then to communicate these priorities to laypeople and called workers alike through a cross-promotion strategy. Communication Services remains committed and able to continue developing content for all other essential internal communication tools, including *Book of Reports and Memorials*, the convention delegate's booklet, *Report to the Twelve Districts, Proceedings*—the official record of each synod convention, live streaming WELS events, and reporting of convention proceedings.

Here is a list of recently completed projects:

- VEBA advantages campaign—The VEBA (Voluntary Employee Benefits Association) Commission is concerned that some WELS congregations will consider removing younger workers from the WELS VEBA plan and have them obtain health insurance through government exchange plans. Because of the potential threat of the Affordable Care Act on WELS VEBA, several communications pieces have been prepared by the Communication Services team in conjunction with the Benefit Plans Office.
 1. A letter from President Schroeder was sent to all active pastors in September 2014.
 2. A VEBA marketing mailer was sent to workers and organizations in mid-October 2014.
 3. A new website section went live to summarize the VEBA campaign in mid-October 2014.
 4. A WELS "Together" article to all called workers and organizations was published in November 2014.
 5. An article highlighting the advantages of VEBA was included in the November issue of *Forward in Christ* magazine.
- WELS staff from Benefit Plans, Communications, and Technology worked with a third-party vendor to migrate content from the old Benefit Plans website to the new WELS-hosted web platform on May 15, 2015. The new WELS web platform provides significant enhancements in user interface, accessibility on mobile devices, and access to a wide range of new features.
- Communication Services produced materials needed to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Watertown, Wis., campus. Working with the Ministry of Christian Giving and Luther Preparatory School, the Communications office prepared an anniversary logo, Christian giving counselor's case statement, and *WELS Connection* recruitment/ anniversary video and letterhead to be used during the year-long campaign.
- Interactive Faith online Bible studies are held twice per year. Led by a pastor or professor, these one-hour studies are broadcast live via the Internet. Many congregations gather as a group for the Wednesday night study; other WELS members connect as couples or individuals. Postcards, posters, and worship folder inserts are created and mailed to every congregation to promote the Bible studies.
- Working with the Ministry of Christian Giving, President Schroeder, and Chief Financial Officer Todd Poppe, the Communications office prepared presentation materials for circuit pastors to use during the Congregation Mission Offering revisit meetings during the summer of 2014.
- The 2014 WELS International Youth Rally was held June 25–28, 2014, at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. More than 1,800 young people attended workshops on relationships, social networking, dealing with temptations, finding ways to serve at home and abroad, and making decisions beyond high school. A logo was created for the event along with the layout and design for all convention print materials including a promotional booklet, poster, and bulletin insert.
- The seventh triennial WELS National Worship Conference was held July 22–25, 2014, at Carthage College, Kenosha, Wis. More than 1,000 attendees gathered for four days of worship, instruction, and camaraderie. A logo was created for the event along with the layout and design for all conference print materials. A promotional brochure was made available to our congregations. Full news coverage of this conference was shared with our members in the "Together" e-newsletter.

- More than 1,700 WELS members attended WELS Night at Miller Park on Aug. 5, 2014. The WELS Center for Mission and Ministry hosted a pre-game meet-and-greet event that drew hundreds of people. This first annual event was a chance to meet WELS members throughout the Midwest in a casual setting all while promoting our synod to the greater Milwaukee area. The date for the 2015 WELS Night at Miller Park event is Aug. 14.
- Communication Services provides monthly digital display graphics for churches and schools to inform members of WELS events and programs supported through their Congregation Mission Offerings.

A look ahead

The synod's long-range plan states:

Worldwide identity as Confessional Lutherans

1.1 - WELS will be more widely known as a confessional Lutheran church body, firmly founded on the Holy Scriptures and joyfully proclaiming the saving love of Jesus Christ in Word and sacrament to as many people as possible around the globe.

To accomplish this goal, the following multiple major initiatives are planned for the next biennium:

- Communication Services in partnership with the Ministry of Christian Giving is preparing print and video materials to be used for the synodwide debt elimination campaign.
- The Communication Services team worked with the Technology staff to redesign the official synod website, www.wels.net. The new website will be more topical than departmentalized—designed for the average layperson or non-WELS visitor. It will be easier to search and will be optimized for mobile devices. We plan to launch the new design prior to the 2015 synod convention. The site includes a WELS Resource Center that will replace the current “public” Connect intranet site.
- *Forward in Christ* (FIC) magazine is featuring a new series that highlights the people being reached around the world through WELS World Missions. Short PowerPoint presentations that share pictures and facts about WELS mission fields are available to download for use during your congregation's offering or at the conclusion of a worship service. A new presentation that corresponds with the mission field being highlighted in FIC will be available each month. This is another way to communicate to our members the blessings of their Congregation Mission Offerings.
- *Forward in Christ's* new parenting column, *Heart to heart: Parent conversations*, is hosting live webcasts from a new video production studio located in the Center for Mission and Ministry. Communications staff member Nicole Balza hosts the quarterly webcast and interviews authors on current topics. FIC's new parenting column is designed to be an honest forum for Christian parents to build one another up and support each other. We need to expose the magazine to a younger demographic if we expect to maintain or grow our monthly subscriptions.
- Social media is another important communications platform and tool to reach our members. Our Facebook page, facebook.com/welslutherans has around 20,000 followers, and we are posting daily to encourage more interaction and sharing from our followers. We also have a Twitter page, @welstweets, with nearly 1,500 followers and an Instagram account and YouTube channel. We will once again use social media as a communications and marketing tool for the 2016 WELS International Youth Rally. With nearly 2,000 young participants expected to attend the rally, the wels.net home page and our Facebook and Twitter pages will be the source of information and stories happening at the rally. It will be a great way for parents, family, and friends of the participants to keep up-to-date on events at the rally and have these young people share their experiences and photos from the rally.
- Five copies of *WELS Annual Report 2014* were mailed to every WELS congregation, and one was included in the Ministry of Christian Giving annual statement of each synod donor. For the first time, free print versions of the report are available from Northwestern Publishing House. Christian giving counselors were provided a PowerPoint presentation that summarizes the information in the annual report.
- Communication Services, in cooperation with Home Missions, produced a video for the WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF) that explains the purpose and impact of investing with CEF. The video features a home mission congregation that benefits from a grant provided by CEF. It also highlights CEF's low interest loan program available to existing congregations and schools. Every WELS congregation was mailed a DVD earlier this year.
- We live in an age where video is the primary method of communication. We need to have the capability of doing it well as viewers expect high quality video production. An Antioch II Foundation grant allowed us to recently build a studio within the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry (CMM). The studio is used to highlight the important work of the WELS areas of ministry and subsidiaries.
- Planning is underway for the development of materials needed for our synod's celebration of Reformation 500 in

2017. Communication Services seeks to increase the visible church known as WELS both in the state of Wisconsin—home to our largest concentration of congregations—and nationally. Television, radio, and online advertising campaigns would promote our website, www.wels.net, and WELS Mobile products. This Reformation 500 campaign will establish WELS as a beacon of confessional Lutheranism and promote all of our congregations as places where the law and gospel are preached.

The workload on our current Communications staff is at capacity. If not for the servant's attitude and incredible work ethic of the talented and dedicated individuals, many of these projects would not be completed in a timely manner.

Mr. Lee Hitter, reporter

Advisory:

Rev. John A. Braun, Northwestern Publishing House

Mr. Lee Hitter, director of communications

Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president

Prof. Daniel Leyrer, *Forward in Christ* consultant

Nominating Committee

Floor Committee #24

These candidates have been chosen by the synod Nominating Committee to be presented to the delegates of the 63rd biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The delegates will elect one man for each position listed unless otherwise indicated. Incumbents are noted by an asterisk (*).

Board for Home Missions

Chairman

Matthew Brown, Clarksville, Tenn.

Wayne Uhlhorn, Colorado Springs, Colo.

Charles Westra, Columbia, Tenn.*

Board for Ministerial Education

Parish pastor

John Bortulin, Mukwonago, Wis.*

Mark Voss, Oakland, Mich.

Michael Zuberbier, Fond du Lac, Wis.

Teacher

David Bartelt, Jackson, Wis.

Frederick Lohmiller, Thorton, Colo.

Kurt Rosenbaum, Laveen, Ariz.*

Layman

Richard Bakken, San Diego, Calif.

Paul Fick, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Kyle Koltz, Oconomowoc, Wis.*

Board for World Missions

Chairman

Joel Hoff, Renton, Wash.

Mark Johnston, East Brunswick, N.J.

Howard Mohlke, Nampa, Idaho*

Board of Appeals

Pastor

Paul Janke, Watertown, S.D.

David Kolander, Brookfield, Wis.

John Vieths, Norman, Okla.*

Teacher

David Knittel, Grove City, Ohio

Alan Schaffer, Oakley, Mich.

Stephen Schultz, Antioch, Ill.

Layman

Gregory Galler, Lake Elmo, Minn.

Bruce Krug, Cheyenne, Wyo.

John Postelli, Stevensville, Mich.

Commission on Adult Discipleship

Chairman (pastor, teacher, or layman)

Gary Pufahl, Big Bend, Wis.

Thomas Unke, Sheboygan Falls, Wis.

Joel Vogel, Marietta, Ohio

Commission on Congregational Counseling

Chairman (pastor, teacher, or layman)

Philip Kieselhort, Westminster, Colo.

David Scharf, Greenville, Wis.*

Jonathan Scharf, Covington, Ga.

Commission on Special Ministries

Chairman (pastor, teacher, or layman)

Joel Gaertner, Fond du Lac, Wis.

Jonathan Kehren, Rocklin, Calif.

David Rosenbaum, Merritt Island, Fla.

Commission on Worship

Chairman (pastor, teacher, or layman)

Aaron Christie, Waukesha, Wis.

Paul Meier, Neenah, Wis.

Jon Zabell, Green Bay, Wis.*

Commission on Youth and Family Ministry

Chairman (pastor, teacher, or layman)

John Boggs, Fond du Lac, Wis.

Matthew Holtz, Greeley, Colo.

Snowden Sims, Grove City, Ohio

Martin Luther College Governing Board

Chairman (parish pastor)

Michael Enderle, Clear Lake, S.D.

Jonathan Kolander, Menomonee Falls, Wis.

Michael Woldt, Jackson, Wis.*

Northwestern Publishing House Board of Directors

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary professor

John Brenner, Mequon, Wis.

John Hartwig, Mequon, Wis.*

Thomas Kock, Mequon, Wis.

Layman

Paul Baker, Orangevale, Calif.

Gary Frey, Bartlett, Tenn.

Christopher Snyder, Milwaukee, Wis.*

Rev. Robert Pasbrig, chairman

Rev. Jonathan Bergemann, North Atlantic District

Rev. Robert Guenther, Pacific Northwest District

Rev. Jeffrey Heitsch, Nebraska District

Rev. Mark Henke, Northern Wisconsin District

Rev. Michael Kober, South Atlantic District

Rev. Henry Koch, Minnesota District

Rev. Jonathan Nitz, Southeastern Wisconsin District

Rev. D. T. Rawerts, Dakota-Montana District

Rev. Jeffrey Seelow, Western Wisconsin District

Rev. Joshua Stahmann, Arizona-California District

Rev. Steven Wagenknecht, South Atlantic District

Rev. Thomas Westra, Michigan District

Congregation and Ministry Support Group

Our calling

The Congregation and Ministry Support Group (CMSG) is part of Congregation and District Ministry and serves under the Conference of Presidents (COP).

The role of the CMSG is to serve congregations, schools, and their leaders by providing resources, training, and personal assistance so that they might carry out gospel ministry in the most faithful way on the local level.

The various CMSG units give focused attention to specific areas of congregational life. Resources that are offered include print/electronic material, “schools” for specialized leadership training, conferences, consultation, and Web connections. Each CMSG unit works with district coordinators to assess the needs of district parishes and schools and to provide resources, training, and personal assistance to meet those needs.

Strong and healthy congregations are best able with gospel ministry to expand the kingdom and to enable the synod to carry out its ministries. Thus the many CMSG programs and services benefit not only congregations but also the worldwide mission of WELS.

Our current situation

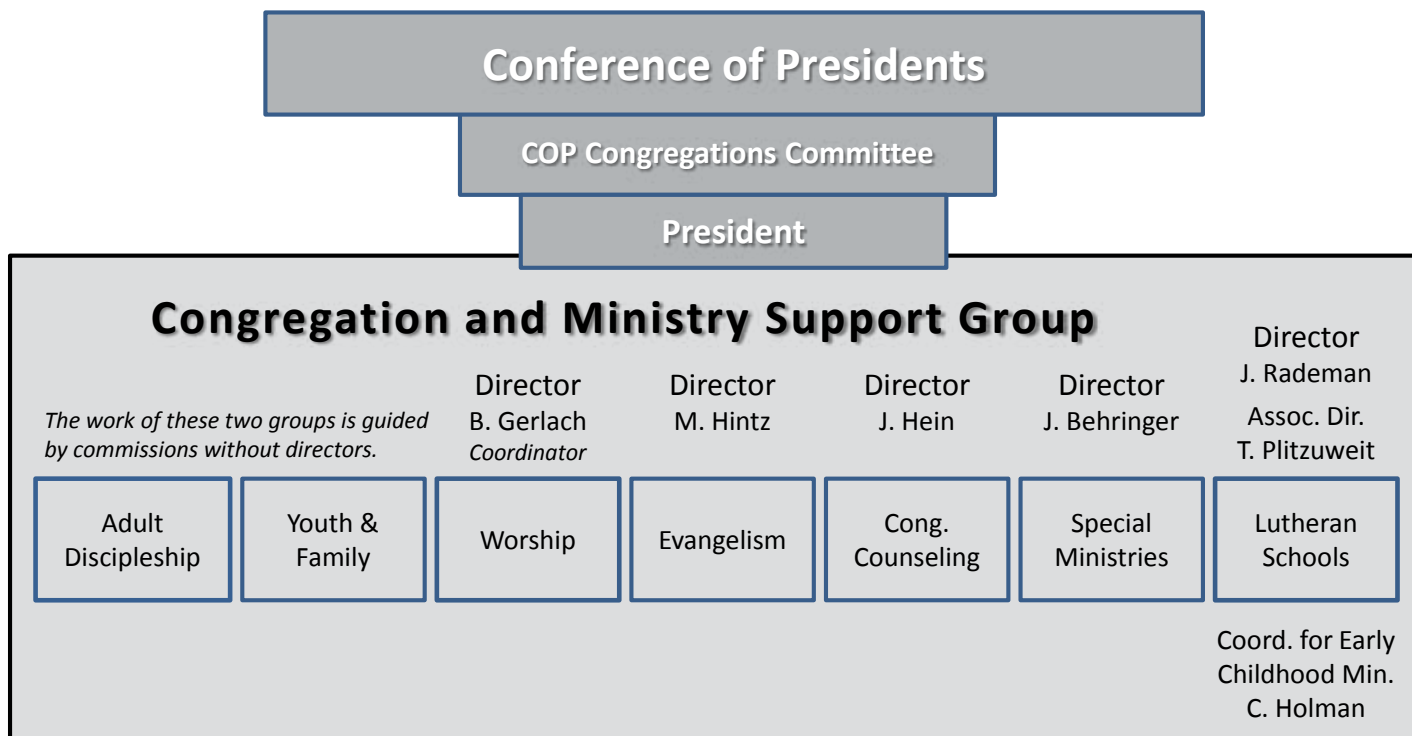
Synodical priorities and budgetary realities since 2009 have required a downsized CMSG. In early 2015 there are six people serving in called CMSG positions (plus a vacancy filled in July 2015), down from 11 in 2009. This includes two positions prioritized by the COP and funded since 2009: the national coordinator for early childhood ministry (July 2011) and the director for congregational counseling (July 2013).

The Commissions on Adult Discipleship and on Youth and Family Ministry continue their work without directors and with very limited synod subsidy support. They rely on special funds to carry on limited programs.

The February 2014 meeting of the Synodical Council (SC) included members of the Conference of Presidents’ Congregations Committee. The SC’s Ministry Committee, which is charged with budgetary allocations across areas of ministry, met with the Congregations Committee. The discussion included CMSG vacancies. Consensus among these leaders indicates that several other positions or projects will likely remain higher priorities than filling the Adult

Discipleship and Youth and Family Ministry positions—not only in the short term but also for several years going forward. (See the Synodical Council’s unfunded program priorities on p. 69.) With limited funds, WELS may need to address the needs identified by these commissions in ways that don’t require paid staff.

The current structure of the CMSG is shown in the following chart. Boxes indicate commissions; members are indicated in the reports that follow.



CMSG units strive faithfully and creatively to serve congregations, schools, and their leaders. The unit reports that follow give some of the details of this service in the cause of our Lord Christ and his kingdom.

For additional information, contact Pastor Bryan Gerlach, 414-256-3265 or bryan.gerlach@wels.net.

Rev. Bryan Gerlach, reporter and CMSG coordinator

Appendix: Institute for Worship and Outreach

The Institute for Worship and Outreach (IWO) works under the auspices of the Conference of Presidents to assist and encourage pastors as they strive for excellence in public worship and mission outreach. The IWO is a group of WELS pastors who have become convinced, on the basis of study and ministry experiences, that worship forms and outreach methods can and must intersect confessionally and evangelically in efforts to proclaim the gospel of Jesus. With this perspective, they have come together to foster a unified philosophy of worship and outreach in WELS and to be a resource for pastors as they reach out to the lost with the gospel of Jesus in public worship.

The IWO carries out the following functions.

- **Publishing:** The institute publishes papers, articles, and blogs at www.worshipandoutreach.org.
- **Studying:** The institute is committed to an ongoing study of methods, practices, and customs that concern especially the interaction of worship and outreach. The institute assembles periodically and invites other WELS pastors to participate in the studying process.
- **Training:** Through resource development, program content, and publishing, the institute assists pastors interested in developing an overall strategy of outreach that includes an emphasis on public worship.
- **Consulting:** When invited, members of the institute will work with individual pastors and/or groups of pastors to offer advice and counsel concerning specific challenges in the field.

Since its inception in 2010 the IWO has presented to eight districts; the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Symposium; Martin Luther College Evangelism Day; Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Mission and Ministry; and the National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts. Several members of the IWO are regular presenters at Schools of Worship Enrichment. Eight of its members serve on committees to produce the next WELS hymnal.

Rev. Jonathan E. Schroeder, reporter

Rev. Jonathan E. Schroeder, moderator

Rev. Jonathan Hein, co-moderator

Rev. Jonathan Bauer

Rev. Aaron Christie

Rev. Donn Dobberstein

Rev. Michael Hintz

Rev. James Huebner

Rev. Michael Geiger

Rev. Bryan Gerlach

Prof. Daniel Leyrer

Rev. Adam Mueller

Rev. David Scharf

Rev. Michael Schultz

Rev. John Steinbrenner

Rev. Nathan Strutz

Prof. James Tiefel

Rev. Earle Treptow

Rev. Chuck Westra

Rev. Jon Zabell

Commission on Worship

Floor Committee #14

Our calling

The Commission on Worship exists to help parishes in their central activity of worship that glorifies God and strengthens his people. Music and liturgy consume much of the commission's time, but "worship" includes far more: an interest in the style, the forms, and the setting of worship; in preaching; in liturgical orders and rites; in church music for the congregation, choir, soloists, and instruments; in architecture and ecclesiastical arts.

Worship is the heart of all parish life, the time when the greatest number of members gather to proclaim the gospel and receive God's life-giving power in Word and sacrament.

Our current situation

The last two years have brought significant blessings and milestones for WELS through the Commission on Worship.

The National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts

The National Worship Conference is the largest worship conference of all North American Lutheran church bodies (including events sponsored by the pan-Lutheran Association of Lutheran Church Musicians), even though WELS is one of the smaller Lutheran synods. After holding three conferences at Gustavus Adolphus College in Minnesota (with a day at Martin Luther College in 2011), conference planners searched for a campus that would provide improved facilities—especially a larger air-conditioned chapel and a location closer to the WELS heartland. The triennial conference returned in July 2014 to Carthage College, Kenosha, Wis. About 1,600 people attended the closing service in a chapel that seats 1,700. The first three conferences were held there in 1996, 1999, and 2002.

Worship conferences contribute to WELS efforts at continuing education and pursuit of excellence. Several of the typically 60 presentations relate to the intersection of worship and outreach, including some cross-cultural themes. Many presentations advance the education and expertise of those who serve us in worship, both called workers and lay leaders. Some topics focus on themes meant to strengthen our unity as expressed in worship. All enable us better to proclaim “Christ’s Love, Our Calling” to both the found and the lost.

Resources from past worship conferences are available at the Worship Connect website. Some of the resources are valuable for discussion by worship committees or boards of elders (if addressing worship topics). The 2014 plenary address by Pastor Jonathan Hein, “Compelling Worship,” is especially valuable. Double CDs of conference highlights are available from NPH.

The next conference will be in the summer of 2017 (dates not yet determined). In addition to a main conference in the Midwest, initial plans are considering two satellite sites (Phoenix, Ariz.; Atlanta, Ga.), which would offer slightly scaled down conference options. This would enable us to serve a larger audience in the Reformation 500 anniversary year. Over half of the worship conference attendees are, as expected, from the WELS heartland—the three Wisconsin districts. At last summer’s conference, outlying districts near proposed satellite locations sent only 107 people—58 from Arizona-California, 32 from South Atlantic, 17 from South Central. While overall attendance at conferences has remained solid or increased, attendance from outlying districts has declined at the last three conferences.

Schools of Worship Enrichment

The Commission on Worship has offered Schools of Worship Enrichment since 2002. By the end of 2014, we had served 291 churches. The soul membership of these churches served is one third of WELS. These events have been some of the most valuable and appreciated efforts of the Commission on Worship. Participant surveys at every site representing a wide variety of parishes throughout the country have given high marks to these events. In 2013 we began experimenting with a one-day event as an alternative to the full weekend event. However, we still recommend the full weekend option, Saturday morning through Sunday afternoon, with Sunday morning worship planned by Schools of Worship Enrichment leaders.

Christian Worship: Supplement

Sales of *Christian Worship: Supplement* have far exceeded the projections of Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) from 2008. By the end of January 2015, 2,101 accompaniment editions had been sold, indicating that a strong majority of WELS parishes are using the supplement to some degree. The pew and spiral editions have combined sales of 58,631 copies.

In addition to the 255-page pew edition and the accompaniment edition, other editions (with sales) are: electronic (623) and guitar (653). Purchase of the electronic edition makes use of pew edition optional. Sales of all *Christian Worship: Supplement* editions total more than \$1 million.

Publishing

The commission publishes two bi-monthly newsletters: *Worship the Lord* and *Preach the Word*. These newsletters are used also in Hong Kong, Ukraine, Sweden, Indonesia, and parts of Latin America. In addition a growing number of non-WELS pastors are making use of *Preach the Word*.

In September 2014 Pastor Thomas Westra began a series of encouraging articles on various aspects of preaching. The previous editor, Prof. Paul Koelpin from Martin Luther College, began his service in September 2013. In September 2015 a new series begins on preaching to Millennials, with a variety of writers selected in partnership with the Commission on Evangelism.

Worship the Lord, after focusing in recent years on theological and historical emphases, began a new series for 2014 to 2016 that is focusing on a variety of practical worship issues.

Back issues of both newsletters are available online.

A look ahead

Ongoing activity

Many of the activities described above will continue in the future, encouraging WELS toward good worship variety and vitality. In particular, several Commission on Worship members serve on Hymnal Project committees. Read more about the Hymnal Project on p. 39.

Future activity

Newer initiatives include:

- **Hymnology:** Since its first meeting in July 2012, a committee has been working on a hymnology curriculum. The mission is simple: “This curriculum will help teachers cultivate in their students a deeper appreciation for Christian hymnody.” The curriculum has three objectives: show Christ, application, and develop a love to sing and perform these melodies. Writers have begun submitting lesson plans. These plans are in the editing process. NPH should be finished with year one (of three) of the curriculum by the summer of 2016. Sample plans were featured at the 2014 worship conference. Initial committee members include two pastors (Jon Zabell and Jason Oakland), and six teachers (Julie Neujahr, Naomi Laabs, Beth Nolte, Mary Prange, Mike Marquardt, and Kevin Bode).
- **Worship education resources:** The commission has determined to place higher priority on resources for worship education. This will include a variety of Bible study approaches, a professional volume on the theology of worship, and a new major worship education curriculum. Since the hymnal and *Christian Worship: Manual* were published in 1993, the commission has published 16 projects, culminating in the 2008 hymnal supplement. (These projects include two ongoing newsletters and the serial *Worship Music* keyboard resource, which is no longer published). The majority of these projects have been practical rather than educational resources. The last major publication for worship education was the 1996 curriculum *Come Worship Christ*.
- **2017 Reformation anniversary:** In anticipation of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and in conjunction with the new Hymnal Project, the commission has explored revision of some historic Lutheran hymns. The language in translation of some hymns may be improved, making these worship masterpieces more accessible to 21st-century worshipers. New translations would speak with as much clarity and impact as found in newer English hymns, such as “In Christ Alone.” In some cases, new music might be provided. See “Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands” in *Christian Worship: Supplement* for an example of new music. The 2011 worship conference featured new translations of two historic texts, both with new tunes: “Jesus, Priceless Treasure” (*Christian Worship* 349); and “Where Wilt Thou Go?” (*The Lutheran Hymnal* 197). Among other commissioned music, the 2014 worship conference featured two new texts: “The Christ, Our Lord, to Jordan Came”—a new translation of this Luther hymn (CW 88) by Pastor Peter Prange, sung to an existing tune; and “Eyewitnesses of Majesty”—text by Rev. Michael Schultz (Hymnal Project director) and music by WELS composer Jeremy Bakken. Now that the Hymnal Project has begun, initiative for consideration of new texts, translations, and tunes moves from the Commission on Worship to the hymnal project. The Commission on Worship plans to assist congregations with Reformation worship plans in 2017 by providing the following:
 1. Five Reformation-themed services released at the 2017 worship conference(s).
 2. Commissioned musical works that will be usable in a variety of parishes. Additional commissions will include works of liturgical art, e.g., paraments, banners, graphic arts, graphics.
 3. Encouragement for planners to aim high for district events.

For additional information, contact Pastor Bryan Gerlach, 414-256-3265 or bryan.gerlach@wels.net.

Rev. Bryan Gerlach, reporter

Rev. Jon Zabell, chairman
Rev. Aaron Christie, secretary
Teacher Kevin Bode
Mr. Harvey Dunn
Rev. Jason Hacker
Dr. Kermit Moldenhauer

Advisory:

Rev. Bryan Gerlach, director of WELS Commission on Worship
Mr. Carl Nolte, Northwestern Publishing House
Prof. Joel Otto, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
Rev. Michael Schultz, director of the Hymnal Project

Appendix: WELS Hymnal Project

Our calling

The long-range plan adopted at the 2011 synod convention stipulated that, in the years leading up to 2017, the Conference of Presidents and Northwestern Publishing House would “put plans in motion to publish a new hymnal by the 500th anniversary of the first Lutheran hymnal (1524).” This plan for developing our synod’s next hymnal was also in harmony with the 1993 Joint Hymnal Committee’s desire that *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* would serve as our synod’s hymnal for approximately 30 years.

In keeping with that long-range plan, a full-time project director, Pastor Michael Schultz, was called, and a committee was formed. The WELS Hymnal Project has adopted the following mission statement for its work:

1. This hymnal will confess Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, who comes to us in the means of grace.
2. This hymnal will provide materials that enable believers to use the means of grace in public worship and other devotional settings.
3. This hymnal will be faithful to the scriptures and to the witness of the scriptures in the Lutheran Confessions.
4. This hymnal will respect and draw from the historic worship voice of the Christian Church and from our Lutheran heritage.
5. This hymnal will include texts and music of excellent quality from past and present sources.
6. This hymnal will be produced with thorough study of the character of worship in WELS and the prayer that it may be used joyfully by the people and congregations of our synod.
7. This hymnal will be accompanied by print and electronic resources intended to meet the needs of various worship settings in WELS.

Our current situation

In keeping with that mission statement (especially statement #6), the Hymnal Project’s Communications Committee has been busy working to understand what characterizes worship in our church body.

At the beginning of each of the past two church years, all congregations were invited to participate in a weekly review process in which they could submit information and feedback on their worship. Roughly one hundred congregations have been participating each week. Hymn usage data has been collected from any congregation willing to share it. Our project director, Pastor Michael Schultz, has been invited to many conferences and conventions throughout the synod and has collected feedback at each one. Our project website, www.welshymnal.com, includes a contact form through which upwards of a thousand comments have been submitted. Finally, four surveys were conducted in 2014. Survey 1 was intended for pastors, Survey 2 for teachers, Survey 3 for musicians, and Survey 4 for any and all worshippers. Among those four surveys, just shy of 7,200 responses were received. The information gathered in these various ways has been processed and shared with all those working on the project.

What follows is an attempt to summarize what those working on the Hymnal Project have learned about worship in our church body so far.

People desire to participate in worship

The people of our church body want to be actively involved in worship. Specifically, they love to sing and want to continue to be able to do so. Seventy-nine percent of those who completed Survey 4 described themselves this way: “I enjoy singing and feel confident doing so.” A good portion of those who completed the same survey (34 percent) indicated that they enjoy singing in parts. Many of the comments that have been critical of *Christian Worship* have been related to features of the hymnal that negatively affect a person’s ability to sing. When asked about a choir’s participation in worship, many comments indicated that worshippers do not want too many parts of the service normally sung by the congregation to be given to the choir.

So if people love to sing, what sometimes stands in the way? Quite a few individuals point to the range of a hymn. Just over 50 percent of those who filled out Survey 4 commented that hymns often have notes that are too high for them to sing. Quite a few comments have been submitted requesting that hymn keys be lowered.

Related to the range of hymns and songs of the service, some have indicated that they often sing in harmony because it enables them to sing a part that is more in their range. In fact, one of the requests we’ve heard most frequently is for songs of the printed orders of service to include all four parts rather than just melody.

Speaking of singing in parts, a common complaint about some of the hymns in *Christian Worship* has been that the harmony settings are too difficult. A solid majority (83 percent) of the musicians who filled out our third survey indicated that the difficulty level of *Christian Worship* hymns and songs was “Just right for the average musician.” Most of the respondents for Survey 3 were organists and keyboardists. When it comes to singing, however, we have heard a different tune. Both the worshipers in the pew and the choirs in the balcony have expressed a desire for harmony settings for hymns that are simpler and easier to sing.

A topic that also comes up in connection with singing is variety. Plenty of people have commented that there is already too much variety in worship. Some of those same voices are concerned that a new hymnal will only lead to less familiarity with an ever-increasing array of resources and that, as a result, singing will suffer. Others would like to see more variety so that what they are singing doesn’t become stale. In the question on Survey 4 that asked about the variety of hymn styles in *Christian Worship*, 8 percent indicated that there is too much, while 22 percent indicated there is not enough.

Even though there are differences of opinion regarding the best way to facilitate singing, it has been encouraging to hear how strongly people desire to sing in worship. It is also a good reminder that, whether it’s a decade-long hymnal project or the weekly work of organists, instrumentalists, and choirs, the goal should always be to encourage and facilitate the active participation of the people worshipping.

People desire Christ-centered worship

As encouraging as it is to hear that people love to participate in worship, it’s even more encouraging to hear how strongly they desire Christ-centered worship.

One of the ways in which the desire for Christ-centered worship is seen most clearly is the widespread use of the *Christian Worship* and *Christian Worship: Supplement* lectionaries. Ninety-four percent of the pastors who filled out Survey 1 indicated they use these yearly schedules of Scripture readings as the backbone for their worship each week.

It is certainly possible to have Christ-centered worship without following the lectionary. At the same time, these lectionaries have long proven to be valuable resources for the Church’s annual proclamation of Christ. Their widespread use among our churches reflects a desire for the life and teachings of Christ to continue to serve as the focus for our worship.

In addition to the use of our lectionaries (which is probably the pastor’s decision in most cases), worship planners, choir directors, and musicians have also indicated that Christ-centered worship is a high priority. In Survey 3, 86 percent of respondents indicated that the most important factor for them when selecting music for worship is its specific connection to the gospel-centered focus of the day. When asked to indicate what new resources and tools would most assist them in their work, those most commonly requested are ones that would help them more quickly and easily make that connection. One resource already available, *Planning Christian Worship*, provides summaries of each week’s lesson along with a list of hymn suggestions. That resource is very commonly used and well liked by pastors and worship planners.

Finally, one of the requests most frequently made through our website’s comment form is for the inclusion of Scripture references with the hymns. On Survey 4, nearly half of those who responded (49 percent) indicated that they would benefit greatly from the inclusion of these references.

Again, it is encouraging to see how concerned people are in the content of what goes on in worship, namely, that it richly and clearly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

People (ought to) desire timeless worship

Perhaps the area where the sharpest disagreement occurs is over whether our worship should be more “traditional” or more “contemporary.” This disagreement certainly isn’t new and doesn’t come as much of a surprise. It also isn’t a surprise that those terms are often used in different ways by different people, are often misunderstood, and rarely help groups of people have beneficial discussions about worship.

A question on Survey 4 asked for people’s input about various styles of hymns. Every style of hymn listed is currently found in the hymnal or supplement except one. It was labeled “Christian contemporary music,” and three artists were listed as examples.

That was the style of hymn where the responses were most sharply divided. Even though none of the artists mentioned are currently represented in our hymnal or supplement, 20 percent of respondents still indicated that

there is “too much” of that style in those resources. On the other hand, 40 percent indicated that there is “not enough.” In the comments connected with that question, there were people who pleaded for more Luther, Bach, and Gregorian chant. Just as many pleaded for more contemporary music, gospel music, and Christian rock. The comments that have come in through our website have indicated some of the same polarity.

So what does this mean? First of all, it indicates that when people hear the word “contemporary,” they often have a strong and immediate reaction that is either very positive or very negative. The same is probably true when people hear the word “traditional.” In love for the entire body of Christ, we owe it to our brothers and sisters to be aware of these different viewpoints and seek to understand them. It is so easy to surround ourselves with those who think like we do and refuse to understand those who don’t.

Second, those whose opinions are sharply divided have one important thing in common. Neither wants a hymn to be excluded from worship simply on the basis of when it was written. One person thinks a hymn should not be excluded simply because it’s old. Another thinks a hymn should not be excluded simply because it’s new.

However, there’s a flipside to that. If a hymn should not be excluded from worship simply on the basis of when it was written, neither should it be included in worship simply on the basis of when it was written. To let our decisions about music selection be driven by a single factor—whether it be age, origin, or style—would not be wise.

In other words, what everyone is pleading for—or at least ought to be pleading for—is timeless worship. We rightly show tremendous appreciation for the blessings that God has given his Church in the past. The fact that a hymn has remained in use for centuries is a pretty good indication of its quality.

At the same time, it would be foolish to assume that the same God who has blessed the Church with so many gifts for so many years would suddenly stop. In fact, one of the important reasons for continuing to produce new worship resources is that it gives these newer songs an opportunity to go through the same test of time that older songs have gone through and passed.

The original intent of this hymnal is that it would be released around the 500th anniversary of the year Lutherans first started publishing hymnals, 1524. One of those first Lutheran hymnals contained just eight songs. Four of them were written by Martin Luther, but the one for which he’s best known (“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”) wasn’t published for another five years. The great Lutheran hymn writer Paul Gerhardt wouldn’t write a single hymn for another century. We certainly thank God that these early Lutherans were wise enough to continue to allow new gifts from God to his Church to be used in worship. We certainly ask him for the same judicious wisdom he gave to them.

People desire to grow in worship

Finally, it has been encouraging to see how much people care about their personal and public worship. Pastors and worship leaders have responded positively to most of the ideas for how a new hymnal could include features and resources that assist them in their work. The teachers who filled out Survey 2 indicated a desire for resources that would enrich their daily classroom and weekly chapel worship.

People have expressed a high interest in continuing to learn more about the biblical principles for worship and the rich heritage of worship that has been handed down to us. They’ve also responded very positively to possible resources that would aid them in the use of worship resources at home.

In other words, it seems as though very few would say, “My worship life is exactly what it should be. Nothing needs to change or improve.”

This, too, comes as no surprise. As we continue to live under sin’s curse and in the shadow of our Savior’s cross, we fully realize that worship on this side of heaven will always be a work in progress. Some of the challenges facing this Hymnal Project’s committee are unique and new. Others are challenges that Christians have faced for years.

Since a hymnal project is a natural opportunity to think more and talk about worship, the members of the Hymnal Project look forward to working together with the people of our church body to continue to achieve the growth in worship that we all desire.

A look ahead

The other six subcommittees of the Hymnal Project (Hymnody, Rites, Scripture, Psalmody, Literature, and Technology) continue to carry out the work they have been assigned. As they do so, they look forward to sharing with the synod in 2016 a comprehensive update on their progress. This update will consist of two parts:

1. A written report describing the various issues that each committee faces and the approach they have adopted for those issues. This written report will be shared shortly after Easter 2016.
2. A set of materials for sampling and reaction. These materials will be distributed in July 2016 with the hope that, as congregations and schools prepare for the start of new school and church years, those materials can be incorporated in their worship.

It is our desire to make this report and accompanying materials available to all of the churches and schools in the synod. The 2017 National Conference on Worship and the Arts will also provide an opportunity for some of these materials to be sampled.

The members of the Hymnal Project ask for your continued prayers as we seek to assist the congregations, schools, and people of our church body in their continued desire to proclaim Christ's saving name in public and personal worship.

Rev. Jonathan Bauer, reporter

Rev. Jon Zabell, chairman

Rev. Daniel Sims, secretary

Rev. Caleb Bassett, Technology Committee

Rev. Jonathan Bauer, Communications Committee

Rev. Aaron Christie, Hymnody Committee

Rev. Bryan Gerlach, director of the Commission on Worship

Rev. John Koelpin, Literature Committee

Teacher Michael Marquardt

Rev. Jonathan Micheel, Rites Committee

Rev. Paul Prange, Psalmody Committee

Rev. Jonathan Schroeder, Scripture Committee

Rev. Michael Schultz, director of the Hymnal Project

Prof. James Tiefel

Commission on Evangelism

Floor Committee #14

Our calling

The Commission on Evangelism exists to assist congregations and members to seize every opportunity the Lord provides to evangelize lost souls. Our service to WELS is:

1. To develop and promote evangelism resources which faithfully proclaim the truth of Scripture.
2. To promote evangelism attitudes, structures, and programs consistent with Christian doctrine and the situation into which God has called a church, its called workers, and its people.
3. To promote the "equipping of the saints" for both organized congregational evangelism and individual Christian witness.

Our current situation

School of Outreach

A main objective of the WELS Commission on Evangelism is to assist every WELS congregation with specific and ongoing guidance for evangelism planning, organization, and implementation of outreach strategies. The School of Outreach continues to be an important aspect of our work to help accomplish this objective.

From July 2013 through June 2015, 143 congregations participated in the School of Outreach program. Leaders from those congregations attended two one-day workshops that were scheduled several months apart. At those workshops

they heard presentations on key components of a congregational evangelism program. Additionally, there were breakout sessions at which the presenters worked with individual congregations to advise them regarding outreach plans and strategies. In the months following each of the workshops, those advisors were available to offer follow-up assistance specific to the needs of congregations.

In 2014 a milestone was reached. The 200th School of Outreach was conducted. Originally, the School of Outreach was held at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Then congregations began hosting the program, and nearby congregations would also attend. This “satellite” School of Outreach made it possible for more congregations to participate. The first satellite School of Outreach was held in September 1993. Since then, the total number of registered congregations is 1,362. Over the years, many congregations have attended more than once.

WhatAboutJesus.com

This outreach website produced by the Commission on Evangelism continues to reach many people with God’s Word. New articles are posted on a regular basis. Daily Devotions appear on the home pages of wels.net and WhatAboutJesus.com. They are also sent to nearly 10,000 e-mail subscribers every weekday. Predominantly, e-mail subscribers are based in the United States and Canada. However, there are people all over the world who access the devotions. A report at the end of February 2014 indicated subscribers who “opened” the devotions in Japan, India, United Kingdom, France, Portugal, Germany, Sweden, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Malawi, China, Thailand, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic.

Online evangelism courses

The WELS Commission on Evangelism is offering evangelism courses through the Martin Luther College online continuing education program. These evangelism courses are designed and intended for laypeople and called workers to help them lead their congregations with planning and implementing efforts to reach more people with the gospel. These courses make up the Evangelism Certificate Program at Martin Luther College. There are three one-credit courses: 1) The Mission of the Church, 2) Practical Evangelism for Congregations, and 3) Friendship Evangelism. Information is available at www.wels.net/evangelism.

Evangelism Day at Martin Luther College

The Commission on Evangelism partners with the faculty of Martin Luther College to enhance the evangelism training of students at the college. In January 2015 the tenth annual evangelism day was conducted. The day for focusing on personal and congregational evangelism starts with a worship service and includes two workshops for each class and various “elective” presentations. More than 40 individuals including pastors, teachers, staff ministers, and lay members make presentations.

Come Follow Me

Recounting the experience of the apostle Peter—his denial, doubts, and fears, *Come Follow Me* is a movie that depicts what it means to be a disciple, a follower of Jesus (www.comefollowmemovie.com). Forgiven by Jesus, the way for Peter to follow his Savior was found in the power and promises of Jesus’ Word, in the same way as it is for us. Study materials were prepared to help groups and individuals explore the scriptural truths that are depicted in the movie. Released in October 2013, about 125,000 copies of the DVD have been distributed. Additionally, the number of “views” on YouTube and other digital platforms is approaching 30,000. There have been TV broadcasts of the movie on TBN, cable TV, and various international broadcasters. Churches have shown the movie in theaters or at their own facilities, and the movie is being used in world mission fields. Although it is impossible to know the actual number, a conservative estimate is that more than one million people have seen *Come Follow Me*. The movie won three awards in 2014—best short film at the Christian Worldview Film Festival in San Antonio in March; the Gold Crown Award for Best Evangelistic Film at the International Christian Visual Media Catalyst Conference in Atlanta in June; and best short narrative film at the Pan Pacific Film Festival in Los Angeles in July. The movie was a collaborative work of the Commissions on Evangelism and Adult Discipleship, Multi-Language Publications, and Northwestern Publishing House. Boettcher/Trinklein Media, Inc., was the producer. Funding came from a combination of gifts from individuals and congregations, grants, and budgetary funds.

A look ahead

School of Outreach

The Commission on Evangelism is revising the presentation and breakout materials used in the two School of Outreach sessions to provide current information for planning and implementing outreach strategies and to better address opportunities and challenges that congregations have today. (The last revision was done in 2009.)

To enhance the School of Outreach program and help congregations with resources for following through with their planning, we are working to develop a library of online resource videos and associated materials that will focus on specific aspects of a congregation's evangelism program. Another use of this evangelism library will serve to help the 12 district coordinators and their commissions. Congregations often contact them about specific aspects of their outreach ministry: "How do we do . . . ?" "Give us details about" District evangelism leaders can respond to these requests with the help of the online library of evangelism videos and materials.

The Commission on Evangelism works closely with district evangelism coordinators to carry out the School of Outreach program. Our intent is to continue conducting the program annually at various locations in each district so that all congregations have an opportunity and are encouraged to attend.

District evangelism coordinators:

<i>Arizona-California</i>	Pastor Steven Hillmer
<i>Dakota-Montana</i>	Pastor Justin Cloute
<i>Michigan</i>	Pastor Joel Thomford
<i>Minnesota</i>	Pastor Stephen Meyer
<i>North Atlantic</i>	Pastor Frederick Guldborg
<i>Nebraska</i>	Pastor Jesse Stern
<i>Northern Wisconsin</i>	Pastor David Scharf
<i>Pacific Northwest</i>	Pastor Timothy Schwartz
<i>South Atlantic</i>	Pastor Jonathan Scharf
<i>South Central</i>	Pastor Paul Seager
<i>Southeastern Wisconsin</i>	Pastor David Pagel
<i>Western Wisconsin</i>	Pastor Joseph Fricke

New movie

The writing team and producer of *Come Follow Me* plan to have another movie ready by the fall of 2015. The movie will be about the birth, life, and ministry of Jesus from the perspective of his mother, Mary. The title is *My Son, My Savior*. Initially, congregations and individuals may use the movie for outreach at Christmas. Study materials, worship planning, outreach ideas, and promotional items will be available.

Gospel proclamation in America

The religious climate in America is changing rapidly. In 2007 those who checked "none" when asked their religious affiliation was about 15 percent of the American population. Today that percentage has risen to 20 percent. Among Americans 30 years old and younger it is a staggering 33 percent. This shift in American culture has tremendous implications for our WELS congregations.

Because of this shift in religious thinking, the Commission on Evangelism began an in-depth study in order to better communicate the gospel to Millennials (those born after 1984), especially those whose views can be characterized as skeptical of and disillusioned with Christianity (the "nones").

Our work to date has consisted of studying sociological analysis of the "nones." We conducted listening sessions with students and faculty at 13 of our area Lutheran high schools to explore ways for partnering with all our schools to prepare students for witnessing to their peers—many of whom are "nones." Insights into this cultural shift will be included in an upcoming *Preach the Word* series that will address challenges and opportunities that our congregations face. Additionally, we are planning ways of teaching personal evangelism that will help and encourage Christians to translate knowledge and methods into action of talking with people about Jesus.

The strategies used to proclaim the gospel in a nation that is becoming more and more godless is similar to that of first century Christians. Those who had been scattered preached the Word wherever they went (Acts 8:4). As we seek to continue to proclaim the gospel of Jesus, we always rest our confidence in the power of the gospel and our Savior's promises to us: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. . . . Surely I am with you always to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:18,20).

Rev. Michael Hintz, reporter

Rev. Donn Dobberstein, chairman

Rev. Joseph Fricke
Rev. Michael Geiger
Rev. John Huebner
Rev. Douglas Tomhave

Advisory:

Rev. Michael Hintz, director of WELS Commission on Evangelism
Prof. Daniel Leyrer, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Commission on Congregational Counseling

Floor Committee #14

Our calling

The Commission on Congregational Counseling (CCC) assists WELS congregations to assess and evaluate ministry, review biblical teachings and principles that impact ministry, develop plans to adjust and expand ministry in appropriate ways, and carry out their plans over a period of time. The CCC serves under the direction of the Conference of Presidents, serving as a means for district presidents to provide encouragement and support to their congregations.

Our current situation

The 2014–15 biennium is the first one where the Commission on Congregational Counseling has existed as a fully operational commission with a director. It is unique in that the director, Pastor Jonathan Hein, also remains a parish pastor in South Carolina. WELS provides him with a graduate associate. This allows Hein to work one-third of his time in a congregation and two-thirds of his time for the synod at large. Part of the rationale behind this was that with a scope as broad as congregational health, it was beneficial to have the director have one foot in congregational ministry, much like our district presidents.

Here is what has transpired over the past two years.

Self-Assessment and Adjustment Program

The primary goal of the first biennium of the CCC's existence was to develop a program that fulfilled the CCC's mission statement: "to assist WELS congregations to assess and evaluate ministry . . . and to develop plans to adjust and expand ministry in appropriate ways." That goal has been completed in the launch of the ministry Self-Assessment and Adjustment program (SAA). This program consists of four phases.

- **Establishment phase:** Here a congregation works through a community profile, a congregational profile, and an electronic pulse survey. This allows both the congregation and its assigned counselor to have a more complete understanding of the congregation's current ministry context.
- **Assessment phase:** This is the heart of the SAA program. An assigned CCC counselor is on site. On Saturday, the counselor leads the congregation in a day-long Bible study about various aspects of ministry—worship, outreach, discipleship, youth ministry, fellowship, stewardship, etc. The congregation looks at biblical and confessional principles in each of these areas. Then members come up with a list of ways they could adjust or expand their local ministry in those areas.
- **Adjustment phase:** The counselor produces a detailed report, summarizing important findings from the community and congregational profile, as well as the pulse survey. Most importantly, the counselor makes recommendations based on what the congregation members said they wanted to do to adjust or expand ministry. Those recommendations will often include using various resources produced by the WELS Congregation and Ministry Support Group (CMSG).
- **Implementation phase:** For up to ten months, the counselor will remain in contact with the congregational leadership, offering ongoing encouragement and advice as the congregation works at implementing the ministry adjustments and expansions.

The Self-Assessment and Adjustment program was beta-tested in almost 20 congregations over a year and a half. In November 2014, 30 WELS parish pastors and two ELS guests met at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry where they were trained in the SAA program. The prayer is that each trained parish pastor could serve one or two congregations per year. Their work began in January 2015. Hein will be training another 30 counselors to begin work in 2016, bringing the total to 60. This would allow the CCC to work with approximately 100 congregations annually.

It is important to stress the “S” in the SAA program. Self-analysis. Self-adjustment. The view of the CCC is not that the counselors are outside experts who will tell congregations the right way to do ministry. A CCC counselor cannot understand a congregation or a community as well as the people who have been there for years. Thus, the counselor serves to facilitate healthy discussion amongst the congregational members about how they might best serve the kingdom. The counselor provides an objective set of eyes and ears as the congregation looks at the situation and helps the congregation to find the resources they need to adjust and expand ministry as they themselves determine best.

Currently, 41 congregations are enrolled in the SAA program. Eighty-one more congregations are in the pipeline, waiting for counselors to be available.

Ministry Organization and Staffing Evaluation

The Ministry Organization and Staffing Evaluation (MOSE) program is an ancillary follow-up to the SAA program. Whereas the SAA program focuses almost exclusively on ministry activity, the MOSE program focuses on people—the organized volunteers and staff—who carry out that ministry. The MOSE program has three goals.

First, the MOSE program helps congregations convert annual mission plans into action plans. This allows them not only to determine how many hours of manpower are needed on average to carry out ministry but what types of skill sets are needed. How many hours require someone with theological training? How many hours require spiritual maturity but not theological training? How many hours of work could be done by someone that was new to the faith? How much work requires interpersonal skills? How much requires technological expertise? In other words, the first goal of the MOSE program is to help congregations figure out not just how much financial resources they need to conduct ministry (a budget) but also how many human resources are needed.

Second, the MOSE program helps congregations to assess how they can best meet those manpower needs. Can they carry out their ministry plan simply through increased volunteerism? Do they need additional staff? If so, what type of staff? Another pastor? A staff minister? A skilled administrative assistant?

Third, the MOSE program helps congregations to develop an ongoing system of brotherly encouragement. It suggests ways for leaders to help one another grow professionally and, when possible, align skills and interests with tasks.

The School of Strategic Planning

The School of Strategic Planning (SSP) expands the various “schools” offered by the WELS Congregation and Ministry Support Group, such as the Commission on Evangelism’s School of Outreach and the Commission on Worship’s School of Worship Enrichment.

The School of Strategic Planning brings groups of congregations together—the pastors and the church councils—for a weekend. At these workshops, attendees learn about the various components of a strategic plan—a mission statement, clarifying core values, appropriate goal setting, producing a ministry plan and subsequent action plan, plan review, setting long-range objectives, leadership development, etc. In breakout groups, the presenter(s) works with congregations to actually produce some of these components.

A look ahead

The ministry “toolbox”

The biggest challenge of the past biennium has been the CCC’s efforts to compile all the ministry resources available to our congregations. There are fantastic tools that are out there that could help congregations assess and carry out ministry, but often people don’t know about them. In this next biennium, the CCC will produce an online WELS “toolbox” of available resources.

“Lutheran Leadership”

“Lutheran Leadership” is a quarterly newsletter that will contain timely articles about the spiritual and practical components of congregational leadership. It will also include devotions that could be used personally or corporately. “Lutheran Leadership” will be published only in PDF format, which can be read on any computer or tablet. It will be available for free online or through e-mail subscription.

Two demographic studies of WELS

In the fall of 2014, the CCC asked the Conference of Presidents to expand the annual statistical survey to include demographics. The COP passed that resolution. Starting in this coming year, congregations will be asked to provide how many members they have in a variety of age brackets: 0 to 1 years, 1 to 5 years, etc.

This data can be used in numerous ways. It can help identify district trends. It can help us plan for student enrollments, especially at the high-school and college levels. It will help the CCC with our work in the following two ways.

Aging congregation study

Anecdotally, you often hear about aging WELS congregations. This is especially true in the rural areas of the heartland. (Though you can also find this in outlying states where WELS has had a presence for awhile, such as Florida.) There are many places throughout the Midwest where WELS will have four or five congregations relatively close together with a high average age of membership. In many cases, the membership of these congregations, often started as a congregation for farmers, has been in decline. In some cases, because of where the congregation is located (an area with an extremely low per-square-mile population density), there isn't much of a mission field. A very informal study of this reveals that WELS might have more than 100 congregations that fall into this category—congregations that may cease to exist in the next decade, simply due to demographics.

The demographic study will help us to better quantify this issue, rather than talking anecdotally. That is a first step in coming up with a strategic plan to help those aging and/or rural congregations address the challenges before them, so that ministry might continue in that area, God-willing.

Ongoing study of the Millennials

The Millennial Generation is typically thought of as those who were born between 1980 and the early 2000s. These individuals reached adulthood around the turn of the millennium. Studies have shown this group to have little desire to connect with church. Again, anecdotally, there are reports of WELS congregations struggling to reach and/or retain this group.

The CCC has been studying this issue for a year. The demographic study will help us further quantify the challenge before our congregations. Working with WELS Commission on Evangelism, it will enable us to help congregations plan for ways to reach out to this group as well as retain members within this demographic.

In summary

One of the phrases said often in the CCC is, "If a congregation is doing all it can to share the gospel, then numbers don't matter." We believe that firmly. Our calling is not to make God's Church grow. Our calling is not to increase the number of members who are in worship or Bible study. Our calling is not to make members give more generously to the Lord's work. Only the Holy Spirit, working through the Word and sacrament, can accomplish such supernatural things. We simply respond to Christ's love by heeding his call to do all we can to share the gospel—with our members and with the lost. Therefore, we believe that a "healthy congregation" is simply one that is regularly asking itself, "What else can we do to help all people know Jesus?"

May God grant that among us all.

For more information, contact Pastor Jonathan Hein at pastorhein@gmail.com or 843-873-5522.

Rev. Jonathan Hein, reporter

Rev. David Scharf, chairman

Rev. Adam Mueller

Prof. James Tiefel

Rev. Doug Tomhave

Advisory:

Rev. Jonathan Hein, director of WELS Commission on Congregational Counseling

Rev. James Huebner, WELS first vice president

Commission on Special Ministries

Floor Committee #15

Our calling

The Commission on Special Ministries offers spiritual and practical guidance and training to congregations and individuals as they share God's love to those with needs or circumstances that prevent them from being served through the congregation's usual ministry.

WELS Special Ministries reaches out to individuals, congregations, and families to offer specialized services and resources to address the special need(s) with which they are confronted. It serves people who are physically, mentally, or emotionally in need of special consideration as regards their ability to learn, worship, or participate in local ministries and everyday living situations. Special Ministries also serves thousands of people who are away from their church home, such as military personnel, people living overseas, and those in prison or in some other institution.

The commission carries out this work via appointed committees focused on specific areas of special need, and district special ministries coordinators who bring our work to the district level.

While the commission is devoted to serving WELS members, our Lord continues to provide opportunities to also proclaim the gospel to people who are unchurched or have fallen away from their former church.

Our current situation

The Commission on Special Ministries employs three full-time called workers—the director of Special Ministries, a civilian chaplain to the military serving in Europe, and a prison ministry administrator. Our national civilian chaplain to the military serves part time. The latter two positions are supported entirely by special gifts and grants. Under the direction and support of these and other leaders, the commission mobilizes thousands of unpaid volunteers in a worldwide effort to meet the spiritual needs of people who might otherwise be ignored or forgotten. The work of the commission, as well as that of its eight committees, is described in the following paragraphs.

Health and Wellness

The WELS Health and Wellness Committee encourages and assists WELS members and their congregations as it offers spiritual and other services in the following areas—ministry to aging; nursing and parish nursing; hospital, nursing home, and assisted living ministries. The committee currently has a special concern for the needs of caregivers for those with long-term illnesses or disabilities. The Health and Wellness Committee cooperates with several organizations.

The Organization of WELS Seniors (OWLS) grew out of the committee's early involvement in ministry to the aging. Through involvement, fellowship, mutual support, life enrichment activities, and service to others, its members are encouraged and helped to serve as God calls them. Having originated with Special Ministries, OWLS also promotes and strongly supports WELS Special Ministries. The OWLS annual conventions have been held in Wausau and Wisconsin Dells, Wis., the last two years. The next OWLS Convention is scheduled for LaCrosse, Wis., Oct. 12–14, 2015.

Parish Nursing provides a practical way for congregations to demonstrate loving Christian care and a clear gospel witness to members and the community. For helpful guidelines on how to begin a program, contact the Special Ministries office, 414-256-3241.

The WELS Nurses Association has begun to network and serve God's people. This organization provides support for WELS nurses to grow spiritually as they serve. Their mission is to "work together as servants of Christ." Visit www.welsnurses.net or e-mail welsnurses@wels.net.

WELS Chaplain Certification is a continuing education initiative that involves cooperation of leaders from several Special Ministries divisions and Martin Luther College (MLC). In an era of growing security in institutions, it will become increasingly difficult for local pastors to minister in prisons, military bases, and large health care facilities. Chaplain certification and ecclesiastical endorsement will be increasingly necessary, especially if a pastor or layperson wants to reach out to more than one's own members. Online courses are being coordinated through MLC.

Costs for the program are the responsibility of the student; we encourage churches and other calling bodies to include funds in their continuing education budget for this purpose. We are seeking grants to provide scholarship assistance where necessary.

Pastor Robert Dick is the chairman of this committee. E-mail him at chaplaincert@wels.net. Applications for the program are received by the Chaplain Certification Committee through the Commission on Special Ministries.

For more information, e-mail Pastor Jonathan Semro, chairman of the Committee on Health and Wellness, at jms@popcopperfield.org.

Military Services

The WELS Military Services Committee provides spiritual services to WELS members and others who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces. The committee carries out its mission through a ministry-by-mail program, a full-time civilian chaplain in Europe, and a national civilian chaplain and liaison to the military.

Civilian Chaplain Joshua Martin serves hundreds of military personnel and civilians in Europe. He and his family live at Spiesheim, Germany (near Mainz and Frankfurt). Besides worship services, Martin conducts retreats at Reformation and Easter.

As WELS' national civilian chaplain and liaison to the military, Pastor Paul Ziemer maintains regular contact with many WELS troops and their families. He coordinates training conferences for WELS military contact pastors and orients and mentors new military contact pastors.

One hundred twenty-five WELS pastors who live near military installations in the continental U.S. and select nations overseas stand ready to serve our military personnel and their families as part-time WELS civilian chaplains.

The Military Services Committee continues to conduct a "ministry by mail" for those in military service. We send free copies of *Meditations* to military and overseas civilians on our mailing list and a printed monthly worship service to overseas civilians on our mailing list. We also offer devotions online at www.wels.net/military-services/devotions.

WELS Military Services is funded through designated gifts and grants. With two called workers serving as chaplains and our church's commitment to serving our people in the military, we pray that this work may continue to have its synodical funding restored. The last convention restored a subsidy of \$30,000, about one third of the budget. Offerings from individuals and groups such as OWLS continue to flow into the Civilian Chaplaincy Special Fund. The Synodical Council has indicated that \$50,000 more for Military Services is an unfunded priority at this time (see p. 69).

Please help us serve our military personnel and WELS members living in Europe. Send the names and addresses of those serving in the military or living in Europe to the Special Ministries office at N16W23377 Stone Ridge Dr, Waukesha, WI 53188. Our online referral service is readily available at www.wels.net/military-services.

For more information, contact Pastor Paul Horn, chairman of the Military Services Committee, at revhorn2004@gmail.com.

Prison Ministry

WELS Prison Ministry administers an extensive ministry-by-mail program and provides training opportunities for lay people and pastors who would like to begin a local jail or prison ministry.

Through a central office at New Ulm, Minn., a small staff utilizes the services of hundreds of volunteers to manage a ministry-by-mail program that has reached more than 80,000 inmates. The rate of response to our materials is high. Seventy-five percent of our Bible study course books that are given out produce a response from an inmate! Volunteers prepare regular mailings, correct Bible correspondence tests, and serve as pen pals to inmates.

Partnering with Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries, WELS Prison Ministry equips individuals and congregations for local jail and/or prison ministry through its Jail Ministry Training Team. After initial training, the team offers supplemental training via online courses, occasional visits, and teleconferences. The Jail Ministry Training Team has trained hundreds of lay volunteers and called workers from congregations in 10 of the 12 WELS districts. This effort has been largely funded by grants.

WELS Prison Ministry and Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries continue to seek out men and women for face-to-face jail and prison ministry. We identify and recruit laypeople to bring the gospel to inmates in local institutions. More than 400 lay volunteers have been trained to do face-to-face ministry in a local jail/prison throughout the U.S.

Additional training continues in areas of interest. This effort has been largely funded by generous grants. For more information, contact us at specialministries@wels.net.

WELS Prison Ministry continues to be a popular Bible study choice for prisoners, with our twenty Level 1 Bible correspondence courses (and more being written) and fourteen Level 2 publications. New publications are a Level 1 study on contentment, "Enough is Enough," and several Level 2 books, including "Chosen by Grace" (study of Ephesians) and "Freedom in Christ" (study of Galatians) as well as three produced through a partnership with Multi-Language Publications. These three studies include "Come Follow Me" (a Bible study for the WELS Evangelism movie), "Rescued from the Belly of the Beast" (on infant baptism), and "No More Fear" (on superstition). It is hoped that this partnership will continue to produce many more books useful for prison ministry as well as mission work. Almost all jail and prison ministry resources are available free of charge from WELS Prison Ministry.

For information, contact Mr. Brad Price, Prison Ministry administrator, at prisonministry@wels.net or 507-354-3130.

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Ministry

The Intellectual and Developmental Ministry promotes and encourages active participation in ministry to people with special needs in our synod. The ministry develops resources and provides information to parents, caregivers, children, adults, pastors, teachers, and congregations about education programs, mentoring networks, support groups, and printed and digital materials.

The key to accessing these supports is found at wels.net/iddm. Sample resources found on the wels.net/iddm website include: "Pastors: Your Piece of the Autism Puzzle" (information to assist with pastoral care), a webinar: "Overcoming Seven Hurdles Parents Face in Establishing a Special Needs Trust," "He Cares; We Care" (spiritual material and crafts mailed on a regular basis to people with intellectual or developmental disabilities upon request, call 414-256-3241), and "Guidelines for Establishing a Parent Special Needs Support Network" (a manual designed for congregations to use in serving parents in their congregation and reaching out to others in their community). This ministry works with Jesus Cares Ministries, a program of The Lutheran Home Association, with resources for Bible study, worship, and socialization needs for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

For more information, contact Pastor Joel Gaertner, chairman, at jpgaertner@tlha.org.

Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The WELS Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing seeks to help congregations share the gospel of Jesus Christ with members of WELS and others who are deaf or hard of hearing.

One in three people over 65 years of age and one in two over the age of 80 have a hearing loss. These percentages are also true for WELS churches and the communities they serve! Addressing the needs of these individuals will improve gospel ministry in the worship service and Bible classes.

The Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing offers training and resources for ministry to deaf and hard of hearing people. New technology, such as installing a hearing loop in a worship area or classroom, makes a speaker's voice clearer for people with hearing aids. The availability of real-time video on iPads or tablets makes it possible for congregations and pastors to use the services of an interpreter without the interpreter having to be physically present to enable communication. At the same time, a Martin Luther College course on American Sign Language will soon be launched, with the prayer that it will be a first step for a new generation of church interpreters and called workers familiar with the language.

For more information, contact Mr. Dean Weigand, chairman of the Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, at mdhh@wels.net.

Mission for the Visually Impaired

The Mission for the Visually Impaired helps people who are unable to read normal-sized print, whether they are blind or have impaired eyesight. Much of the work is done by volunteers at the headquarters in St. Paul, Minn. The mission produces devotional and other materials in Braille, in large print, and on cassette tape. These materials are distributed free throughout the world to WELS and non-WELS visually impaired people. In particular, the mission provides many blind people in Africa with spiritual materials in Braille and on cassette.

Internet and other digital technology is opening doors for ministry to people with visual impairment, and the Mission for the Visually Impaired has begun the process of getting their resources available in ways that work with the new technology. Our resource catalog of Braille, large print, and audio materials is now available online at wels.net/mvi.

To order materials or to learn more, contact WELS Mission for the Visually Impaired at 375 Bridgepoint Dr, South St. Paul, MN 55075-2466; welsvisimp@wels.net. Mr. Bill Bremel is the chairman.

Care Committee for Called Workers

The Care Committee for Called Workers exists to assist WELS calling bodies in the spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional care of their called workers. The committee functions by providing congregations and other organizations with called workers with resources and guidance for supporting called workers and their families, encouraging workers in their ministries, and enhancing their quality of life.

The committee provides a free resource, *Care to Care*, which includes printed study materials that provide more detailed information about Care Committee work, including how to start a Care Committee, suggestions for the types of questions to ask during the visits, and suggestions for activities that the committee can carry out. A *Care to Care* DVD provides a general overview of the purpose of the local care committee and portrayals of the three types of visits (entrance, annual, and transition) for which the local Care Committee is responsible.

The committee is developing resources to help called workers successfully plan and transition into retirement.

For more information, contact Pastor Paul Schaeewe, committee chairman, at revpes2@hotmail.com.

Committee on Mental Health Needs

The Committee on Mental Health Needs assists WELS congregations, institutions, called workers, and lay members as they minister to one another in love, especially those who are experiencing mental health needs.

Mental health needs are often addressed by professional counselors. This committee helps congregations and individuals find or provide the care needed. The committee has developed brochures (also available in digital form) that will be helpful for members of WELS as they seek to find a therapist, interview a therapist, and understand therapist language.

The WELS/ELS Christian Therapist Network has constructed a website that contains a listing of therapists in fellowship with WELS and the ELS at christiantherapistnetwork.com. The committee also works closely with WLCFS Christian Family Counseling, which now uses technology to offer video counseling so that WELS/ELS members who do not live near a counselor of our faith may still receive professional Christian counseling. Our counselors often work with local pastors to help members.

Conquerors Through Christ is a committee that helps Christians who struggle with the temptations of pornography, a growing problem now that the Internet brings such temptations to the privacy of a computer or mobile phone. The committee's website, www.conquerorsthroughchrist.net, has already been effective in bringing people to seek help from their pastors or professional counselors.

Freedom for the Captives is a taskforce force to develop materials and training to improve the ability of our churches to address the needs of abused children in our congregations and communities. These materials will be available on a website that is being developed and will also be available in other formats. To better prepare our called workers to address the sin of child abuse, all students in the pastor or teacher tracks at Martin Luther College receive several hours of training in recognizing and responding to cases of child abuse. Additional training is provided to students attending Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

The WELS Social Media Task Force gathers and produces materials to educate, provide self-help, and provide resources for helping others who are dealing with the challenges posed to the Christian by access to social media. The task force is building a website, www.christiansinthedigitalage.com to share helpful information.

For more information, contact Prof. John Schuetze, committee chairman, at schuetzj@wls.wels.net.

A look ahead

The Lord is blessing the work of Special Ministries as the number of lay volunteers continues to grow and as our resources for ministry become more easily accessible via the Internet. The resources that we have developed for one field of special ministry are finding application in other areas of the ministry and in missions.

Special Ministries accepts the challenge and privilege of training and equipping the many men and women who are passionate about ministry to the "least of these." Much of this work is done by volunteers or by called workers assuming extra duties without pay. In the next biennium, such programs as chaplain certification, jail ministry team training, and military contact pastor conferences will equip and strengthen those whom the Lord is calling to

serve. We plan to expand Internet resources for families of those with intellectual or developmental disabilities and addictions and mental health needs. Under God's blessing, WELS members who serve as nurses and those who are training for that vocation will find increasing support and encouragement through the WELS Nurses Association.

We will need even more creative, talented, and dedicated laypeople as well as pastors, teachers, and staff ministers to selflessly devote their time to developing materials and training others to bring the gospel to those who cannot access it through the usual congregational channels. Our work will require closer cooperation with the many WELS organizations that have sprung up to carry out the work not funded in the WELS budget. The leaders of our special ministries will also need to increase their attention to communicating the financial needs of Special Ministries for the sake of financial support by interested Christians and organizations.

All of this ministry is in the hands of Christ, the Head of the Church, who has shown that he has all authority in heaven and earth. He goes before us in our labors, creating opportunities and blessing the gospel, whether shared in a military contact pastor's living room or signed in a Sunday morning worship service. The prisoner and the Christian struggling with depression are finding that the Lord has compassion on them. We know that the Lord will hear our prayer, "Your kingdom come!" Our calling is to go into all the world. Join us in sharing the love of Christ our Savior in the forgotten parts of our communities.

For more information on any or all of the areas of Special Ministries, visit www.wels.net/special-ministries or contact Pastor Jim Behringer, director of the commission, at 414-256-3240 or jim.behringer@wels.net.

Rev. Jim Behringer, reporter

Teacher Charles Buege, chairman

Rev. Joel Gaertner, vice chairman and chairman of the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Committee

Mr. LeRoy Robbert, secretary

Mr. Leon Brands, chairman of the Prison Ministry Committee

Mr. Bill Bremel, chairman of the Mission for the Visually Impaired

Rev. Paul Horn, chairman of the Military Services Committee

Rev. Paul Schaewe, chairman of the Care Committee for Called Workers

Prof. John Schuetze, chairman of the Committee on Mental Health Needs

Rev. Jonathan Semro, chairman of the Health and Wellness Committee

Mr. Dean Weigand, chairman of the Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Advisory:

Rev. Jim Behringer, director of WELS Commission on Special Ministries

Mr. Brad Price, administrator of WELS Prison Ministry

Commission on Adult Discipleship Floor Committee #15

Our calling

The biblical goals of the church are to proclaim Christ's love through worship, nurture, and outreach. The WELS Commission on Adult Discipleship (CAD) is the synodical response to that part of the church's mission we call "nurture." The WELS CAD serves pastors and congregational leaders with training and resources to help them proclaim the Word and help people apply it to their lives; to nurture the faith.

Our current situation

Looking back on the past two years:

- We taught a five-hour class to improve adult Bible study teaching skills in all 12 districts to about 90 percent of WELS pastors.
- We began writing a two-day class on 1) creating and writing adult Bible studies and 2) teaching and facilitating adult Bible studies. This class will be for pastors, teachers, and lay leaders of adult Bible study.

- We developed a new working relationship with both Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) through editor Dan Schroeder and the seminary through Prof. Tom Kock. We have enjoyed a healthy relationship with NPH for years and look forward to the blessings we can bring to others through joint work.
- We led 20 WELS Marriage Enrichment Weekends in 10 of the 12 WELS districts. The two classes were Distracted Marriage and Mysterious Marriage. These teaching events have helped about one thousand married people apply the gospel to their marriages and equipped about one hundred pastors with training and resources for marriage ministry to serve thousands more in their churches.
- We worked with several WELS para-church agencies to develop a model for raising the awareness of the potential for gospel ministry through marriage ministry. The model includes hosting several Marriage Conversation Cafes and raising up demonstration parishes to provide resources and examples.
- We produced Interactive Faith—an online Bible study. Archived video studies on Jonah and Judges are available at www.wels.net/adult-discipleship. A growing number of churches have gathered in large and small groups for this teaching resource.
- The Women’s Ministry Committee held a conference at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to train women in a biblical understanding of leadership and encouragement for their roles of leadership. They have built a network of contact women and conducted “sharing hope” workshops to highlight women’s ministry.
- Faith Focused Finances, a financial planning and stewardship resource, has been available through NPH.
- Responsibility for stewardship training resources for congregations has been transferred to the WELS Ministry of Christian Giving, by mutual agreement.

A look ahead

Looking ahead to the next two years, we plan to

- develop fully the two-day “Teaching Adult Bible Study,” and teach groups of pastors, teachers, and lay leaders of adult Bible study.
- teach the “Five-Hour School of Adult Bible Study” to pastor conferences or groups of circuits that request the class.
- partner with NPH to launch a new teaching adult Bible study newsletter.
- teach 20 marriage enrichment weekends across all 12 districts to strengthen marriages and equip pastors with resources and training for their marriage ministry. Each year, we see a 20 percent increase in attendance in each location. The titles for the two new classes are Simply Marriage and Richer Marriage. Locations are listed at www.wels.net/adult-discipleship.
- provide Interactive Faith—an online Bible study. We will seek out gifted teachers to provide a life learning experience. We encourage everyone to gather a Bible study group at church or in homes to benefit. See the schedule, access the live stream, and download the worksheets at www.wels.net/adult-discipleship.
- support the Women’s Ministry Committee as it continues to gather and post Bible studies, resources, ideas, and multi-language resources and provides coaching help through “Talk on Tuesdays.” On July 21–23, 2016, the Women’s Ministry Committee will host a women’s ministry conference at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Find the resources and information at www.wels.net/women.
- seek out churches and leaders with experiences and resources for small group Bible studies and ministry to millennials.

The unfilled position of director for Adult Discipleship slows our ability to develop new training and resources to help congregational leaders nurture the faith of God’s people. We are grateful for the leadership of our commission members but recognize their time limitations. We anticipate a director for Adult Discipleship. We thank Pastor Mike Hintz of the Commission on Evangelism and Ms. Laura Schulz of the Commission on Worship for so capably facilitating our work. It has been my honor to serve as a member of this commission for the past 20 years and as chairman for the past 12 years. I thank the Lord of the church and the men and women of WELS for the privilege.

Rev. Randy Hunter, reporter

Rev. Randy Hunter, chairman

Rev. Aaron Boehm

Prof. Tom Kock

Rev. Dave Wenzel

Advisory:

Prof. Stephen Geiger, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Commission on Youth and Family Ministry

Floor Committee #15

Our calling

David was an amazing child of God. He was not afraid of lions, bears, or even the giant, Goliath. It wasn't trust in his skill or his weapons but a childlike trust in his God that removed his fear. He verified this in Psalm 27:1: "The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?" There are many things in this world that can make us fearful. Only the Lord can remove all fear. The mission of the Commission on Youth and Family Ministry is to help and encourage parents and congregations as they teach and instruct children about Jesus Christ, the one who has conquered all our enemies and removes all of our fears. The work of this commission is to provide materials and encouragement for children from birth through college to encourage them that the LORD is the stronghold of their lives.

Our current situation

The Commission on Youth and Family Ministry hosted an International Youth Rally in Knoxville, Tenn., in June 2014. The theme of the rally was "No Fear," which was based on Psalm 27:1. Almost 1,800 teens and adult chaperones attended the rally. This summer, a number of districts will be hosting regional youth rallies, and many congregations are planning mission trips.

This year the commission is celebrating the 20th anniversary of *Kids Connection*, a monthly video series produced for congregations and schools. For 20 years, teenage hosts have introduced grade-school-aged children to other people who have served and stayed connected to Christ. For 20 years, Pastor Tony Schultz has been giving encouraging devotions at the end of every segment to strengthen the faith of an entire generation.

The commission has also recently produced the *Everyday* video Bible study series. These materials are available in various forms through Northwestern Publishing House.

A look ahead

The Commission on Youth and Family Ministry continues to look for ways to serve our youth into the future. We have begun planning for another international rally in 2016. In addition to offering spiritual encouragement to our teens at the rally, we will continue to provide *Kids Connection* to our churches and schools. We have begun work on creating a School of Youth and Family Ministry. These "schools" are intended to help congregations prepare, plan, and strengthen the ministry to their youth and families. We are confident that the LORD, who is our light and our salvation, will bless the children and families of our congregations as we take to heart and fearlessly carry out our synod's theme, "Christ's Love, Our Calling."

Rev. Thomas Schneider, reporter

Rev. Thomas Schneider, chairman
Staff Minister Thomas Banaszak
Rev. Benjamin Berger
Rev. John Boggs
Rev. Snowden Sims

Advisory:

Rev. Raymond Schumacher, Northwestern Publishing House
Prof. David Sellnow, Martin Luther College

Commission on Lutheran Schools

Floor Committee #16

Our calling

God's command to us as Christians is clear: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Luke 18:16). The mission statement of the Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS) is also clear: "to guide and assist congregations in advancing the gospel of Jesus by providing resources, training, and personal assistance for starting and strengthening Lutheran schools." It is with these two statements in mind that the CLS works to serve our 10,595 early childhood ministry (ECM) students; our 24,424 Lutheran elementary school (LES) students; our 5,768 Lutheran high school (LHS) and prep school students (PHS); and our 2,597 faithful and talented teachers, directors, and principals by providing resources and assistance to help strengthen the teachers and leaders of our schools.

Our current situation

The CLS has provided resources, training, and personal assistance in a wide variety of ways:

- Consulting with principals, directors, teachers, schools, and congregations
- Developing more than 500 call lists per year on behalf of the 12 district presidents
- Managing school personnel and statistical data
- Attending teachers' conferences and conducting school visits throughout the synod
- Publishing a weekly electronic news bulletin—the CLS e-News
- Providing promotional materials
- Coordinating a synodwide Lutheran elementary school testing program to assess our students' progress and provide tools for modifying instruction to improve learning
- Representing WELS schools to the general public through interaction with the National Council on Private School Accreditation, the Council for American Private Education, the United States Department of Non-Public Education, and various other state and national education agencies and organizations
- Developing and maintaining partnerships with the district schools coordinators, early childhood district coordinators, Northwestern Publishing House, Martin Luther College, and many others to provide resources to strengthen the instruction, materials, and curriculum within our schools (a list of resource partners is on the CLS website)

Lutheran school enrollment trends

School type	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15
ECM	9,600	10,019	10,019	10,717	10,694	10,595
LES	24,597	24,300	24,644	24,254	24,245	24,424
LHS	5,510	5,577	5,303	5,123	5,141	5,093
PHS	558	558	583	668	682	675

Overall student enrollment has had minimal variation over the past biennium after over a decade of steady decline. Early childhood enrollment has remained steady. Lutheran elementary schools have experienced growth in some suburban and urban areas but have struggled in many small towns and rural communities. Rising operational costs and demographic changes are two of many societal changes that have challenged congregations seeking to support Lutheran schools.

Uncalled teachers

As a result of raising a family, teacher call elimination within schools, and the closing of once-thriving schools, there exists a significant number of qualified and willing, yet uncalled, teachers in WELS. The CLS works with district presidents to use these 170 teachers on call lists as appropriate as they seek to return to ministry.

A look ahead

Staffing transitions

In March 2014, Teacher Jim Rademan accepted the call to serve as director of the Commission on Lutheran Schools, replacing Teacher Greg Schmill, who earlier in the year accepted a call to serve Ministry Leadership Institute. Teacher

Ken Proeber accepted a one-year part-time call to serve as interim associate director, and former full-time staff member Mrs. Rachel DiGiorgio was hired part time to provide support for WELS School Accreditation (WELSSA) during the associate director vacancy. In early 2015, Teacher Tom Plitzuweit accepted the call to serve as associate director of Lutheran Schools and executive director of WELSSA beginning July 1, 2015. Teacher Cindi Holman continues to serve as the national coordinator for early childhood ministries. Ms. Tierney Arndt and Ms. Allison Page serve as full-time support staff.

Early childhood ministries

Early childhood ministries (ECMs) serve close to 11,000 young children and their families, sharing the gospel message each day. WELS ECMs offer the opportunity, privilege, and responsibility for congregations to support and encourage parents in their God-given role. The CLS continues to work to support and encourage congregations and those serving in WELS ECMs. A newly revised edition of *Building Blocks* has been completed for congregations looking to open, expand, or revitalize an early childhood ministry. Beginning this fall, the CLS will provide online devotions for individuals serving in an ECM. Newly assigned early childhood directors are now receiving the support of an early childhood director apprentice mentor to support and encourage them in the first years of their ministry. The early childhood district coordinators are providing a significant number of opportunities for professional growth and collaboration available within the districts. The district coordinators also offer consultation and support for congregations, ECMs, and ECM personnel within their district. Critical issues continue to be considered with a focus on the mission of each ECM to share the gospel of Christ with young children and their families.

National School Leadership Conference

The National School Leadership Conference, hosted and sponsored by Lutheran Schools, is scheduled for June 15–18, 2015. The conference theme is *Sanctified Through and Through—Soul, Mind, Body*, based on 1 Thessalonians 5:23. The conference will revolve around the principle that a balanced life results in effective ministry and leadership with a focus on helping school leaders reflect and improve upon their spiritual, mental, and physical well-being. The conference will feature worship and a keynote presenter each day, five full-day preconference offerings, and more than 40 sectional presentations. The conference is held every three years and is designed for school principals, educators, early childhood directors and teachers, pastors, staff ministers, school board members, laypeople, and anyone who wishes to grow in their school leadership abilities. Expected attendance of more than 300 WELS guests from across the country will have the opportunity to connect with other school leaders to grow in the blessings of Christian education and to collectively strengthen the ministry of our schools.

Voluntary Supplemental Contribution Program

The Voluntary Supplemental Contribution Program was initiated in 2007 when WELS budgetary support for the Commission on Lutheran Schools was no longer sufficient to completely cover its basic costs. Today the program continues to fund more than 20 percent of Lutheran Schools' operating costs. Each contribution demonstrates our commitment to walk together as a WELS school system and is an opportunity to help preserve and support an important form of gospel proclamation in our world—WELS schools. The voluntary program is vital to ensure that basic and important services are available for all WELS schools and provides the opportunity for such services to grow and be strengthened. In the past two years, approximately 40 percent of WELS schools participated in this program providing more than \$150,000 for the CLS each of those years. These funds provide resources for various items including leadership development programs; teacher continuing education initiatives; congregational, school, and individual support and consulting; as well as district school coordinator and early childhood district coordinator efforts in each district.

WELS School Accreditation

During the biennium, 65 schools have hosted a site visit team allowing for 38 schools to renew their accreditation and 27 schools to become accredited for the first time. Thirteen first-time accredited schools are already planning site visits during the 2015–16 school year. Spring 2014 introduced an addendum to the elementary school protocol providing schools the opportunity to accredit their K3 and K4 along with grades K5-8. Revised electronic standard tracking tools have allowed for a number of reaccreditation visits to be shortened to two-day site visits. A growing number of accreditation consultants and trained team leaders are available to assist schools seeking to make use of this voluntary tool for school evaluation and self-improvement.

Testing Task Force

The Testing Task Force is seeking to select a new synodwide student testing platform, which is needed for the 2016–17 school year. The committee is considering opportunities for both formative and summative testing options.

Curriculum support

Curriculum support for our WELS schools is available through what was originally termed the WELS Task Force on Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Our WELS schools enjoy the freedom to evaluate state and national curriculum mandates such as Common Core to determine appropriate use of standards in their individual schools, since our WELS schools are exempt from the mandates in most cases. The task force has shifted its focus to provide support to schools in their curriculum development and decisions. Schools in several of our area Lutheran high school federations are collaborating on curriculum planning to fit the needs and contexts of their ministries.

Leadership Candidate Training Program

Eight male and eight female candidates have been accepted into the Leadership Candidate Training Program that will be led by the Commission on Lutheran Schools and run from June 2015 through June 2016. The eight males are current teachers who will receive training and practical experience to help prepare them to one day serve as principals in our schools. The eight females are current teachers who will use the training experience to prepare them to one day serve as early childhood directors. This one-year cohort is being funded through an Antioch II Foundation grant approved in the fall of 2013 and received in the summer of 2014.

Principal Training Program

This pilot program pairs a Martin Luther College graduate with an onsite principal at a WELS school who mentors the graduate for two years as a teacher while also providing leadership instruction. The graduate assumes greater leadership during the third year and is mentored by the onsite principal as a principal-in-training. Following the third year, the graduate returns to the Assignment Committee to be assigned as a principal, and his mentor principal mentors him during the first year at the new assignment. St. Paul in Beverly Hills, Fla., and its principal Kyle Bender are piloting the program in 2014–15. The Conference of Presidents has approved seeking two to three additional schools to join the pilot beginning in May 2015 at assignment time. The Commission on Lutheran Schools is identifying schools and onsite mentor principals, while MLC is identifying candidates and providing mentor training for the principals.

Principal Apprentice and Director Apprentice Mentoring

A grant received from the Antioch II Foundation will allow the Commission on Lutheran Schools to provide instructional mentoring to 2015 MLC graduates assigned directly into principal and early childhood director positions. The program consists of instructional mentoring for each apprentice during the first two years of service. This is an established program for principal apprentices and will now move from a pilot program to a planned program for early childhood director apprentices. The CLS thanks Dr. Lee Plath, who is retiring in June 2015 from a part-time role as director of the apprentice program.

Veteran teacher support

The Growing Educators in Ministry Committee is making great progress in developing new ministry development plan materials and also new tools for formative and summative teacher evaluation and assessment. The goal is to select eight to ten pilot schools to test the new tools. The committee will continue its work with a target of the summer of 2018 to roll out the tools for all schools.

Support for struggling schools and congregations seeking to open schools

Support for struggling schools and congregations seeking to open schools continues to be a concern for the Commission on Lutheran Schools. Efforts are planned throughout the next biennium to train school counselors and district consultants to assist schools seeking assistance.

Teacher Jim Rademan, reporter

Teacher James Sievert, chairman

Rev. Matt Brown, secretary

Rev. Jon Brohn

Mr. Ron Conradt

Teacher Steve Granberg

Teacher Shawn Herkstroeter

Mr. Jim Sexton

Advisory:

Teacher Jim Rademan, director

Teacher Tom Plitzuweit, associate director
Teacher Cindi Holman, national coordinator of early childhood ministries
Prof. Robert Klindworth, Martin Luther College
Prof. Joel Otto, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Reformation 500 Committee

Floor Committee #2

Our calling

President Mark Schroeder appointed the Reformation 500 Committee in 2009 in order to guide the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

Our current situation

As we began planning we set two goals: 1) no funds were to be used that would take money away from the ongoing ministry of the synod; projects would have to be funded in other ways, and 2) the celebration of the Reformation was to be an opportunity to educate WELS and others on the important truths the Reformation brought to light.

The first effort we undertook was to send suggestions for papers on Reformation topics to pastoral conferences and ask the conferences to consider these topics. We did this early so that program committees could discuss the topics, choose from them or create their own, make assignments, and allow enough time for preparation of conference papers. The Conference of Presidents was helpful in sharing the list of topics in their own districts. In addition, we encouraged districts to begin planning for their conventions by choosing Reformation themes for presentation especially for 2014 and 2016, the years the districts would hold conventions prior to the anniversary year. Of course, 2018 is also a year that would fit into any Reformation celebration, since the event that set off the Reformation occurred late in 1517. We also encouraged districts to explore possibilities for larger Reformation rallies at the district or local level. We believed it was important to contact venues for large gatherings early in order to secure the spaces needed for a large rally and plan for the rental expenses.

During this time we also developed a logo that will serve as our visual identity for the celebration. That logo was seen at the 2013 synod convention and has appeared in a few other places. It is available for individual congregation, conference, and district events and publications. You may request digital versions of it by contacting the committee chairman, Pastor John Braun, at braunj@nph.wels.net.

The committee took steps to prepare published materials so they would be ready at the appropriate time. The first was to ask Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) to prepare a commemorative book of essays for the anniversary. In response, NPH commissioned 10 WELS scholars to contribute an essay for the book. All 10 of those essays have been written, and the book is scheduled for release in January 2017. NPH has also taken steps to prepare other new books and materials. They include

- a Lenten kit with sermons based on a Reformation theme;
- a Christmas kit;
- three series of bulletin inserts;
- a translation of some of Luther's Christmas sermons that can be used for devotional purposes;
- a new Reformation history;
- a translation by John Montgomery of a French work entitled *In Defense of the Lutheran Faith*; and
- *Luther Then—Lutherans Now*, an interactive digital presentation for Lutheran elementary school classrooms.

As the publishing house looks forward to the anniversary it will reissue earlier published books that are still important for various audiences. They include:

- *The Life and Faith of Martin Luther* (Fehlauer),
- *Martin Luther, Reformer in the Making* (Scharf),
- *Martin Luther and the Jews* (Tjernagel),
- *Martin Luther and the Long Reformation* (Kiecker),

- *Studies in the Smalcald Articles* (Meyer/Brenner),
- *In Defense of Martin Luther* (Montgomery), and
- Luther's *A Simple Way to Pray*.

NPH has also been preparing a new version of the exposition to Martin Luther's Catechism. At this time, the Catechism exposition is planned to be ready to commemorate the Reformation but is subject to delay because of its complexity.

As the committee discussed other approaches to the Reformation celebration, one project continued to occupy our attention—a video presenting the story of Luther and the spiritual treasures we have as a result of the Reformation. Our planning took a different direction when Thrivent decided to fund a two-hour PBS video produced by Boettcher/Trinklein, the company that produces our *WELS Connection* videos. That event led us to focus our efforts on ways we could create materials that could benefit from the broadcast of the PBS special on Luther slated for October 2017. The following projects are dependent upon funding, but we are planning to prepare them trusting that the Lord will provide the financial resources to share the gospel by using the unique event of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation:

- Creation of a shorter video using the footage of the PBS special for use in our congregations.
- Creation of a series of short video vignettes (three to six minutes in length) that can be posted on congregational websites and used for presentations at congregational organizations to reinforce the importance of being Lutheran in our world today. This series we hope can be delivered through *WELS Connection*.
- In connection with these two projects, several Bible studies will be created that will make use of the video and the vignettes for various gatherings.
- There are three important events that will take place in our circles during 2017—the synod convention, the worship conference, and the CELC convention. We are planning to create material for these gatherings that has a consistent professional look and message.
- As we do the planning for this, we want to encourage congregations, committees, boards, and commissions to use the visual identity that is developed so that we have a consistent synodical image or branding and in that way reinforce each others' message.
- The Commission on Worship plans to focus on the contributions of the Reformation to music and worship at the worship conference and to expand the conference to other regional locations to allow more attendance in outlying districts.
- The Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) has planned the drafting of a contemporary set of 95 Theses, which proclaim our confessional Lutheran perspective. The CELC plans for a worldwide proclamation and presentation of the theses on Oct. 31, 2017.
- We are also aware of some of the plans of districts for special celebrations and for plans to host a gathering of all WELS pastors in Milwaukee on Oct. 31, 2017.

The above projects focus on helping our congregations to renew their appreciation for the blessings we have as Lutherans, but we also believe that the focus should include reaching out to those who do not share an appreciation for the gospel we treasure. We want to encourage local congregations to use the anniversary as an opportunity to share Christ with their own communities. To that end we are developing the following plans:

- A press kit that will help congregations share the gospel in newspapers and on radio and television, drawing attention to the PBS special and/or to local congregational events that they plan for sharing Christ.
- Help in supplementing what congregations offer on their websites, including content for e-mail messages.
- Resources for use on social media that share the gospel.
- Materials written for non-Lutherans that can be used by local congregations in a number of ways.
- An opportunity and encouragement for our congregations to demonstrate their love and kindness to the communities in which the Lord has planted them and to the needy in this world.
- Since *Forward in Christ* is the WELS witness to our own members and also to the larger world, we will include special articles in *Forward in Christ* that focus on the Lutheran Reformation.

We have reached out to Multi-Language Publications to work at projects that can be used in our world missions. We have also reached out to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod to help avoid duplication of effort. We continue to be in contact with Boettcher/Trinklein as we develop these materials.

A look ahead

We have a special opportunity to remember God's blessings to us. One request we make of all those who are planning

special events for the Reformation is to adopt the visual branding that we have developed and will develop in the next few months. The logo is one example of that. Please use it wherever you can and whenever you focus on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

We look forward to the few months of planning that we have remaining and then to the production of the material we plan. Many of the plans are already moving forward. It will be a busy two years. We humbly ask that this convention establish a planning committee for the 2017 convention that will work with the Reformation 500 Committee to plan an appropriate opportunity to praise God for our Reformation blessings in 2017.

Rev. John Braun, reporter

Rev. John Braun, chairman

Rev. Curtis Jahn, Northwestern Publishing House

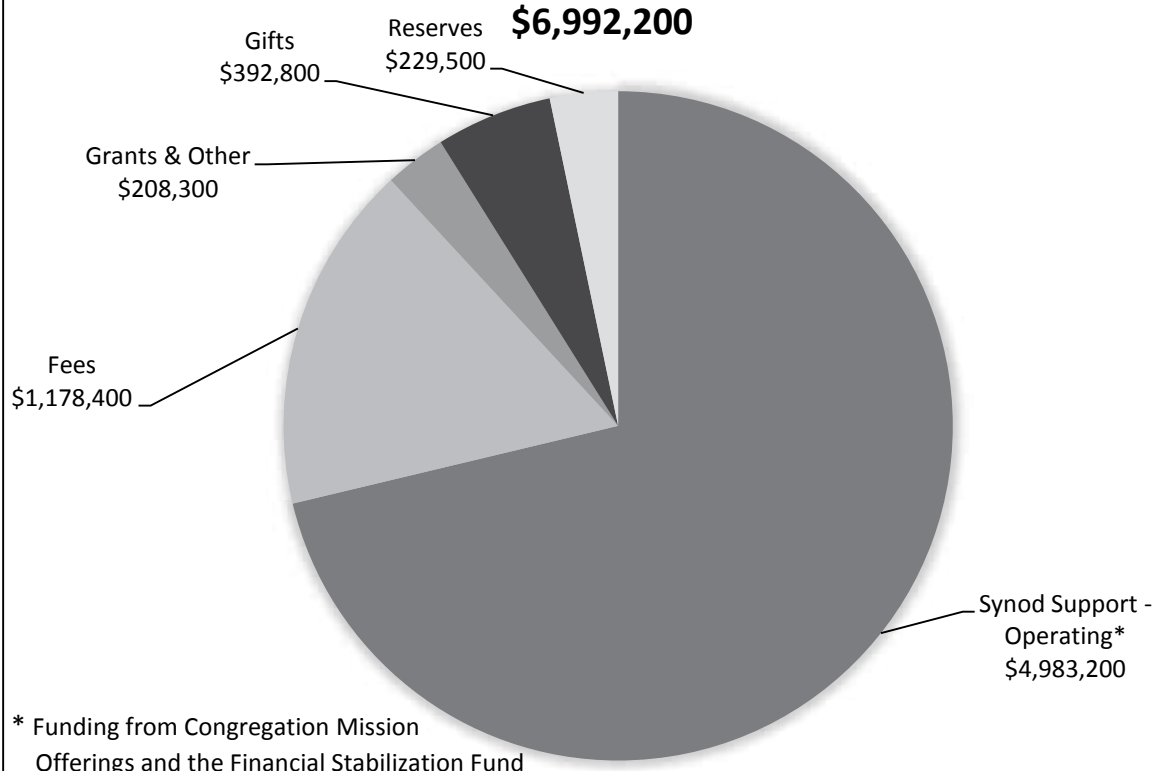
Rev. Bryan Gerlach, Congregation and Ministry Support Group

Prof. Arnold Koelpin, Martin Luther College

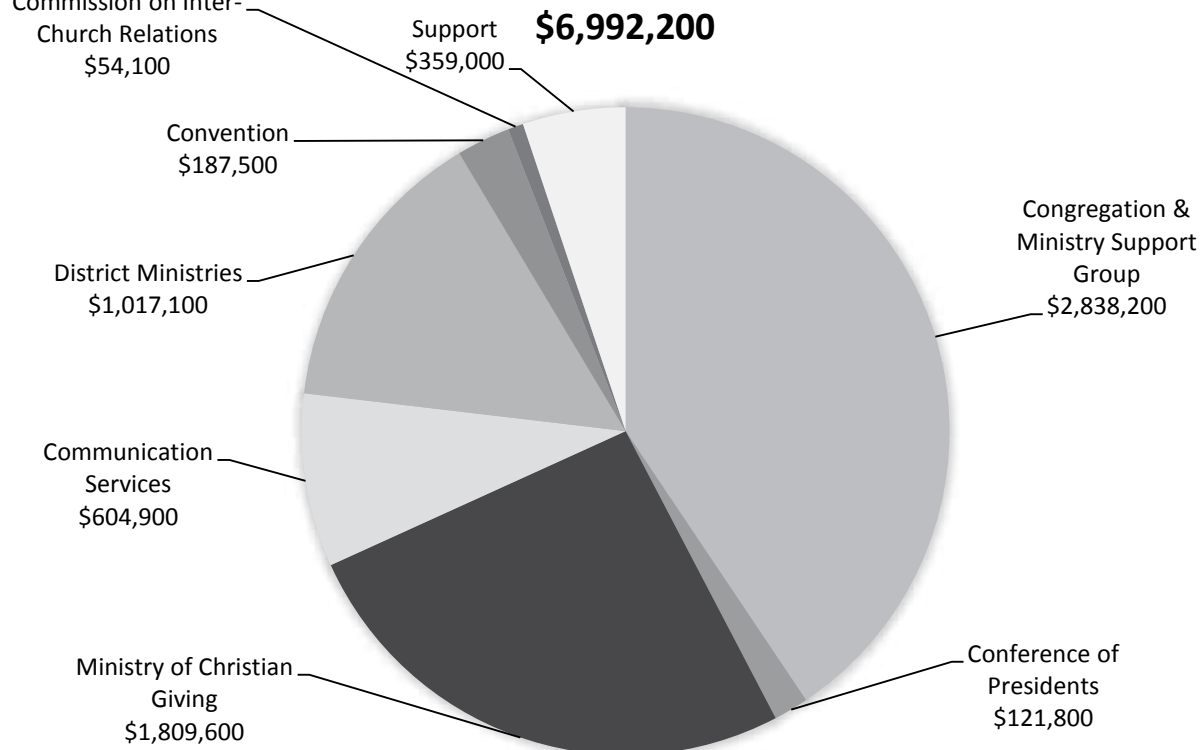
Prof. Paul Koelpin, Martin Luther College

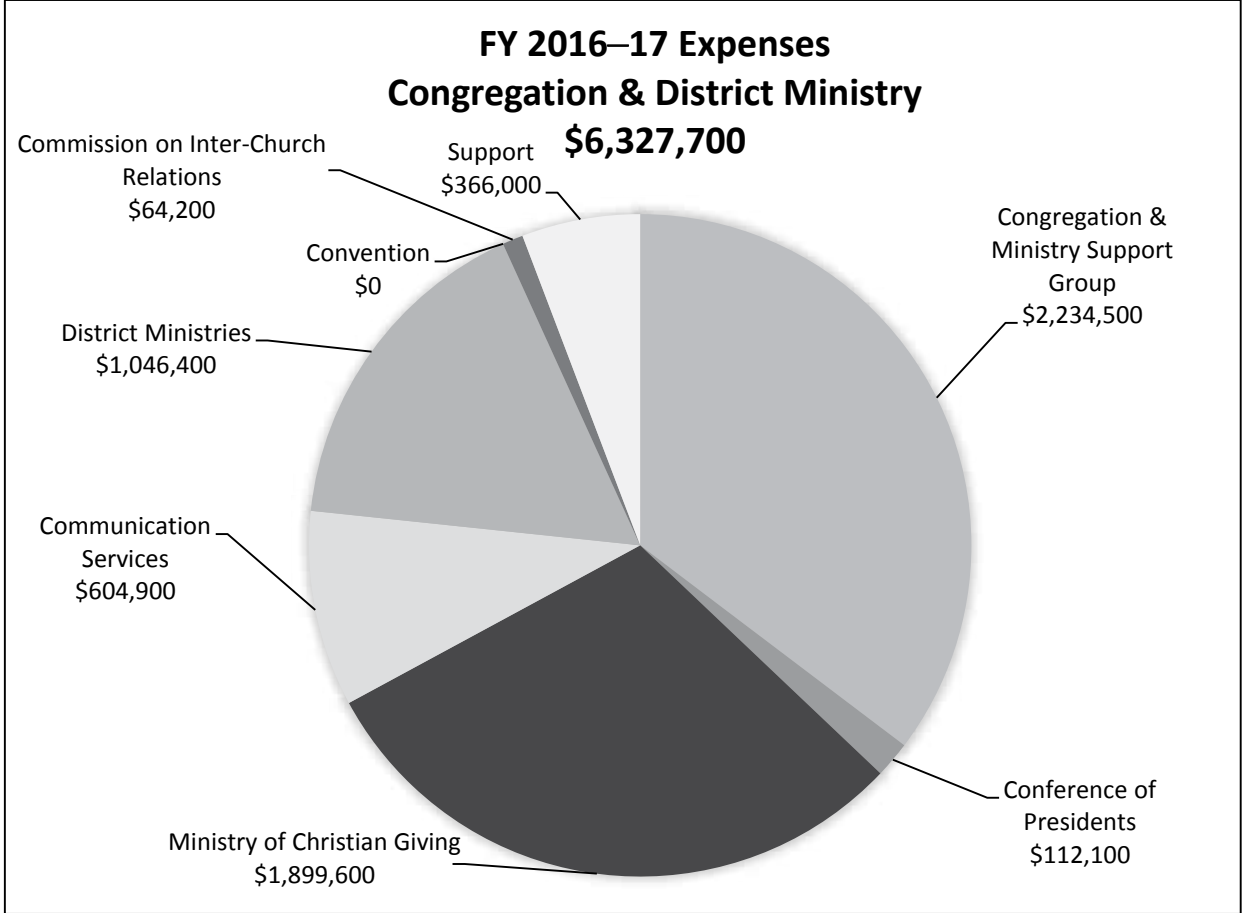
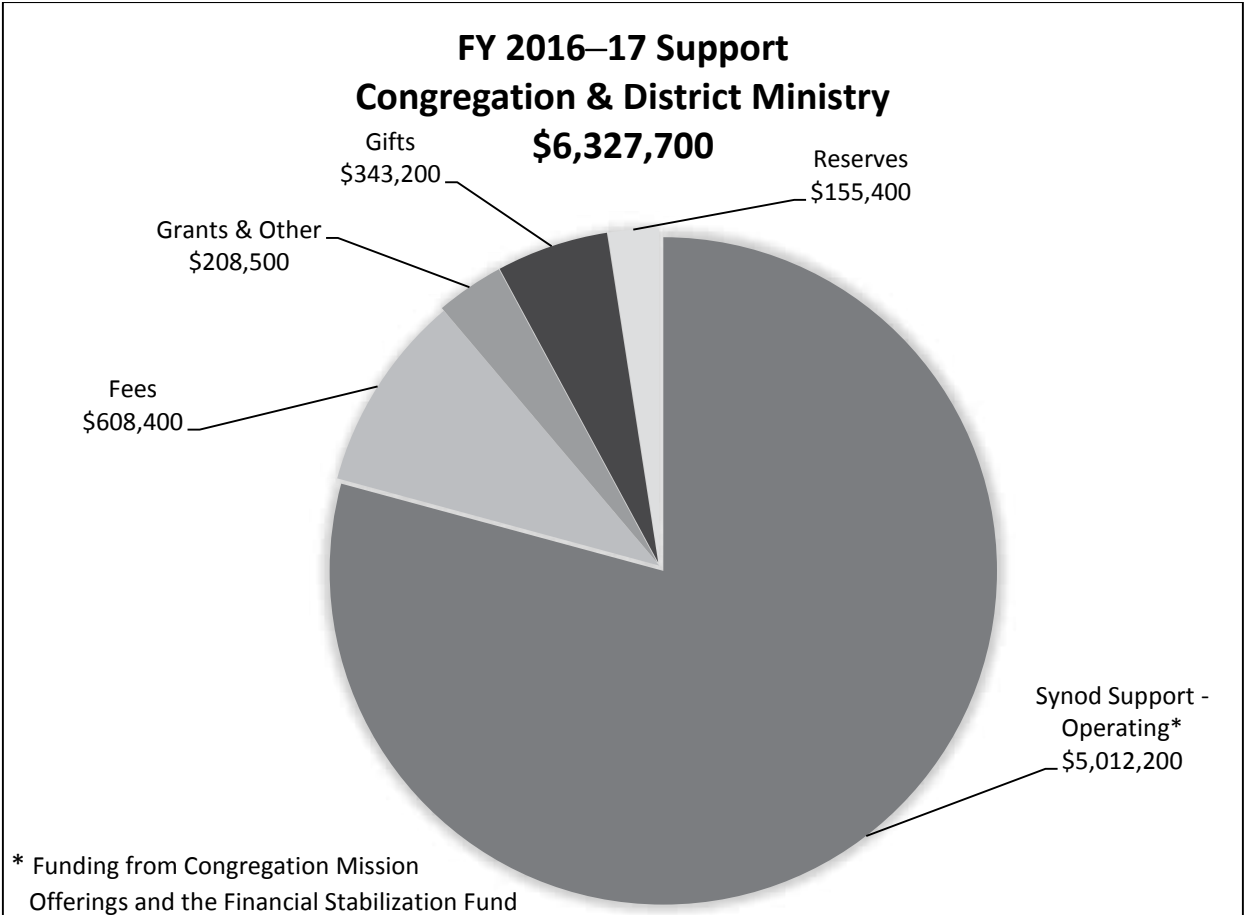
Prof. James Korthals, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

**FY 2015–16 Support
Congregation & District Ministry**

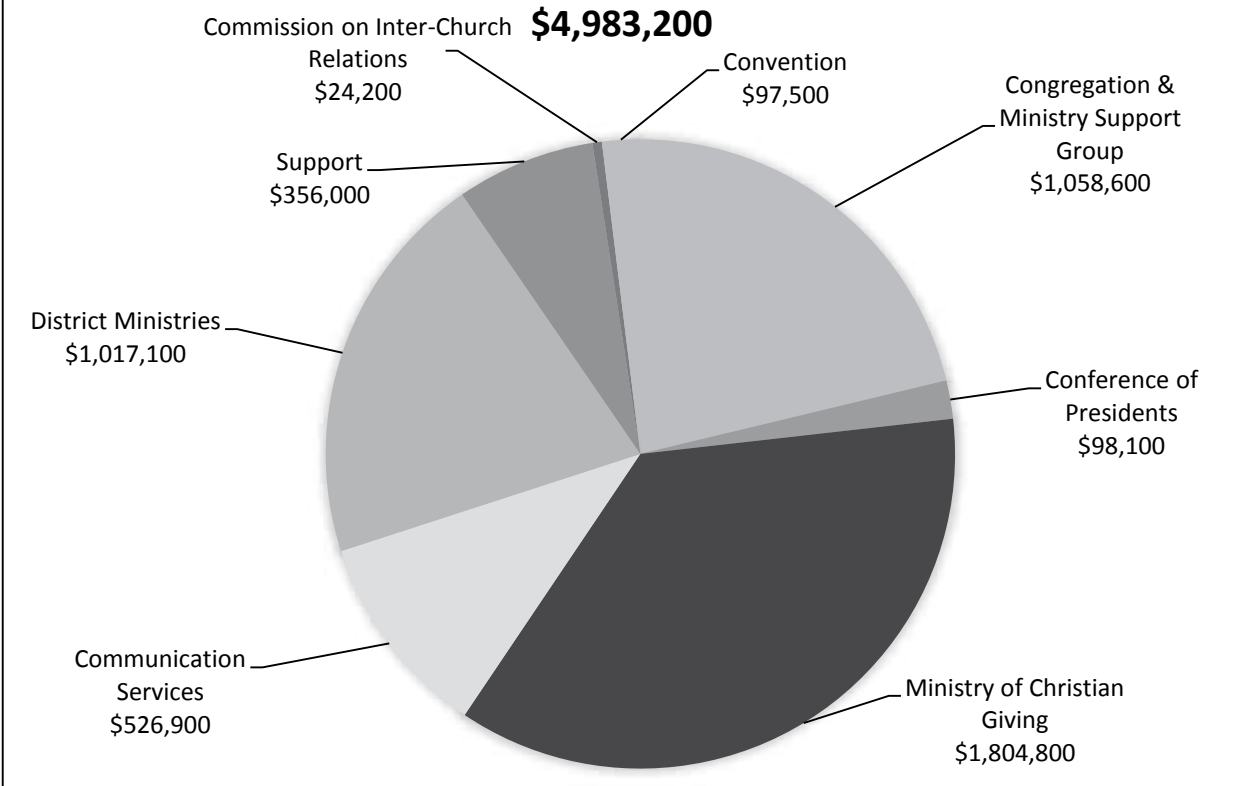


**FY 2015–16 Expenses
Congregation & District Ministry**

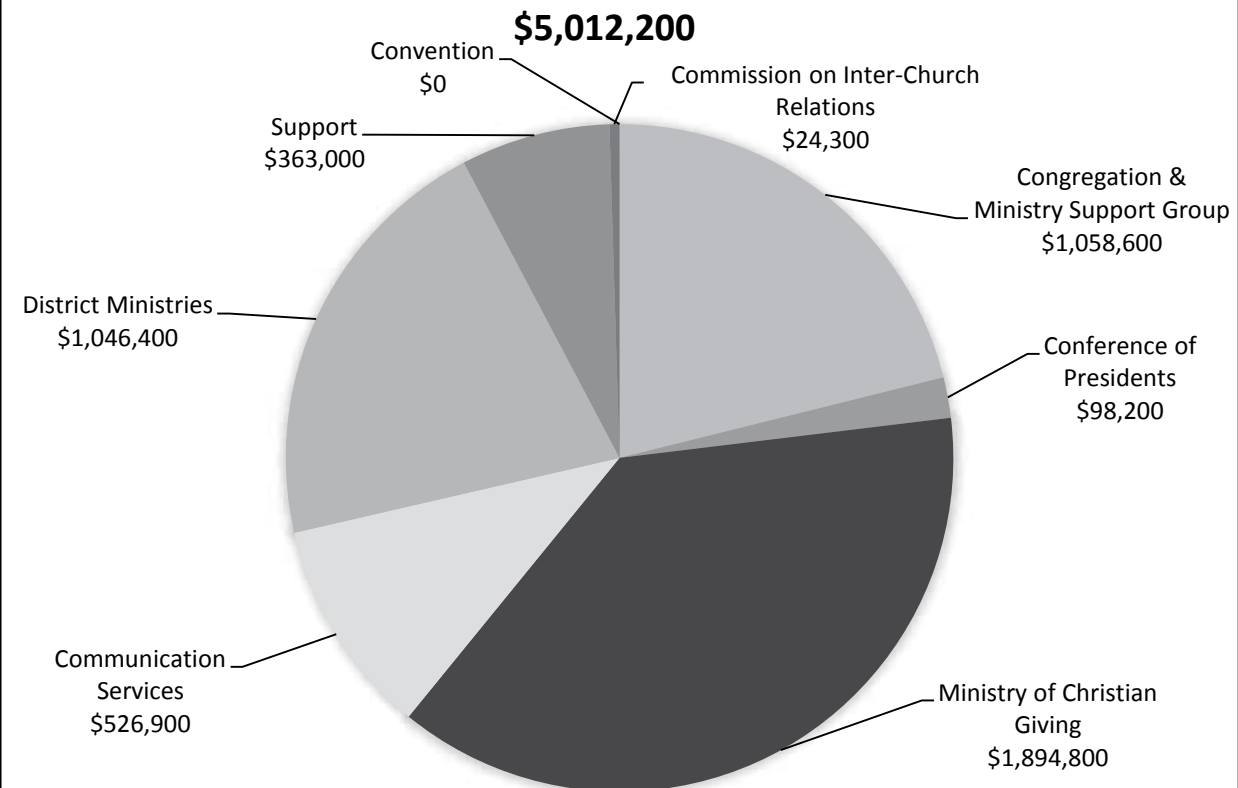




**FY 2015–16 Synod Operating Support Allocation
Congregation & District Ministry**



**FY 2016–17 Synod Operating Support Allocation
Congregation & District Ministry**



Ministry Support

The Ministry Support area of the ministry financial plan includes the Synodical Council and all entities overseen by the Synodical Council. These include:

Synodical Council

- Expenses for regular and special meetings of the Synodical Council
- Expenses for the Accounting Oversight Committee
- Insurance and banking expenses

President's Office

- Compensation for the synod president
- Stipends to the congregations of the first and second vice presidents
- Office staff serving the president and the Synodical Council
- Travel expenses for the synod praesidium
- Special support for displaced called workers
- Colloquy expenses

Facilities

All expenses related to the maintenance and operation of the Center for Mission and Ministry, including insurance costs

Synod Archives

WELS Historical Institute (see p. 172)

Publication Coordinating Commission

WELS Christian Aid and Relief

Expenditures related to humanitarian aid and relief programs; funding for the programs of Christian Aid and Relief is provided by gifts from individuals and congregations and other organizations

Technology Services

Financial Services

Human Resources

Synodical Council

Floor Committee #6

The Synodical Council (SC) is composed of the following 22 members: one lay member elected by each of the twelve districts, three district presidents elected by the Conference of Presidents (COP), and six at-large members elected by the synod in convention (two pastors, one teacher, and the chairmen of the boards for World Missions, Home Missions, and Ministerial Education). The synod president serves as chairman and votes only in cases of a tie. Advisory members include the two synod vice presidents, the administrators of the three areas of ministry, the coordinator of the Congregation and Ministry Support Group, the chief financial officer, the chief technology officer, and the directors of the Ministry of Christian Giving, Missions Operations, Communication Services, and Human Resources.

The SC is organized into three standing committees: Administration, Ministry, and Finance. The Compensation Review Committee is a standing subcommittee of the Administration Committee. According to the synod's bylaws, the SC has the following responsibilities:

- It shall be responsible for all activities of the synod in pursuit of its mission, other than those specifically conferred on the Conference of Presidents.
- It has the authority to act on behalf of the synod between conventions in keeping with the directives and resolutions of the convention.
- It is responsible for overseeing and evaluating all programs of ministry carried out by the synod and coordinating the execution of all decisions made by the synod convention.
- It prepares and submits for approval a ministry plan (along with a budget to support the plan) to the synod. The budget for the ministry plan is required to be balanced, based on the support forecast adopted by the SC. The budget is to reflect fiscal integrity, sound planning, and faithful stewardship.
- It is responsible for the management of all synodical property, funds, and investments.
- It oversees and implements a process of long-range planning approved by the convention and carried out by the areas of ministry and other departments of the synod.

The SC meets in face-to-face meetings three times annually as it works to carry out its broad responsibilities. Special face-to-face meetings and teleconferences of the SC or its executive committee are held as necessary.

Long-range plan

After receiving input from all areas of ministry and departments of the synod, as well as from the Conference of Presidents, the WELS long-range plan, "In Christ Alone," was presented and approved at the 2011 convention. From the beginning of its development, the plan was designed to be a broad outline of the direction of the synod and a description of where the synod, under God, hopes to be by 2017. This broad "road map" was not intended to be a detailed strategic plan; rather, it is to guide those entrusted with carrying out the plan (the areas of ministry, departments, and auxiliary organizations of the synod) as they develop and implement specific strategies to reach the adopted goals.

The plan calls for aggressive, but careful, expansion in all areas of the synod's work. It sets goals for increased efforts in world missions and increased establishment of new home mission congregations. It calls for continued recruitment and training of a sufficient number of well-trained workers. It addresses the need for strengthening congregations and creating a culture of lifelong learning among called workers. It emphasizes the synod's role in assisting and strengthening confessional Lutheran church bodies around the world. The plan recognizes that there are more opportunities for kingdom expansion than we would begin to meet but raises the sights of our members to seize as many opportunities as our resources enable us. The name of the plan ("In Christ Alone") is a constant reminder of the one who alone can bless and prosper the work that we do in his name.

The plan, which has guided the SC in establishing ministry priorities since 2011, is included as an addendum to this report (see p. 72).

In April 2015, the SC began work on the next long-range plan that will serve as our planning guide beyond 2017.

Process for developing the ministry financial plan (budget)

A new process for developing the ministry financial plan was implemented in 2009, refined in 2011, and continued in 2013. The same planning process was followed in the development of the ministry financial plan for the 2015–17 biennium.

The process began in the spring and continued through the summer and fall of 2014 as all areas of ministry outlined their ministry needs and priorities. An initial summary of those efforts was compiled into a single plan by the President's Advisory Council. In view of the financial circumstances at that time, areas of ministry were directed to prepare their plans assuming no increase in synod support. The areas of ministry also considered the special funds available to them (including new gifts as well as those already on hand) and determined a prudent use of those funds to supplement the synodical support that would be allocated to them.

In the fall of 2014, a preliminary support forecast was prepared. The support forecast is a comprehensive estimate of the financial resources from all sources that will be available to carry out the synod's mission and ministry. The forecast considers past trends, the latest information regarding Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO), and the balance in the Financial Stabilization Fund (FSF).

The establishment of the FSF has proven to be very beneficial in budget planning. Prior to 2009, the support forecast estimated the financial support that would be available from such sources as individual gifts, bequests, and grants from foundations. The budget was then crafted based on gifts that were anticipated in the coming year. These sources of financial support are highly unpredictable and subject to sudden change. That often resulted in sudden shortfalls of financial support requiring immediate adjustments to the budget and sudden, unplanned reductions in ministry. The FSF was established to receive gifts from these sources and to enable the synod to spend these dollars only in the year after they are actually received. The FSF has now been in place for six years. It is functioning exactly as it was designed, enabling the support forecast to be made with a much higher degree of accuracy and providing planning time if shortfalls do, in fact, occur.

Throughout the summer and fall of 2014, the areas of ministry outlined their plans and determined the level of special funds (in both new gifts and reserves) that they would prudently use to supplement the synod support that had been allocated.

The President's Advisory Council (PAC) served as a program and budget committee to analyze the plans of the areas of ministry and to craft a comprehensive spending proposal that reflected the use of synod support and special funds. The proposed ministry plan was initially presented to the SC in November 2014, refined in the following months as new information became available, and approved by the SC in February 2015. This is the ministry plan that is now being recommended by the SC to the synod convention.

Throughout the development of the ministry financial plan, there has been excellent cooperation among the areas of ministry, a careful and transparent use of special funds, and a growing confidence in the accuracy and dependability of the support forecast.

Specific details of the ministry plan can be found on pp. 95-105.

Detailed financial results from the 2013–15 fiscal years are included in the Finance and Budget report on p. 93.

Synodical capital debt

In 2007 various non-operational debts of the synod were combined into a single capital debt total of \$22.4 million. A special offering in 2008–09, continuing gifts from individuals and congregations, and annual amortization payments of \$1.6 million have combined to reduce the total outstanding debt to approximately \$4.7 million at the time of the 2015 convention. With continued amortization payments of \$1.6 million annually, the debt will be fully paid off by June 2018. In a desire to eliminate the debt earlier (thus making the annual amount of \$1.6 million available to support missions and ministry), the 2013 convention approved a special offering in 2015 with the goal of completely eliminating the debt by the end of 2016.

We thank God for the remarkable blessings that he has shown on the effort to eliminate the debt, even in difficult economic times. We are also confident that God will bless the special offering. Accordingly, the proposed ministry financial plan does not include the amortization payment in fiscal year 2016–17.

Modifications to the 2014–15 ministry financial plan

In view of CMO subscriptions in 2014 that were \$1.2 million below plan, the SC directed areas of ministry to outline what programs would need to be reduced or eliminated in view of the projected shortfall. At the same time, the COP addressed the shortfall by asking all congregations to reconsider their 2014 CMO subscriptions. Congregations responded by increasing their subscriptions by nearly \$500,000, making some of the reductions unnecessary. The SC carried out its responsibility to make a downward adjustment of \$825,000 in the spending level that had been approved by the 2013 convention. The combination of spending reductions and increased CMO made it possible to close the \$1.2 million shortfall.

In November, the SC also made several revisions to the 2015–16 ministry financial plan. The Ministry of Christian Giving was facing a \$210,000 funding shortfall due to the discontinuation of the Thrivent Churchwide Grant, a portion of which was used to assist in the funding of the Ministry of Christian Giving. The SC increased the synod support for the Ministry of Christian Giving by \$210,000. Funds were available to accomplish this thanks to a grant from the WELS Foundation. The SC also approved the expenditure of \$590,000 at Michigan Lutheran Seminary for a dormitory renovation project. These funds were available due to a grant from the MLS Foundation. The SC also approved modifications for World Missions, Facilities, Adult Discipleship, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Martin Luther College, and Luther Preparatory School. Modifications such as this usually occur due to the increased use of reserves, higher than planned revenues, and/or grants and gifts.

The WELS Center for Mission and Ministry

The synod has occupied its new headquarters, the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry, for two years. The new building in Waukesha has proven to be a remarkable blessing in many ways.

Implementation of convention resolutions

The SC is responsible for overseeing the implementation of convention decisions. The Convention Compliance Listing accompanies this report and can be found on p. 77. The listing provides a status report on the efforts to carry out the resolutions of the 2013 convention. All issues have been addressed; some have been fully carried out while others involve ongoing efforts.

Subsidiary organizations

Although the subsidiary and affiliated organizations of WELS operate with a good measure of independence and are directed by their respective boards and commissions, all are under the general supervision and oversight of the SC and are ultimately accountable to it. These organizations are Northwestern Publishing House, WELS Investment Funds, WELS Foundation, the WELS Church Extension Fund, WELS VEBA, and WELS Pension Plan. A separate report from each is included elsewhere in this book.

In regard to these organizations was a request in 2013 to change the synod bylaws governing WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF), as well as the encouragement that support service subsidiaries develop policies governing the amount and use of unrestricted net assets (reserves). The bylaw change gives the CEF flexibility in designating how its grants to Home Missions can be used. Previously, CEF grants could be used only for the purchase of land and buildings. The change makes it possible for the CEF, if it chooses, to give grants to Home Missions for use in supporting mission planting efforts in general. The adoption of reserves policies has resulted in grants from WELS Foundation of \$460,000 in support of the synod's ministries and plans for the CEF to make at least two grants of \$700,000 to Home Missions.

Insurance cost savings

The SC has achieved significant savings in the cost of property insurance by switching to a higher deductible plan while maintaining an overall cap on deductible exposure. The savings are placed into a reserve pool, which will cover the losses incurred within the deductible of \$25,000 per incident. As the pool of reserve funds grows through ongoing savings, there is potential to raise the deductible even higher, resulting in even greater savings.

Compensation Review Committee

The Compensation Review Committee is a standing subcommittee of the SC. This group reviews all matters of compensation for synodical workers and makes its recommendations to the SC. The compensation levels adopted by the SC then become part of the overall synodical ministry plan presented to the convention. The compensation for workers is outlined on pp. 106-108.

Revisions to the bylaws

The SC is recommending bylaw changes that will define the role and responsibilities of the synod's chief technology officer. Additions are underlined. The recommendation will be addressed by Floor Committee #23 (Constitutional Matters).

SYNODICAL COUNCIL

Section 5.00

Synodical Council Duties and Responsibilities

(c) The advisory members of the council shall include the first vice president, second vice president, chief financial officer, an administrator each for home missions, world missions, and ministerial education, the coordinator of the Congregation and Ministry Support Group, the director of the Ministry of Christian Giving, the director of communications, the chief technology officer, and the treasurer. Additional advisory members may be appointed by the chairman as necessary.

Section 5.80

Chief Technology Officer

(a) There shall be a chief technology officer who, under the direction of the president, shall have overall responsibility for the technology activities of the synod. These activities include the responsibility for the technical infrastructure and activities of the synod, the security of all synodical information, the development and maintenance of financial systems to support the work of all synod

entities, the integrity of synod databases, and provisions for reliable digital communications.

(b) The chief technology officer shall be hired by the president after consultation with the Synodical Council. He shall be an employee of the synod and accountable to the president.

(c) The chief technology officer shall be responsible for areas of ministry support assigned to him by the president. He shall be an advisory member of any board, commission, and committee of the synod as assigned by the president or otherwise specified in these bylaws.

Unfunded program priorities

The Synodical Council prepared a ministry financial plan (budget) for the synod convention. The process of developing the ministry financial plan includes prioritizing funding for various efforts and programs in the synod's work. The WELS constitution requires that the Synodical Council provide the convention with a list of programs that were not funded in the ministry financial plan but are the priority programs should more resources become available. The constitution says in Bylaw 5.30(d): "Requested items not included in the recommended budget shall be placed on an unfunded list in priority order."

This list shows the synod and the convention delegates the expanded ministry efforts possible if God's people give more resources than currently projected. These priorities reflect the intent of the Synodical Council as it brings them to the synod convention. The Synodical Council may adjust these priorities as changing circumstances warrant. Brief program descriptions for each program can be found below.

At its April 2015 meeting, the Synodical Council approved the following prioritized list of unfunded programs:

Priority	Area	Item	Amount
1	World Missions	Ethiopia/Sudan worker training support	\$50,000
2	Ministerial Education	Prep school subsidy	\$180,000
3	Ministry of Christian Giving	Giving counselor	\$100,000
4	Special Ministries	WELS Military Services Committee	\$50,000
5	Home Missions	New home mission start	\$125,000
6	Special Ministries	WELS Prison Ministry Committee	\$50,000
7	Synodical Council	Publication Coordinating Commission	\$100,000
8	Lutheran Schools	Associate director	\$100,000

Ethiopia/Sudan worker training support: New contacts in Ethiopia have been made through online communication and the efforts of WELS Sudanese immigrants in the United States. We now have another tremendous opportunity in Africa. Gospel peace can be offered to more than 250,000 South Sudanese refugees who have fled to Ethiopia to escape tribal conflict. Several South Sudanese leaders from the camps are ready to be trained in partnership with a confessional Lutheran seminary started in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This young Lutheran church also has several students ready to be trained to work in other areas of Ethiopia. This money would provide start-up costs needed to train more than three dozen new Lutheran workers.

Prep school subsidy: Additional funds would be used to shore up the financial positions of the prep schools. The schools have had to spend down their reserves dramatically. Additional funding would allow expansion of efforts such as Project Timothy and Titus (mission and ministry experiences) and student financial assistance.

Christian giving counselor: This would add another full-time Christian giving counselor (CGC) to the Ministry of Christian Giving. Over the past six fiscal years, our Christian giving counselors have made an average (per full-time equivalent) of 282 face-to-face donor visits and have nurtured an average (per full-time equivalent) of \$500,000+ in immediate gifts (not including those to congregations or collaborative partners) and \$2,000,000+ in deferred expectancies. What a blessing from the Lord! The Ministry of Christian Giving believes that an additional CGC will enable our team to help more of our fellow Christians excel in the grace of giving to the Lord. An additional CGC will also help us represent our WELS ministries to more people and, Lord-willing, increase over-and-above gifts to our areas of ministry at a time when Congregation Mission Offerings are level yet not increasing at a rate that enables us to expand our ministries.

WELS Military Services Committee: The Military Services Committee provides spiritual services to hundreds of WELS members and others who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces or who live overseas. The Military Services Committee supervises a ministry-by-mail program, a full-time civilian chaplain in Europe, and a national civilian chaplain

and liaison to the U.S. military who trains stateside military contact pastors and serves troops via the Internet. Since WELS has not supplied chaplains for the U.S. military chaplain program, this civilian chaplain program was once entirely funded by WELS, with two chaplains in Europe, but all support was withdrawn due to past financial challenges. The Military Services Committee is almost entirely dependent on freewill offerings and grants. Since fiscal year 2014 WELS has restored \$30,000 of subsidy to the \$200,000 Military Services Committee annual budget.

New home mission start: Additional resources made available to the Board for Home Missions would result in opening a new mission effort from the board's list of approved projects.

WELS Prison Ministry Committee: The Prison Ministry Committee reaches thousands of incarcerated men and women via gospel-centered correspondence Bible studies and training congregations to carry out jail ministry. An administrator and two other staff train WELS volunteers in test correcting and in being a pen pal as a Christian witness. The Prison Ministry Committee develops new resources in partnership with Multi-Language Publications, and these Bible studies serve worldwide, not only in prisons. Partnering with districts, the Prison Ministry Committee is expanding the number of local jail ministries. This program was once entirely funded by WELS, but its \$180,000 budget is currently entirely dependent on freewill offerings and grants, including a fiscal year 2014 \$20,000 grant for publication development from Multi-Language Publications.

Publication Coordinating Commission: The Publication Coordinating Commission provides subsidy amounts required to make publication viable for the small market for some Northwestern Publishing House publications.

New associate director for Commission on Lutheran Schools: Based on recommendations from the Task Force on Lutheran Schools, the 2013 synod convention authorized calling a full-time associate director to lead Forward with Lutheran Schools, Second Wind, and the Leadership Candidate Training Program. Funds also provide for additional support staff. This position will assist congregations as they seek to determine the feasibility of starting a new school or early childhood ministry or expand or revitalize their early childhood ministry and/or Lutheran elementary school. Funding also supports the ongoing resources and training to prepare current teachers for future leadership positions in early childhood ministries and Lutheran elementary schools.

Membership

Mr. Phil Hempel, Mr. Mark Massmann, Mr. David Metzger, Mr. Todd Scott, Pastor Peter Naumann, and Pastor Daniel Koelpin have completed their service on the SC. We thank all of these men for their service and thank the Lord of the Church for using their gifts to his glory.

Rev. Mark Schroeder, reporter

Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president and chairman
Mr. Mark Bannan, Michigan District
Mr. Warren Ehlke, Pacific Northwest District
Mr. John Fowler, South Atlantic District
Mr. Kenneth Gosch, Dakota-Montana District
Mr. Gary Graf, North Atlantic District
Mr. Steven Hansen, Arizona-California District
Rev. Philip Hirsch, chairman of WELS Board for Ministerial Education
Mr. Paul Holzhueter, Minnesota District
Rev. Joel Jenswold, pastor-at-large
Mr. Bradley Johnston, South Central District
Mr. James Moeller, teacher-at-large
Rev. Howard Mohlke, chairman of WELS Board for World Missions
Mr. Dale Pohlman, Nebraska District
Rev. David Rutschow, Conference of Presidents
Mr. Thomas Schermerhorn, Northern Wisconsin District
Rev. Jonathan Schroeder, pastor-at-large
Mr. Timothy Snyder, Southeastern Wisconsin District
Mr. Art Tessmann, Western Wisconsin District
Rev. Donald Tollefson, Conference of Presidents
Rev. Earle Treptow, Conference of Presidents
Rev. Charles Westra, chairman of WELS Board for Home Missions

Advisory:

Rev. Keith Free, administrator of WELS Board for Home Missions
Rev. Bryan Gerlach, coordinator of the Congregation and Ministry Support Group
Mr. Lee Hitter, director of communications
Rev. James Huebner, first vice president
Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, director of the Ministry of Christian Giving
Mr. Dennis Maurer, director of human resources
Mr. Todd J. Poppe, chief financial officer and treasurer
Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of WELS Board for Ministerial Education
Rev. Larry Schlomer, administrator of WELS Board for World Missions
Mr. Martin Spriggs, chief technology officer
Rev. Joel Voss, second vice president
Mr. Sean Young, director of WELS Missions Operations

Appendix:

WELS Long-Range Plan

“In Christ Alone”

Underlying principles

“Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 15:4-6).

We affirm that only the gospel of Jesus Christ can create and sustain faith. Thus, spiritual results related to the growth of the Holy Christian Church are completely in the hands of God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit uses the means of grace to accomplish the results that only he can work, and he has entrusted the means of grace to human beings as his messengers. It is, therefore, a stewardship issue that we are outlining in this document. We want to be faithful stewards of the resources God has given us by planning our activities (sometimes called “strategies”) in order to move toward the goals (sometimes called “results”) for the visible church known as WELS, which we, under God’s blessing, hope to attain.

At the heart of our planning for the future is our desire to seek the lost as well as nurture the found. We do that as individuals and as congregations working together in a confessional Lutheran church body, that is, we carry out our gospel ministry together while standing squarely on all the truths of Scripture as expressed by the Lutheran Confessions. At all times and in all we do our focus is the cross of Christ Jesus.

In planning for the future, the leaders of our synod not only desire to be good stewards but also recognize that they are responsible to the members, called workers, congregations, commissions, and boards of the synod. We trust them to do their work and ask them to provide reports as they have the opportunity. The leadership groups of our synod, in particular the Synodical Council (SC) and Conference of Presidents (COP), will continue to review the synod’s organizational structure so that it operates in the best and most appropriate way, fostering a spirit of unity, supporting the gospel ministry we carry out together, and making the most of every opportunity the Lord places before us. Therefore, we place all things confidently into the hands of our gracious God and make our plans in this working document in keeping with his revealed will.

“In Christ Alone, This Cornerstone, This Solid Ground”

Foundation for long-range planning—our purpose

For the purpose of communicating to people inside and outside of our church body, the synod in convention has adopted this purpose statement:

As men, women, and children united in faith and worship by the Word of God, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod exists to make disciples throughout the world for time and for eternity, using the gospel in Word and sacrament to win the lost for Christ and to nurture believers for lives of Christian service, all to the glory of God.

The focused purpose of our work as a corporate synod structure is summarized in our constitution:

The object and purpose of the synod shall be to extend and conserve the true doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church:

- a) By assisting and counseling in every appropriate way the pastors, teachers, and congregations affiliated with the synod;
- b) By establishing and maintaining theological seminaries, colleges, academies, schools, and other institutions of learning;
- c) By establishing and maintaining home and world missions and such charitable institutions as it may deem appropriate to its calling;
- d) By printing, publishing, purchasing, selling, and disseminating literature that maintains Lutheran doctrine and practice;
- e) By furnishing appropriate literature for parish schools, Sunday schools, missions, institutions, and churches.

For the purposes of planning, of marshalling resources as good stewards of God's blessings, and of encouraging unity in spirit, the leaders of our synod have noted the constitutional priorities articulated by recent synod conventions and have summarized the purpose of our work as a synod with this planning guide:

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod exists to give all glory to God by upholding, defending, and proclaiming the truth of the Holy Scriptures as articulated in the Lutheran Confessions, and by providing a means for congregations and their members to extend the reach of their God-given mission of proclaiming the gospel in Word and sacrament through joint mission efforts at home and abroad and through the training of called workers.

"In Christ Alone My Hope Is Found"

Long-range plans—the picture in 2017

Under God's blessing and by grace alone, we hope to see the following ambitious and realistic snapshot of our work in 2017. Details follow in the section entitled "Strategies to reach long-range plans."

Worldwide identity as confessional Lutherans

As we approach the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we note the potential realignment of confessional Lutherans in North America and beyond so that by 2017:

- 1.1 - WELS will be more widely known as a confessional Lutheran church body, firmly founded on the Holy Scriptures and joyfully proclaiming the saving love of Jesus Christ in Word and sacrament to as many people as possible around the globe.

World Missions

Recognizing the need for billions of souls to hear the gospel, by 2017, the Board for World Missions (BWM) will:

- 2.1 - have a world mission team (from administration to national churches) that agrees on a scriptural understanding of missiological terms and philosophy.
- 2.2 - have six regional seminaries (5 in 2010),
- 2.3 - ten national theological professors (6 in 2010),
- 2.4 - ten functional Bible institutes (8 in 2010), and
- 2.5 - regular curricula supplemented by distance learning.
- 2.6 - publish at least 1/3 of the necessary Bible institute and seminary course materials in at least 20 languages.
- 2.7 - operate in 30 countries (23 in 2010).
- 2.8 - serve more than 150,000 souls worldwide (107,000 in 2010).

Home Missions

Recognizing that the process of encouraging, enhancing, establishing, developing and enriching missions in North America involves partnerships with congregations, groups, and individuals, by 2017, the Board for Home Missions (BHM) will:

- 3.1 - open 8 new missions a year (4 in 2010).
- 3.2 - support 8 new ministry enhancements a year (10 in 2010).
- 3.3 - subsidize mission efforts in 200 congregations (150 in 2010), with eight missions and five ministry enhancements achieving self-support every year.

Ministerial Education

Mindful of the precious Lutheran heritage of the unconditional gospel that has been passed to our generation with remarkable clarity, by 2017, the Board for Ministerial Education (BME) will:

- 4.1 - graduate from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) approximately 30 pastor candidates annually (42 in 2010), reflecting the actual number of pastor-track students already enrolled in 2010 at MLC. The COP recognizes that the smaller classes result in a workable 10 percent vacancy rate in our parishes (5 percent in 2010). As we open more missions and as congregations grow, there will be a need for more candidates.
- 4.2 - graduate from Martin Luther College (MLC) approximately 55 teacher candidates (50 in 2010) who can serve anywhere annually, allowing every early childhood center, Lutheran elementary school, and area Lutheran high school to be staffed by synodically-certified directors, principals, and teachers. There will be 45 additional graduates annually who can serve only in limited geographic locations (40 in 2010).

- 4.3 - graduate from MLC staff minister candidates and those trained for part-time and volunteer service to meet the needs of congregations.
- 4.4 - in collaboration with the COP and Congregation and Ministry Support Group (CMSG), have in place for all ministerial education schools self-supporting continuing education courses in a wide variety of formats for called workers, with a strong component of equipping the saints for the strengthening of congregations.
- 4.5 - have working relationships between WLS, MLC, Michigan Lutheran Seminary (MLS), Luther Preparatory School (LPS), and Home and World Missions to serve the needs of each of our mission fields, home and abroad, and our sister churches in the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC).

Congregation and District Ministry

Recognizing the vital importance of congregational health and the impact of called workers growing spiritually, personally, and professionally, by 2017, the COP and the CMSG will collaborate with WLS and MLC to provide counsel, resources, and training for all congregations to:

- 5.1 - strive for an increasing percentage of participation in worship and Bible study.
- 5.2 - improve assimilation, relationships and personal connections, and service opportunities in church and community, with an emphasis on Christian vocation.
- 5.3 - strengthen the overall quality of education, specifically instruction and leadership, in our early childhood centers, Lutheran elementary schools (LES), area Lutheran high schools, and other children's ministries, so that they demonstrate excellence in both nurture and outreach.
- 5.4 - find ways to connect with the people of their communities and make use of outreach opportunities to share Jesus' love with as many people as possible, including those with special needs.
- 5.5 - support formal and informal programs for the spiritual, personal, and professional growth of called workers.
- 5.6 - support the work of the synod with 10-15 percent of offerings for Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) (7 percent in 2010), with 100 percent of congregations participating (92 percent in 2010).
- 5.7 - reflect synodical unity and vitality in all aspects of congregational doctrine and practice.

Publishing

Mindful of one of the main reasons we joined together as a synod, by 2017, Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) will:

- 6.1 - work toward providing dignified and quality materials that identify us as a confessional Lutheran church body that is serious about what we believe and interested in sharing our witness with the world.
- 6.2 - coordinate the publishing plans and needs of the boards and commissions of the synod and NPH to avoid duplication and promote consistency.
- 6.3 - explore and implement all methods of proclaiming our message, including print and digital media, in a cost-effective way.
- 6.4 - develop literature for the adults, teens, and elementary children that helps them grow in knowledge and devotion to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the confessional Lutheran truths we treasure.
- 6.5 - develop material that can be translated and shared through Multi-Language Publications' efforts among other cultures in our country and worldwide.

Resources

- 7.1 - It is the stated goal of WELS leadership and the synod in convention to have Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) serve as the primary source of financial support for synodical ministries. In order to carry out the plans and goals listed in this long-range plan, under God's blessing and by his grace alone, by fiscal year 2017 we pray that our synodical ministry plan will be funded by unrestricted gifts of \$39 million per fiscal year with \$27.5 million of that coming from Congregation Mission Offerings (\$29.6 million with CMO of \$20.9 million in fiscal year 2010-11). The increase in CMO amounts to congregations moving from giving 7 percent of their offerings to 10 percent of their offerings.

Except for publicity and communication purposes, publishing efforts will most logically be funded by Northwestern Publishing House through the sale of the material. For projects that cannot recover the cost of development, the Publication Coordinating Commission may seek budgetary funds or special gifts to fund new projects.

Resource allocation

With the direction of recent synod conventions, and flowing from the plans above, in fiscal year 2016–17:

- 8.1 - Missions will utilize 40-50 percent of CMO and Financial Stabilization Fund (FSF) resources (40 percent in 2011).
- Ministerial Education will utilize 30-40 percent of CMO and FSF resources (30 percent in 2011).
- Congregation and District Ministry will utilize 10-15 percent of CMO and FSF resources (14 percent in 2011).
- Ministry Support will utilize 10-15 percent of CMO and FSF resources (16 percent, including 5 percent debt retirement, in 2011).

“In Christ Alone, Jesus Commands My Destiny”

Strategies to reach long-range plans

Worldwide identity as confessional Lutherans

In the years leading up to 2017, WELS will:

- 1.1.1 - clearly and consistently express ourselves to the world as confessional Lutherans in doctrine and practice.
- 1.1.2 - maintain communication with the church bodies of the CELC and seek out the fellowship of other confessional Lutheran churches around the world.
- 1.1.3 - make every effort to identify confessional Lutherans in the United States and to rejoice in doctrinal unity when such unity can be determined.

World Missions

In the years leading up to 2017, the BWM will:

- 2.7.1 - enter new fields as God gives the opportunity.
- 2.9.1 - work with Home Missions and Ministerial Education to build awareness of the Church’s mission to the lost and support of World Missions work among called workers and constituency.
- 2.2/4.1 - work with Ministerial Education to develop a worldwide ministerial education system on the model of basic Christian instruction, then Bible institute, then seminary.
- 2.6.1 - publish foundational materials at all levels of theological development in as many targeted languages as possible.
- 2.9.2 - streamline administration and increase joint planning with other administrative units.

Home Missions

In the years leading up to 2017, the BHM will:

- 3.1.1 - prioritize funding with a balance of immediate opportunities and targeted efforts for long-range impact.
- 3.4.1 - streamline the communication, support structure, and resources in the field and in the offices.
- 3.2.1 - provide proactive assistance and strategies to reach the lost with the gospel.
- 3.3.1 - mentor new personnel in mission settings.
- 3.5.1 - partner with World Missions, Ministerial Education, and other leaders to communicate the urgency for outreach and to develop helpful tools and resources.

Ministerial Education

In the years leading up to 2017, the BME will provide coordination, stressing efficiency and fiduciary responsibility, as:

- 4.1.1 - Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) and Martin Luther College (MLC) graduate students who are confessional in stance, evangelical in approach, mission-minded in spirit, culturally sensitive, appropriately flexible, and zealous to nurture and to equip the saints.
- 4.5.1 - Michigan Lutheran Seminary (MLS) and Luther Preparatory School (LPS) graduate students prepared to succeed at Martin Luther College.
- 4.5.2 - MLC continues to recruit students from prep schools, area Lutheran high schools, public schools, home schools, and adults in our fellowship considering another career.
- 4.2.1 - MLC expands its efforts in the training of principals, early childhood directors, and early childhood workers.
- 4.4.1 - the ministerial education schools expand their efforts in continuing education of called workers, education of international students for service in their ethnic groups of origin, and education of those who want to serve part time or as volunteers in the congregation.
- 4.5.3 - it monitors the needs of the synod and encourages the schools to tailor their recruitment efforts to match those needs.

- 4.1.2 - the schools continue aggressively to recruit candidates for pastoral ministry, recognizing that, in every year, at every time, “the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few,” so that we graduate from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary as many pastoral candidates as possible.
- 4.2.2 - the schools continue aggressively to recruit candidates for teaching ministry, recognizing that, in every year, at every time, “the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few,” so that we graduate from Martin Luther College as many teaching candidates as possible.
- 4.5.3 - the schools increase the diversity of their student bodies.

Congregation and District Ministry

Recognizing the emphases in this area changing to “training the trainers,” in the years leading up to 2017, the COP will:

- 5.4.1 - foster the ministries of the CMSG (the Commissions on Congregational Counseling, Worship, Evangelism, Adult Discipleship, Youth and Family Ministry, and Special Ministries) to provide counsel, resources, and training to congregations and all called workers.
- 5.3.1 - foster the ministry of the Commission on Lutheran Schools to provide training, assistance, expertise, and resources for the precious and valuable resources we have in our early childhood ministries, Lutheran elementary schools, area Lutheran high schools, and other children’s ministries, looking for new opportunities and sustainable models of Lutheran education.
- 5.5.1 - work with WLS, MLC, and the CMSG to foster spiritual, personal, and professional growth for all called workers through flexible programs of continuing education and mentoring, to enable the called workers better to equip, empower, and encourage lay members in their vocations and in volunteer service for their congregations.
- 5.1.1/6.1.1 - establish a committee to plan and develop a new hymnal by the 500th anniversary of the first Lutheran hymnal (1524).
- 5.6.1 - work with all congregations to increase CMO using the 10/10 plan.
- 5.7.1 - work with parasynodicals to enlist and coordinate their support roles in funding and ministry.

Publishing

In the years leading up to 2017, NPH will:

- 6.2.1 - plan materials that will help us celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in 2017.
- 6.1.2 - continue to publish materials that will help congregations carry out their ministries through the printed or digital word.
- 6.4.1 - explore new confirmation instructional material.
- 5.1.1/6.1.1 - put plans in motion to publish a new hymnal by the 500th anniversary of the first Lutheran hymnal (1524).

Resources

- 7.1.1 - In order to fund an annual ministry plan with unrestricted gifts of \$39 million in 2017, plans will be put in motion that will rely solely on the grace of God and his promises of undeserved love through Christ Jesus and will be applied to the hearts of God’s people through a carefully organized every-member visit for every member of WELS. The plans will offer specifics on how to do that in every congregation of WELS—tailored for small, middle-sized, and large congregations. The plans will feature materials that will be brief but pointedly directing all to the “why” of joyful and generous financial stewardship—the cross and empty tomb of Jesus—and will include the “how to” of joyful and generous financial stewardship through a percentage of income offered, through special gifts (a possible special offering for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation), and through planned and deferred giving (estate planning).

Leadership

In the years leading up to 2017, the SC and COP will continue to work together to make the most of opportunities the Lord is placing before us. Issues “on the table” include:

- 9.1.1 - reviewing church governance issues (process and function of synod conventions, boards, size of the SC, etc.).
- 9.2.1 - reviewing the size and number of districts, the size of circuits, possible term limits for district officials.
- 9.3.1 - reviewing the size and efficiency of synod technology, communication, and fiscal support offices.
- 9.4.1 - emphasizing continuing education for all called workers.
- 9.5.1 - encouraging collaboration in synodical support and ministerial endeavors.
- 9.6.1 - continuously updating the strategic plan so that the process continues beyond 2017.

2013 WELS convention compliance listing

Committee, resolution	Responsible group	Resolution description	Due by/status:
1-01	COP	Plan and implement offering for debt retirement	January 2015; completed
2-03	President	Appoint Ad Hoc Commission 2	October 2013; completed
2-03	SC/COP	Ad Hoc Commission 2 functions and reports progress to districts	June 2014; completed
1-05	COP	Plan 2015 convention at MLS	July 2015; completed
4-01	SC	Implement ministry financial plan	Ongoing
4-03	President	Appoint committee to develop capital projects funding plan	October 2013; committee appointed, ongoing
5-02	Praesidium/ COP/CICR	Continue contacts with LCMS leadership	Ongoing
9-01	BWM/CICR	Fine tune guidelines for dealing with emerging national churches	Spring 2014; completed
9-01	BWM	Seek out creative approaches for reaching the lost	Ongoing
10-01	BHM	Implement resolution establishing Canadian Mission District	Spring 2014; completed
13-03	COP	Oversee circuit pastors as they distribute information on the Called Worker Care Committee to congregations	Ongoing
14-01	CLS	Encourage culture of improvement and accreditation efforts	Ongoing
14-02	SC/COP	Include position of CLS associate director and necessary staff on unfunded priority list; COP calls if and when funds become available	Include on list immediately; reprioritization of entire list in November 2013; completed
14-03	BME/MLC	Expand graduate program to train a greater number of LES principals	Ongoing
14-03	CLS	Implement School Leadership Candidate Training program	Ongoing
14-03	COP/CLS	Consult with congregations calling principals and ECE directors	Ongoing
14-03	COP	Reduce the number of candidates assigned to school leadership positions	Ongoing
14-04	COP/CLS	Encourage schools to participate in the Voluntary Supplemental Contribution program	Ongoing
15-01	SC	Provide funding for Publication Coordinating Commission	Include on list immediately; reprioritization of entire list in November 2013; completed
16-01	SC	Include full-time archivist on unfunded priority list; hire archivist if and when funds become available	Include on list immediately; reprioritization of entire list in November 2013; completed
22-02	COP	Appoint standing committee to communicate with the editors of existing translations	October 2013; completed
23-03	President/ COP/SC	Appoint task force to develop process for encouragement and reporting of continuing education efforts by pastors and staff ministers; COP to oversee task force work; task force to bring cost estimates to convention	October 2013; appointment completed ; task force delivered preliminary report to the districts in 2014, final report to the convention in 2015
24-02	COP	Develop and implement procedure for utilizing pastors willing to serve for less than code	Ongoing

Accounting Oversight Committee

Floor Committee #6

Our calling

The Accounting Oversight Committee serves the synod, its schools, its subsidiaries, and its affiliates that are under the oversight of the Synodical Council (SC). The committee serves the SC by assisting in ensuring that appropriate accounting policies and internal controls are established and financial systems are efficient and effective; retaining external auditors; assisting in ensuring that financial personnel have the requisite skills; and by assisting in ensuring that financial reports are prepared timely, accurately, and in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles. The committee keeps the SC informed of its action through the SC's appointed member of the committee; the synod's schools, subsidiaries, and affiliate boards, commissions, and committees are informed through WELS' chief financial officer.

Our current situation

The committee engaged the independent audit firm of CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP, to conduct the annual audits of the consolidated financial statements of the synod, its schools, and its subsidiaries for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2014. All audits were completed within four months of year end and all entities selected for audit received an unmodified/clean opinion, the best you can get, on the financial statement's compliance with generally accepted accounting principles and fair presentation of financial position. In addition, the auditors identified no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in any entities' control environment. Copies of the annual financial statements, quarterly consolidated financial statements, and quarterly budget reports are available on the Financial Services Intranet site.

In addition to the annual synod financial statement audits, the committee engaged the independent accounting firm CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP, to audit the WELS VEBA Group Health Plan and WELS Pension Plan for 2013. These financial statements also received unmodified/clean opinions for 2013 and the auditors did not identify any significant deficiencies or material weakness in their control environments. At the time of this writing, the 2014 calendar year audits for these two entities are just getting started and we expect that the results, which won't be available until spring, will be similar to prior years' results.

A look ahead

The committee remains fully committed to supporting and growing the synod's ministry programs and services. We believe that opportunities for ministry growth can be realized if ministry support services become more efficient through the streamlining of support services across entities, areas of ministry, and departments. Our belief has been repeatedly confirmed by our independent auditors and these concerns and opportunities were also shared with the Ad Hoc Commission 2, who may, or may not, elect to address the changes we have proposed.

At the heart of our concerns about inefficient services and functions is the synodical governance structure, which calls for independent governance boards and management for each synodical entity. Rightly, these boards and management are focused on the ministries they have been called to serve. They have not been and they should not be burdened with designing and managing efficient and effective support services across all synodical entities, nor could they, since their vision and scope is limited to one entity. As a result, there are duplicate and inefficient support resources across synodical entities. To increase funds available for gospel ministry and achieve the cost savings and other benefits described above, we strongly believe that the leadership talent at the synodical level in the areas of communications, finance, technology, and human resources should coordinate and oversee their respective functions and services at the schools, Northwestern Publishing House, and other synod entities. We are confident this can be accomplished in harmony with the governance boards and leadership of each entity to ensure that the mission and purpose of each entity is fully supported—all to the glory of Christ our Lord.

We further believe that similar opportunities to reduce costs and/or improve services also exist in the area of Christian giving. Accordingly, the reporting relationship and service delivery operations in these areas should be reviewed and evaluated by those charged with governance of this area, the Conference of Presidents.

Also, the synod has experienced significant cost savings through coordinated procurement of insurance, audit services, and rental cars to name a few. We believe there are further cost saving opportunities in the procurement areas that should be investigated. If the investigation confirms the existence of savings opportunities, procurement of these items should also be coordinated at the synodical level.

Finally, the synod's financial services function has been reinforced through the hiring of qualified, ministry focused individuals. These individuals, coupled with supporting systems and infrastructure, have implemented policies and procedures that have strengthened internal controls and ensure timely and accurate financial reporting. While turnover among the group has been manageable, the committee is providing leadership to financial services to ensure that, to the extent possible, succession plans are developed and implemented for key positions within the group.

We are hopeful that these opportunities to reduce costs and increase gospel ministry will be made a high priority for the synod president by the Synodical Council and the Conference of Presidents.

Mr. Tom Walters, reporter

Mr. Tom Walters, chairman

Mr. Jim Freer

Mr. Carl Rudolph

Advisory:

Mr. Paul Holzhueter, Synodical Council liaison

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, chief financial officer and treasurer

WELS Archives Floor Committee #8

Our calling

The archives of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is the official repository for records of historical value created by and about WELS and its congregations, called workers, and related parasynodical organizations and institutions. Its mission is to gather, preserve, and make available documentary evidence of the ongoing life and work of the synod and to offer a useful information service to synod administration, WELS called workers, and WELS congregations.

Our current situation

Materials held in the archives at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary are organized and accessible to researchers. Significant progress continues in creating finding aids and archival descriptions for the collections. Many requests for information are successfully filled. There is a small backlog of unprocessed, donated materials.

Routine requests for information are regularly filled, but many functions crucial to a successful archival program are not being carried out. Examples include preserving gathered items, systematic collecting of documents into the archives, advising areas of ministry and congregations on how to manage and preserve records, managing electronic records, and disaster planning. In addition, the current archives space is not only insufficient in size but because its climate cannot be controlled it is also unsuitable for proper preservation of the historical record of our synod.

A look ahead

In a positive step, the synod in its 2013 convention once again resolved, as it had first in 1995, to hire a full-time archivist, subject to funding, under whose direction the archives collections would be moved to an appropriately conformed area at the Center for Mission and Ministry. It is our prayer that the funding to fulfill the mission of the archives will finally be allocated.

Prof. John P. Hartwig, reporter

WELS Christian Aid and Relief

Floor Committee #9

Our calling

WELS Christian Aid and Relief is the synod's "ministry of compassion," bringing physical relief to victims of natural disasters in the form of cash grants, food, clothing, and medical supplies. Christian Aid and Relief also partners with WELS missionaries to support humanitarian aid projects that can help build bridges to proclaim the gospel. The mission of Christian Aid and Relief is drawn from the scriptural encouragement, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (Galatians 6:10). Because of all that Christ has done for us, we are eager to reflect Christ's love and compassion to those in need. Christian Aid and Relief seeks to personalize its efforts by distributing funds through our churches and missions. We partner with them to encourage local relief efforts on behalf of their own members and community. We bring in volunteers to assist when appropriate.

Our current situation

Christian Aid and Relief is not funded in the WELS budget but relies on the special gifts of WELS members.

From July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014, our total relief expenditures were \$265,855 with \$171,972 designated for domestic relief efforts and \$93,883 for foreign relief efforts. From July 1, 2014, to Dec. 31, 2014, our relief expenditures were \$127,119 total with \$71,829 designated for domestic and \$55,290 for foreign.

Specific opportunities to provide relief in the past two years include the following: \$8,000 was granted to provide financial assistance in Ukraine and \$12,000 in support of our Central Africa Medical Mission. We also provided multiple individual grants for called worker crisis counseling through Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service. Other domestic relief activities provided aid for food pantries, inner city relief, and general aid for called workers and congregational members.

In addition, many thousands of dollars were given to support areas of humanitarian aid through home and world missionaries. These projects offer opportunities to show how much we care by bridging gospel proclamation with acts of compassion. In many cases humanitarian aid is what opens the door for us to do mission work in certain foreign countries. \$295,693 was granted for humanitarian aid projects for 2012–13 and \$306,023 was granted for 2013–14. \$324,460 has been approved for 2014–15. Major items include borehole drilling to provide clean water, English as a second language (ESL) classes, home-based care for the chronically ill and dying, food assistance to the needy, agricultural projects, Celebrate Recovery programs, food and nutrition to orphans, midwife training classes, and medical equipment and health clinics. Humanitarian aid projects are being supported in Malawi, Nigeria, Zambia, Russia, Haiti, Mexico, India, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand, Dominican Republic, and St. Lucia; on the White Mountain Native American Reservation; and in Las Vegas, Nev., for a program to welcome new immigrants.

WELS Christian Aid and Relief also continues to provide help for families with catastrophic personal and medical difficulties by assisting the local efforts of congregations and missions as they reach out to those among them in need.

We thank our gracious Lord for moving the hearts of WELS members to show how much they care with their prayers and gifts of love. We thank outgoing members Pastor Harmon Lewis and Teacher Gary Thoma for their faithful service on this committee.

A look ahead

In early 2015 severe flooding in Malawi, Africa, affected our brothers and sisters of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa. Relief efforts were undertaken to provide temporary housing materials for the affected people. At the time of this writing we are exploring efforts to rebuild or repair damaged churches and provide other assistance as determined. We are thankful for our partnership with Kingdom Workers in these efforts.

Annually, Christian Aid and Relief reviews humanitarian aid grant requests forwarded to us from the Board for World Missions and the Board for Home Missions. These projects provide our missionaries with a vital tool to help them build bridges to proclaim the gospel to the precious souls they serve in our mission fields. Our mission fields continually bring us new humanitarian aid opportunities.

WELS Christian Aid and Relief looks for ways to improve its communication to the members of the synod. *Lifeline* videos are regularly being produced so that those who support our work can see firsthand how their gifts are being used. A video and promotional kit are now available to inform school children about our ministry. Our web page, www.wels.net/relief and Facebook site continue to offer timely information and a convenient way to donate online for Christian Aid and Relief projects. Committee members also make presentations to various groups to “tell our stories,” letting WELS members know about the needs and opportunities to help people through Christian Aid and Relief. We are partnering with other WELS agencies, such as Kingdom Workers and the WELS Nurses Association, to coordinate volunteers to assist in relief efforts when appropriate.

Rev. Robert Hein, reporter

Rev. Robert Hein, chairman

Staff Minister Tom Hering, secretary

Rev. Harmon Lewis

Teacher Gary Thoma

Mr. Mark Vance, director of operations for WELS Christian Aid and Relief

Mr. Steven Wright

Support Services

Support Services is the area that encompasses Financial Services, Technology, Human Resources, and Facility Services. These areas support the ministry of the synod and its four ministerial education schools.

Technology Floor Committee #7

Our calling

WELS Technology is a service group that provides support and technical leadership to areas of ministry, synod schools, and subsidiaries as well as guidance to congregations, schools, and other synod organizations. Software Services, Information Services, and Administrative Services comprise the group and are staffed with dedicated Christian men and women with gifts in the areas of project management, technical support, software and web development, training, and enterprise network management. Currently WELS Technology is made up of eleven full-time employees and three part-time employees. The department is privileged to provide the following services.

Technology administration

- Policy and procedure development and management, which includes audit compliance, information security, network usage, and software/hardware acquisition.
- Financial management of all WELS technology expenditures, which includes cost controls, budget planning/reporting, accounting, invoicing, and collections.
- Strategic planning for the effective use of technology across WELS, which includes buy versus build analysis; ministry needs mapping; research and development; technology guidance to churches, schools, and other WELS organizations requesting assistance.
- Vendor management, which includes licensing of all software/hardware, service and product evaluation, engagement management, contract management.
- Project management for internal and external organizations as requested, which includes managing day-to-day project activities for all projects within WELS, portfolio management, project methodologies development, and engagement management of all external vendors.

- Business analysis for each ministry to determine project needs and matching requirements
- Deliver training to synod employees on all technical systems, which includes producing training content, promoting effective use of technology, and developing training programs.
- Test applications and processes, including writing technical documentation.

Information services

- Maintenance of hardware, software, and computer peripherals, which includes repairing hardware used by synod employees, subsidiaries, and virtual knowledge workers; peripheral installation and maintenance; software installation and upgrades.
- Asset tracking and inventory (more than 3,000 technology assets owned by synod).
- Backup systems for all core synod applications and databases, which includes providing a virtual infrastructure for inexpensive redundancy and failover technologies that allow automated and semi-automated switchovers.
- Plan ongoing needs to support business continuity efforts, which includes network analysis to detect single points of failure, security breaches, etc.; capacity planning to predict future storage needs.
- Hardware setup and configuration for all synod servers (currently the synod requires approximately 50 servers to maintain current operations including e-mail, spam and virus control, accounting systems, donor management systems, file storage, printer services, intranet, synodwide database/yearbook, call system, banking applications for Church Extension Fund, member databases for VEBA, security monitoring, www.wels.net, affiliate websites, etc.)
- Provide helpdesk services on all technical systems and websites, which includes troubleshooting, account maintenance, equipment setup, and telephony support.
- Provide antivirus and spam protection for users making use of network resources, the Internet, and e-mail, which includes the security of all data residing on synod networks and servers.
- Provisioning of all telephony infrastructure.
- Active monitoring of network for violations, breaches, stress, and intrusion detection.

Software services

- Consulting, designing, coding, testing, and deploying applications that supports the business processes of the synod, which includes information architecture, database development and tuning, usability testing, and performance testing.
- Website development, which includes www.wels.net, www.WhatAboutJesus.com, blogs.wels.net, Connect, and approximately 25 other sites.
- Applications supported include: Yearbook data management, VEBA benefits eligibility, call system, synod certification management, statistical reports for churches/schools, Congregation Mission Offering submissions, church and school statistics, core Church Extension Fund and Missions data forms, electronic newsletter distribution (including "Together"), forms (military referral; gifts/donations; events like worship conference, marriage enhancement weekends, WELSTech, leadership and staff ministry conferences, synod convention; subscription systems like call reports); and e-commerce (Commission on Lutheran Schools' subscription system and ShopWELS).

Our current situation

Over the past two years WELS Technology upgraded the synod's intranet platform called Connect to WELS Cloud. This series of websites houses almost all synod produced documents and other content in a safe and searchable environment. The platform is built on Microsoft's industry standard Office 365 and SharePoint technologies. Since it is hosted on Microsoft infrastructure, it provides more reliable access for our international users and support for larger digital assets. The move brought with it significant savings.

WELSource is the name of the new synod database application that supports all called worker, congregation, and school profile information. The launch of the second phase allows web access to update information, run reports, and provide easy forms for called workers and organizations to maintain certain aspects of their own data. It also provides a new and improved approach to requesting, developing, and tracking call lists and activity. The new system replaces an aging and unsupported database application that was put in place more than 25 years ago.

Foreign language websites have become a growing part of mission outreach. Technology has teamed with missions and Multi-Language Publications to design and publish sites in Japanese (Aganai.com) and Urdu (Pakistan site) adding to the existing Spanish site, elmenajaruluterano.com. Each site leads visitors to Christ's teachings in media rich presentation with downloadable or subscription-based resources in the native and English language. WELS

Technology is also supporting the migration of the wels.net website to the new Wordpress platform. The move should enable easier content management and more efficient maintenance.

WELS Technology continues to support the synod's mobile app. An update to WELS Mobile was released in three formats—an Android version, an iOS version, and a new format for Amazon devices. To date, the application has been installed on more than 15,000 devices. Content includes daily devotions (text, audio), Bible readings (text, audio), *WELS Connection* (video), blogs, call reports, and the "Together" e-newsletter. A church and school locator function helps users find WELS or Evangelical Lutheran Synod locations. New to the app is an online WELS Yearbook. Learn more at <http://m.wels.net>.

ShopWELS, the synod's cooperative buying program, continues to expand with new vendors including Complete Office, Troxell, Central Office Systems, James Imaging, and SoftwareOne. The program helps WELS organizations and members to find discounted prices on many products from office supplies/copiers to computers/Chromebooks to mobile phones. To take advantage, go to <http://www.shopwels.net>. All congregations, schools, and synod members are encouraged to use these services as higher usage volumes mean better negotiated prices for all users.

The WELSTech podcast aired its 400th episode this summer. The show, available in audio and video format, exists to share technology tools and techniques that could be used for ministry. Each week the show hosts, Mr. Martin Spriggs and Mrs. Sallie Draper, discuss different technology topics, interview interesting guests, and solicit listener feedback about tech-in-ministry ideas.

The summer of 2013 saw the synod offices move from 2929 North Mayfair Road in Milwaukee to its new home in Waukesha, Wis. The technology team embarked on a four-month accelerated project to prepare and migrate infrastructure to make the move go as smoothly as possible. Telephone, Internet, security, computer setup, and many other essential services were set up. The move took place over a weekend with very little downtime or other issues that prevented staff from being fully functional on day one in the new office.

Other projects completed in the last two years include:

- Solidification of disaster recovery procedure
- Addition of Internet bandwidth from TWtelecom
- Implementation of Bitdefender anti-virus product
- Centralized server monitoring
- Improved Help Desk and password self-service site
- Consolidation of printers and follow-me printing
- Improved presentation equipment for the Center for Mission and Ministry

A look ahead

In the next biennium, four primary areas of focus will be 1) Migration of all forms to digital in connection with WELSource, 2) Improve security, 3) Additional assistance provided to cross-cultural mission work, and 4) Further migration and upgrade of web properties.

Digital forms and WELSource

The synod has a variety of forms in many different paper and digital formats. Few can share information or take advantage of modern advancements to make the user experience a pleasant and efficient one. K2 is an enterprise class forms solution that was installed last winter and will now be made available to all areas of ministry. The solution will work together with WELSource to enable smarter forms and improve information gathering (statistical reports, Congregation Mission Offering subscriptions, assessments, loan applications, and biographical updates).

WELSource Phase 3 will include Called Worker Self-Service forms (Information, Inventory, and Performance Assessment), Unit Self-Service Forms (Information forms for churches and schools), Synod Yearbook directory data, and Campus Ministry. A new church locator to display more church-related information will also be upgraded.

Improve security

Digital resources have never been at higher risk than they are today. Security breaches seem to be commonplace. Important steps have already been taken this past year to improve security. The coming year will see an emphasis on user education and securing their computing devices (laptops, tablets, and smart phones). Formal security policies will be revised to reflect new threats and emphasize the importance of keeping data safe. Of significant importance is donor, patient, and student information.

Support for cross-cultural ministries

Ministry efforts for Hmong, Vietnamese, and Spanish cross-cultural work have been underway for some time in our synod. Each ministry has reached a critical point where technology can be put to better use to reach more people. Prospect databases, web strategies, and live Internet streaming are just a few of the technologies being considered to assist these fields in reaching out. Work with each field will identify areas of opportunity, project plans, and needed funding.

Website migrations and upgrades

Plans are being made to use Blackbaud's Net Community Spark system to offer a more responsive design for the four ministerial education schools' donation sites. In addition, e-appeals functionality will be added to engage donors and to provide more visibility for specific ministry needs.

Further website migration and development projects will include moving WhatAboutJesus.com to WordPress and retooling accompanying applications for Bible study. Years of archived web content will require planning and an ongoing strategy to complete the migration process.

Conclusion

The work of the synod is more and more connected to the effective use of technology. The resources and support provided by WELS Technology are focused on enabling ministry. A clear vision for applying the most appropriate technology to project and ministry efforts is an ongoing objective. In the current strategic plan the following core values are outlined:

1. Focus on ministry
2. Attitude of service
3. Driven to excellence
4. Committed to education
5. Willing to change

It is a privilege to serve the synod, its membership, and its ministries.

Mr. Martin Spriggs, reporter

Financial Services

Floor Committee #6

Our calling

Financial Services prepares and provides accounting and financial information and services that support and serve WELS ministries. This is accomplished with timely, accurate, and complete financial statements, reports, and analyses that facilitate ministry planning and implementation. The services are designed to be God pleasing, efficient, and effective and result in operations that are in accordance with policies, procedures, and regulations through internal control systems that safeguard the assets God has provided.

Financial Services provides financial planning and forecasts; accounting, audit, and financial statement preparation; gift processing; accounts payable; accounts receivable; unclaimed property; special funds accounting; payroll; risk management; insurance; records retention; banking; cash management; investments; contract review; corporate credit card and rental vehicle programs; trust administration; and tax advisory services and legal services coordination. These services are provided to WELS, WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF), WELS Foundation, WELS Investment Funds (WIF), WELS Pension Plan, WELS Voluntary Employee Benefits Association (VEBA) as well as serving as consultants for these services to Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) and WELS' four ministerial education schools.

Human Resources and Facility Services also report to the chief financial officer (CFO). The CFO is the WELS treasurer and an advisor to the Synodical Council. In addition, the CFO, as the synod president's designate, serves as an advisory member to the board of directors of NPH, CEF, Foundation, WIF, and the WELS Pension Plan and VEBA Commissions.

Our current situation

Financial Services is blessed with a dedicated, talented staff with complementary education, training, and work experiences. Financial Services will continue to identify, investigate, and implement strategies that improve effectiveness and reduce costs within the area and across WELS.

In 2014, Financial Services, a staff of fourteen, experienced two long-term leaves of absence and the departure of four employees—one to retirement, one to an internal promotion, and two to pursue new career opportunities. While these losses did and continue to pose some challenges, they also resulted in the addition of four new, highly qualified individuals. We thank God for continuing to provide staff with hearts for serving WELS ministries.

Even with fewer staff than several years ago, Financial Services is focusing on maintaining day-to-day operations, reducing costs, and improving effectiveness. Recently, the following occurred:

- Completed all audits within four months of year end, and the auditor's opinions were unmodified (the best you can get).
- Evaluated and implemented ADP as the synod's new integrated human resource and payroll software for the Center for Mission and Ministry (CMM) and the ministerial education schools.
- Provided payroll processing services for all of the schools.
- Consolidated certain CMM and school bank accounts to gain efficiencies and lower costs.
- Guided development and implementation of unrestricted net asset policies for WELS Foundation and CEF.
- Assumed additional responsibilities for CEF member investment rate setting, accounting, and reporting.
- Expanded the self-insurance reserve to include the autos in Malawi and increased deductibles to \$50,000 on certain insurance lines, which have collectively resulted in savings of more than \$300,000.
- Collaborated on the development and implementation of a disaster response plan.
- Reviewed and enhanced the Foundation's compliance with state charitable gift annuity registration requirements.
- Encouraged use of corporate credit cards. This use is now at its highest level, which has resulted in a small cash back award and has saved tens of thousands of dollars annually through its provision of insurance on rental cars.
- Created the WELS Donated Property LLC to facilitate the acceptance of property gifts while limiting WELS' risk exposure.

A look ahead

With no increase in synod support, Financial Services is forced to further reduce staff. We are confident that controls will not be weakened and are fully committed to ensuring that services will not deteriorate as a result of the further reduction. However, our abilities to react to new service requests may be limited. We will continue to seek out and implement changes that reduce costs, increase effectiveness, and/or strengthen internal controls.

Looking ahead, our plans include the following:

- Acclimation and training of new employees and employees with new responsibilities.
- Transition to electronic storage and retention of reports, communications, and records.
- Conduct, in collaboration with the ministerial education schools, NPH, WELS VEBA, and Pension Plan, a request for proposal (RFP) for the provision of banking services.
- Conduct, on behalf of the Accounting Oversight Committee, solicitation and evaluation of RFP for audit services for FY2017 and beyond.
- Lead the implementation of software to enhance endowment management and donor services provided by WELS Foundation and the schools.
- Continue to develop documentation and cross train staff to avoid disruption of operations.
- Collaborate in the evaluation of WIF and Foundation structure and fees.
- Evaluate the economic benefits of further increases or changes to property, casualty, and auto insurance lines.
- Evaluate electronic receipt processing and retention for the corporate credit card program.
- Collaborate in the development of a short- (biennium), intermediate- (3-10 years), and long- (>10 years) term capital projects plan for WELS, its schools, and its subsidiaries for the 2017 long-range ministry plan.
- Further leverage purchasing power through expanded negotiated contracts for goods and services.

In summary, the financial services team is honored to serve and is prepared to use the available resources and their God given skills and abilities to support the ministries of WELS.

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, reporter

Human Resources

Floor Committee #7

Our calling

The synod's Human Resources Department oversees the personnel functions for synod personnel, including development, communication, and implementation of personnel policies; recruitment; compensation; benefits; performance management; and employee relations. Human Resources provides advice to supervisors on matters such as federal and state legal requirements concerning the treatment of personnel.

Human Resources also serves as a resource to WELS congregations and to affiliated groups and entities on the matters mentioned above as well as for risk management and federal and state legal requirements related to personnel matters. Further, in addition to legally mandated reporting to authorities, any charge, report, or allegation of sexual misconduct or physical abuse that has been made of an incident involving pastors, teachers, vicars, full- or part-time employees, and volunteers in any capacity must be reported to the synod president, director of Lutheran Schools, or director of Human Resources.

Our current situation

The Human Resources (HR) department has new faces as a result of the replacement of both the HR director, who resigned to accept a different position, and the HR generalist, who retired, both departing in July 2014.

The new HR director is Mr. Dennis Maurer, a member at St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis. He has 17 years of experience working in human resources, both in leadership and operations. Maurer started his service as the director of Human Resources for WELS in October 2014.

The new HR generalist serving WELS is Ms. Lori Schmick, a member at Peace, Hartford, Wis. Schmick served as payroll specialist for WELS for four years before being promoted to HR generalist in July 2014. Prior to serving WELS, she had more than 13 years of experience working in HR.

Beyond day to day human resource management activities, there are a few key activities/accomplishments that deserve special attention:

- The Human Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC) is in place and operating to assist the HR function in ensuring policies and procedures are established and applied across all synodical entities. Further, the committee is assisting HR in making sure that these systems are efficient and effective, that HR is staffed appropriately to include the requisite training and experience, and to investigate and review any issue related to HR. The committee meets quarterly, rotating onsite meetings with conference call meetings.
- Staffed the following roles at the Center for Mission and Ministry (CMM) within the last four months—administrative assistant, Technology; communication specialist; benefits specialist.
- Migration of HR website information from the WELS Connect site to the WELS Cloud. Massive clean-up required in advance of the move and ongoing to streamline the usefulness of HR information. The Connect site will remain active but any updates will only be added to the Cloud site, with the exception of the HR home page in Connect accessed by congregations/schools.
- After thorough evaluation of requests for proposal, ADP was selected as vendor for the payroll/HR management systems. This system enables payroll and HR to support all synodical operations in the matters of payroll, personnel data management, regulatory compliance, and budget analysis. Further, the system can increase individual and synodwide efficiency and effectiveness. The ADP payroll/HR management system has been implemented at CMM and each of the ministerial education schools (Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Martin Luther College, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, and Luther Preparatory School).
- An audit has been completed on internal and external compliance within human resources policies and procedures. Improvements are being implemented to ensure all activities are completed promptly.
- Updated human resource materials on www.wels.net and the new Cloud site for WELS organizations including compensation worksheets to assist WELS organizations in budgeting compensation and benefits for called workers.

A look ahead

As the HR team is new, a key area of focus will be to look at current operations and then to identify where efficiencies could be implemented, while maintaining effectiveness. Over the next biennium HR will, with God's guidance and blessings:

- Follow through on the implementation of the performance review process for the synod entities. This process will be one that will allow synod staff to receive feedback related to how they are doing but also to ensure goals are established and measured, assisting in effective operations.
- Implement the HR model whereby volunteers will be available to provide assistance on an as-needed basis for both needs within the synod entities, as well as congregation support. Focus will need to be on identifying other HR resources from within WELS that can be used on a volunteer basis.
- Facilitate learning and development programs for the management and staff of the synod entities.
- Update and maintain the WELS and Connect sites to ensure information and details provided assist members from both an informational as well as practical aspect.
- Perform due diligence on the vendors and systems in place within the HR structure. This will be an important step to ensure both the outcomes provided, as well as the cost, are appropriate and expected.
- Full utilization of the ADP HR and payroll software modules and support for CMM and the ministerial education schools.

Questions can be directed to hro@wels.net or call 414-256-3268.

Mr. Dennis Maurer, reporter

Mr. Thomas Plath, Human Resources Advisory Committee chairman

Mr. Robert Bullens, Human Resources Advisory Committee member

Mr. Len Kasten, Human Resources Advisory Committee member

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, Human Resources Advisory Committee member and WELS chief financial officer

Rev. Earle Treptow, Human Resources Advisory Committee member and president of the Nebraska District

Facility Services Floor Committee #6

Our calling

Facility Services provides support services to the ministries conducted at or through the synod corporate headquarters. This objective is accomplished by providing a God-pleasing physical work space conducive to ministry operations and by creating a welcoming environment to passersby, visitors, guests, and employees.

Our current situation

Since the summer of 2013, synodical administration has been housed in a building located in Waukesha, Wis., along I-94 on Stone Ridge Dr. It is called the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry (CMM). The building has 33,000 square feet of space on two floors. All areas of ministry and departments of the synod, along with three of the WELS subsidiaries (WELS Church Extension Fund, WELS Foundation, and WELS Investment Funds), WELS VEBA, and WELS Pension Plan are located at the new site. The building also has an unfinished basement level that provides ample storage and a possible future home for the WELS archives, now housed at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS), Mequon, Wis.

During the summer of 2014, the CMM grounds were completely renovated. The previous property owner had planted prairie type vegetation that had spread uncontrolled and was overgrown. The renovation returned the grounds to a more maintenance friendly state that balances prairie habitat with more manicured areas.

Overall, the facilities and grounds are in excellent condition and in November 2014 the Synodical Council adopted a policy to ensure funding is available for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the property and grounds.

A look ahead

As mentioned previously, the new location has a full basement and this area has been identified as a possible home for the synod archives. The proposed ministry financial plan includes funding from WLS for the synod to hire an archivist to begin exploring the relocation of the archives to the CMM; however, the plan does not include funding for build-out of the space.

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, reporter

Capital Projects Committee

Floor Committee #6

Our calling

The 2013 synod in convention approved Resolution #3 of Floor Committee #4, which stated “that the president of the synod appoint a committee to develop a plan for a Capital Projects Fund (sic) and that this committee present its report and offer its recommendation to the 2015 synod convention.”

The Capital Projects Committee (CPC) was established to ensure that the synod’s capital needs were a component of the synod’s ministry plans in the near term and longer term. The CPC established a charter and various criteria and definitions to guide its work for this initial phase, which focused on the facility capital projects needed and desired for the 2015–17 biennium.

Our current situation

The CPC believes that in general terms, the synod’s facilities are being well maintained and updated as funds are available. Specifically, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) and Martin Luther College (MLC), through a use of their operating funds, reserves, synod support from the Board for Ministerial Education (BME), and gifts, are able to keep up on maintenance and modernize their facilities and grounds. Luther Preparatory School (LPS) and Michigan Luther Seminary (MLS) have limited reserves and thus rely on allocations of their operating funds and synod support through the BME for their facility maintenance and modernization needs. Additionally, the MLS Foundation has in the past focused on the funding of capital projects at MLS. Recently, the MLS Foundation has changed its emphasis to include both student assistance and special projects. Collectively, these sources have proven to be moderately adequate for the maintenance of the facilities and grounds. The synod’s Center for Mission and Ministry (CMM) facility needs are funded from its Building Fund. The CMM Building Fund is funded by subsidiary and affiliate rent for space at the CMM and is adequately funded for the foreseeable future, given the newness of the building. Northwestern Publishing House declined to participate in the work of the committee.

For the 2015–17 biennium, the four ministerial education schools have identified projects totaling \$1,774,000 and \$2,871,000 for FY 2015–16 and FY 2016–17, respectively. For FY 2015–16, the funding shortfall is \$185,000, which is primarily attributed to unfunded needs of the two prep schools. For FY 2016–17, the funding shortfall increases to \$568,000 and is primarily attributed to unfunded needs of the two prep schools.

Going forward, the CPC has real concerns about the synod’s ability to maintain its schools’ facilities and grounds. WLS and MLC have been using synod support, unrestricted gifts, and reserves to fund maintenance projects. This funding model may be challenged going forward with the prospects of flat or declining synod support from Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO), which could result in synod support being redirected to maintaining reasonable tuition rates and student assistance. Likewise, LPS and MLS could be required to use more of their synod support funding for maintenance projects, which could make tuition unaffordable for many prospective students. In addition and most troubling is the lack of a fund source or strategy for major capital projects. MLC has identified the need for an additional dormitory and desires to add air conditioning to at least one of the existing dorms in the next two to four years. In the longer term, MLC desires to expand recreational facilities, such as updated locker rooms, outdoor track and field, and a field house to meet the standards of its athletic conference and NCAA Division III athletics.

To guide its work on maintenance and modernization/expansion of the synod's facilities and grounds, the CPC established the following definitions and planning priorities.

Definitions

- **Capital expenditure**—item, unit, or set costing \$5,000 or more and having a useful life of two or more years.
- **Capital expenditure classifications**—facilities, technology, and vehicles
- **Short term**—two years or less
- **Intermediate term**—three to ten years
- **Long term**—more than ten years

Priorities

1. Facilities and grounds—short term (2015–17)
2. Facilities and grounds—intermediate term (2017–24)
3. Facilities and grounds—long term (2025 and thereafter)
4. Technology—short term (2015–17)
5. Technology—intermediate term (2017–24)
6. Technology—long term (2025 and thereafter)
7. Vehicles—short term (2015–17)
8. Vehicles—intermediate term (2017–24)
9. Vehicles—long term (2025 and thereafter)

To facilitate, streamline, and provide a common platform for planning, SchoolDude facility management software was selected by the ministerial education schools. Utilization of the software began with the load of facility details, such as roof and boiler age. Following the loading and tweaking of facility data for each school, initial reports were run from the software to identify expected maintenance needs and the associated cost estimates. The schools refined the reports and supplemented them based on their observations as well as desired facility and grounds improvement projects. The efforts resulted in their project plans for the 2015–17 biennium and more clearly identified significant future maintenance and expansion projects.

A look ahead

Going forward the CPC will be focusing on the following to ensure that needed and complementary facility modernization, expansion, and maintenance needs are included in the long-range ministry plan that will be presented to the 2017 synod convention:

- Development and refinement of a project evaluation tool.
- Review of the Board for Ministerial Education program maintenance funding distribution formula.
- Continued refinement of data in the facility management database.
- Updating facility master plans for each school.
- Funding models and strategies for large and smaller projects.

Mr. Tom Schermerhorn, reporter

Mr. Tom Schermerhorn, chairman and Synodical Council lay representative

Mr. Matt Burow, lay representative

Mr. Chris Kestner, Michigan Lutheran Seminary

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer

Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of Board for Ministerial Education

Mr. Steve Strucely, Luther Preparatory School

Mr. Steve Thiesfeldt, Martin Luther College

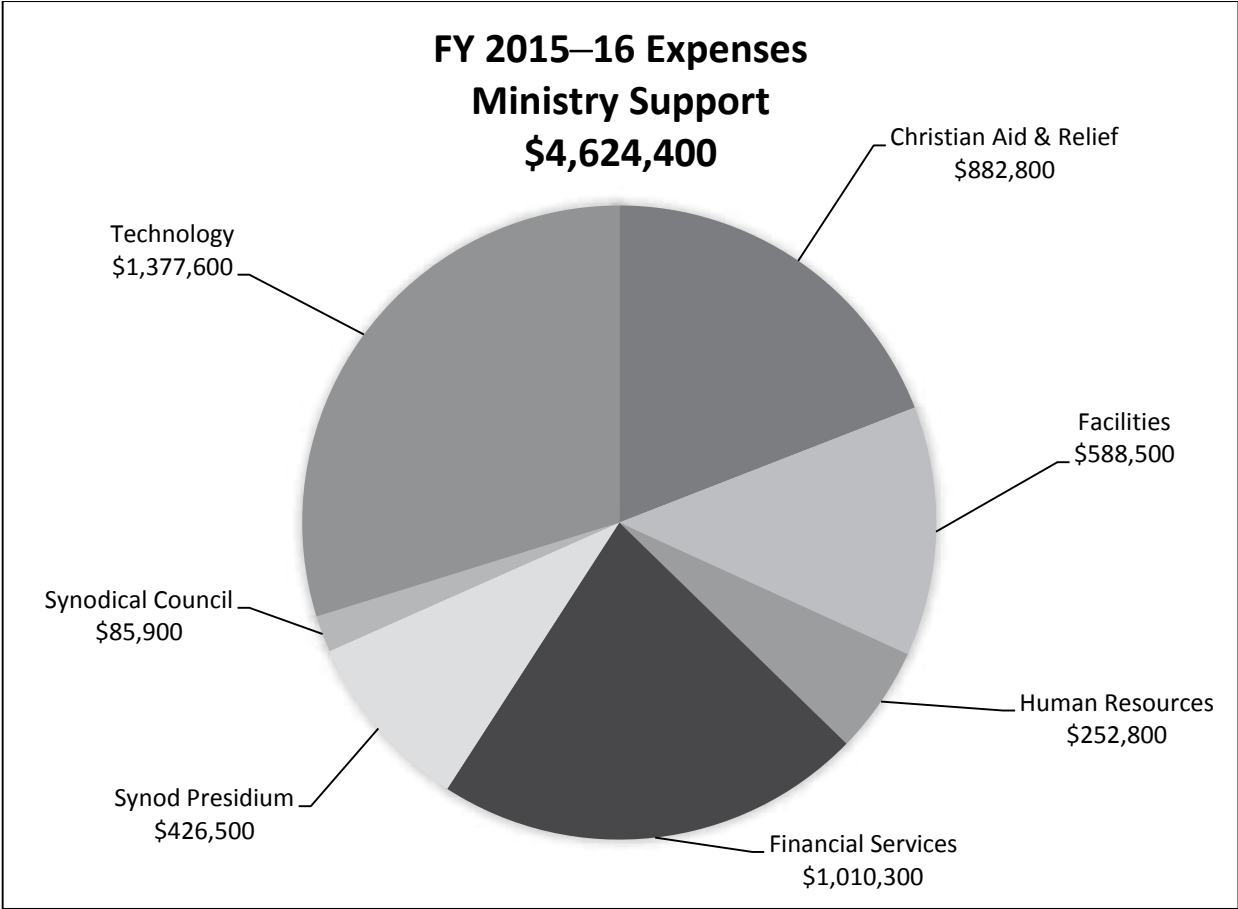
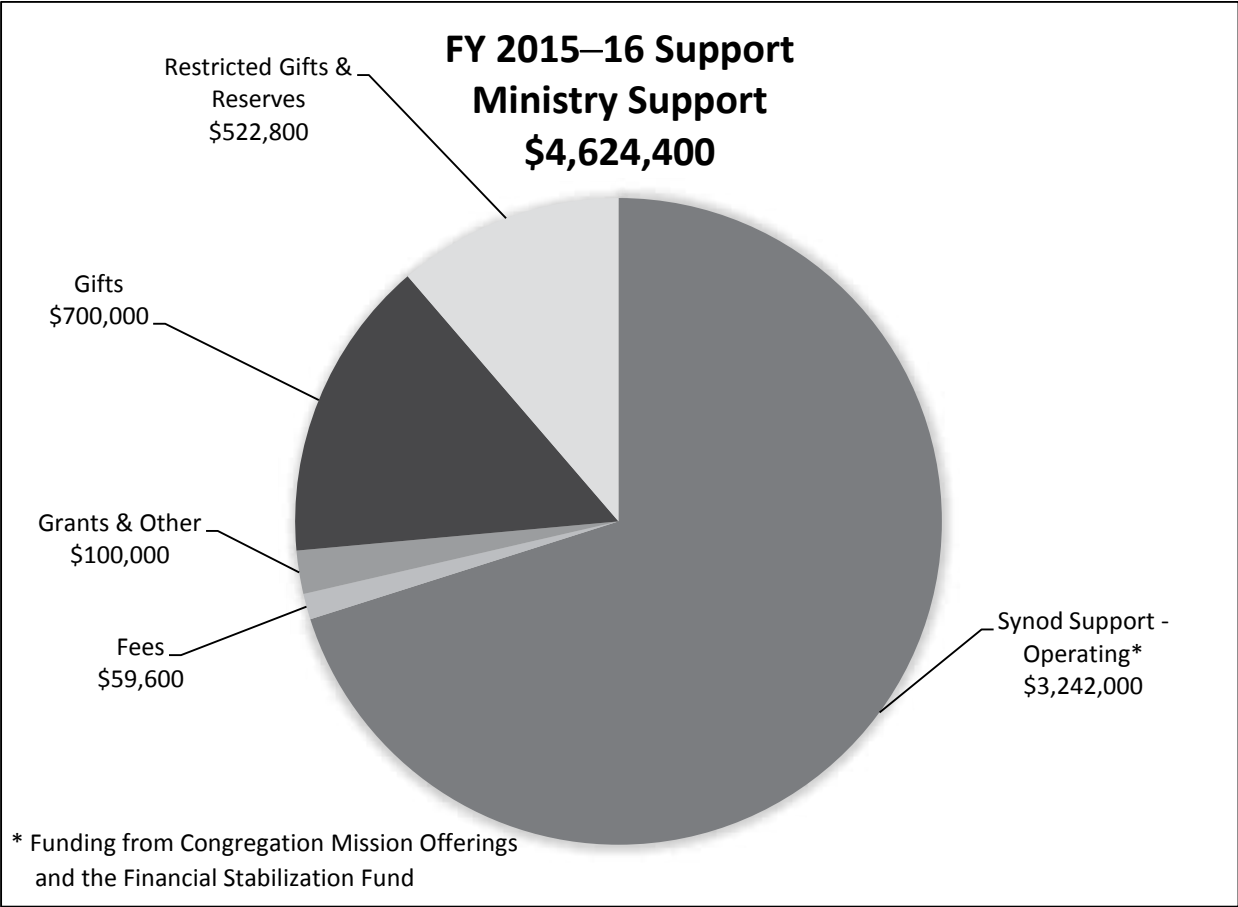
Mr. Brian Treichel, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

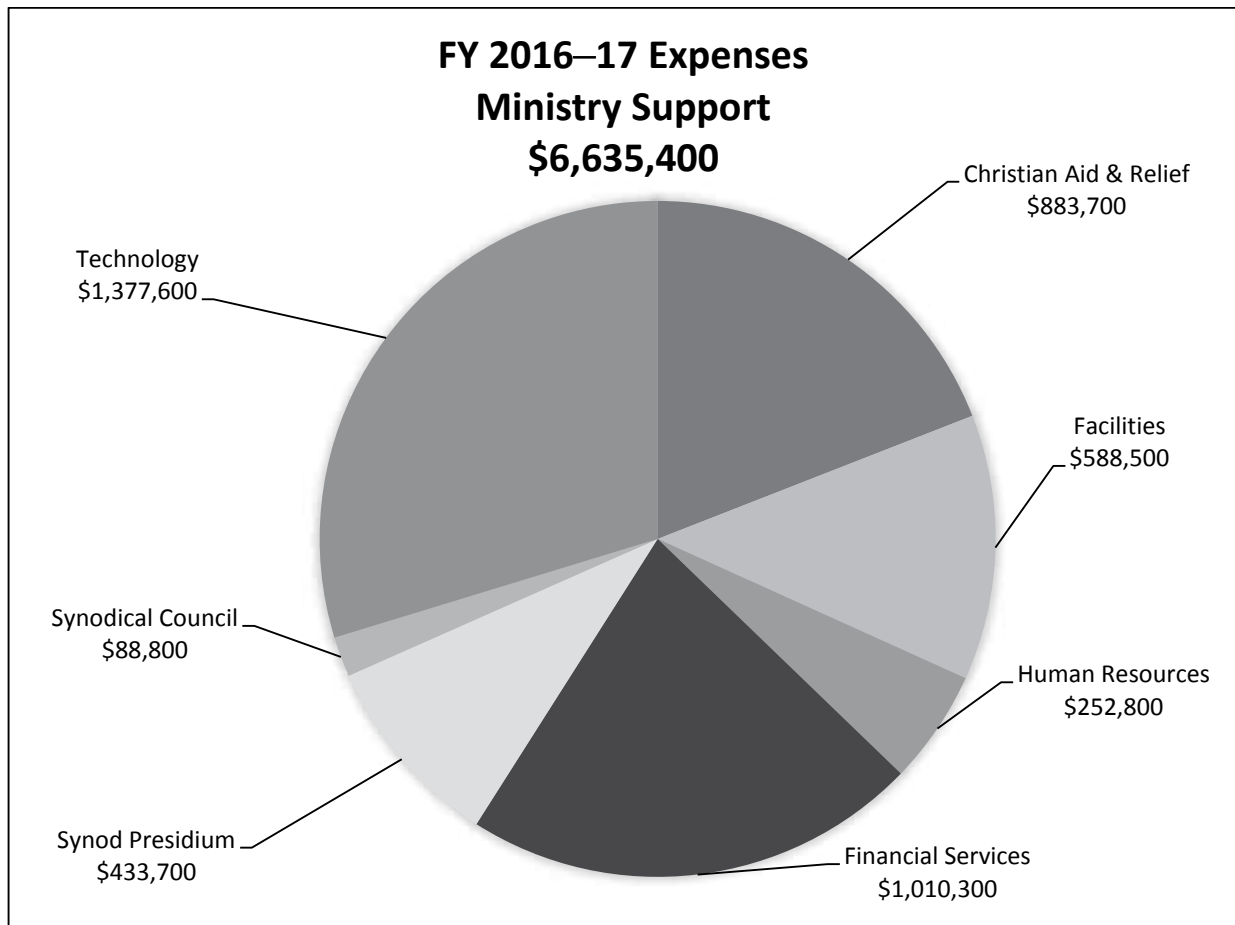
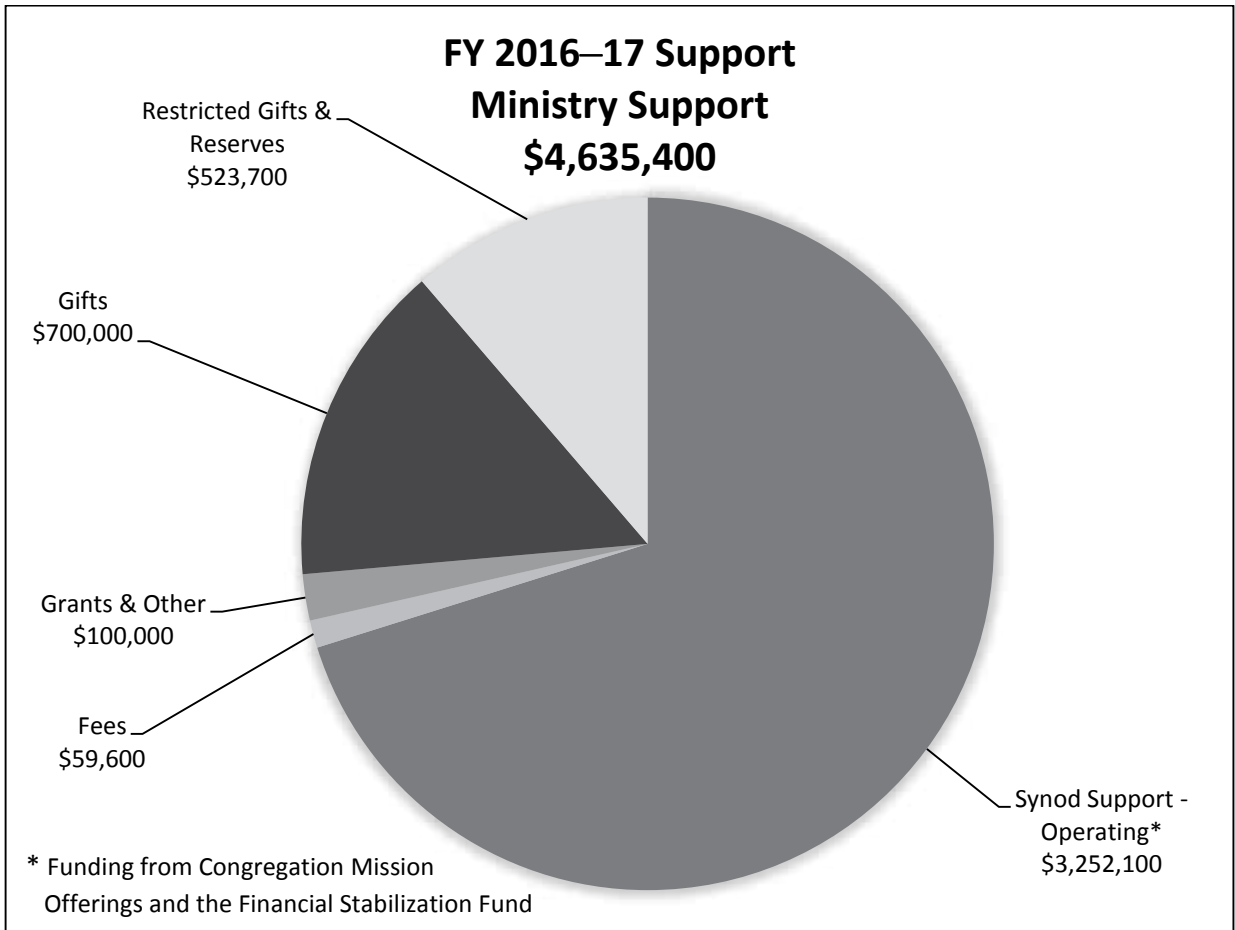
Mr. Dean Waldschmidt, Board for Ministerial Education

Advisory members:

Ms. Carla Hulke, director of finance for Martin Luther College

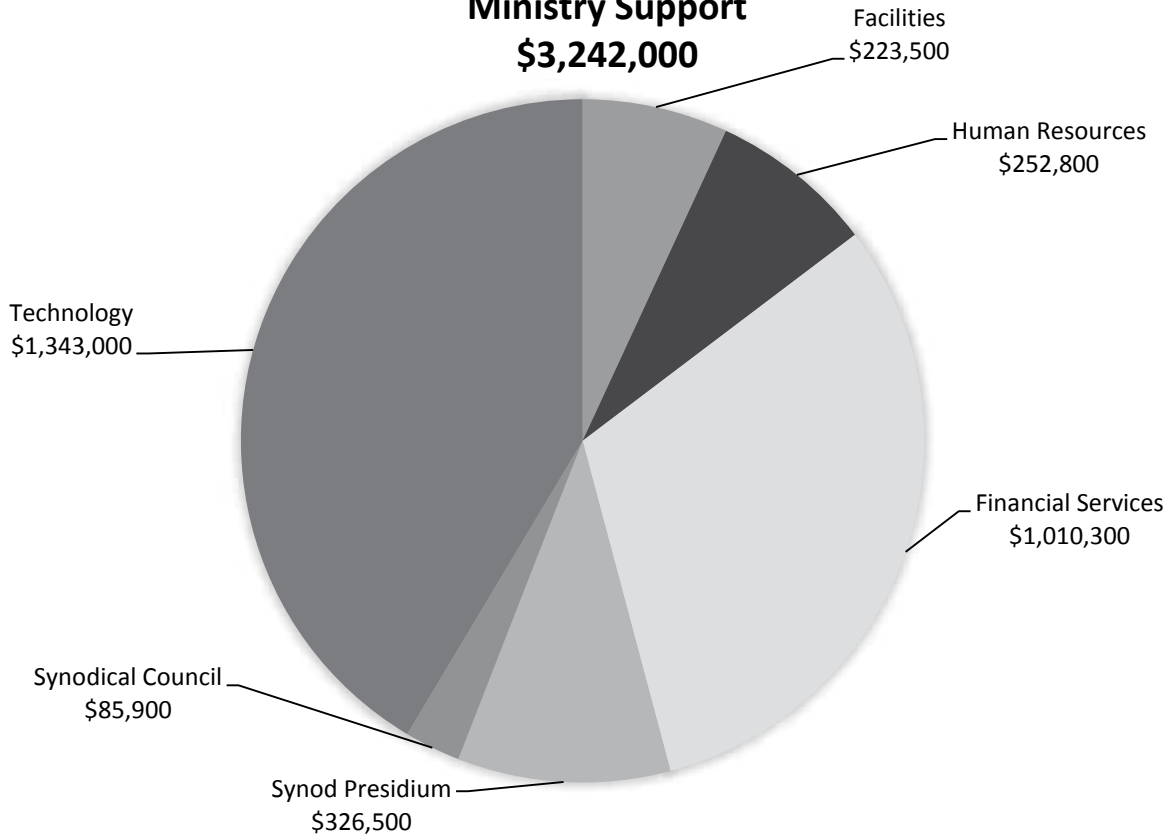
Ms. Jamie Ristow, director of financial planning and analysis for WELS





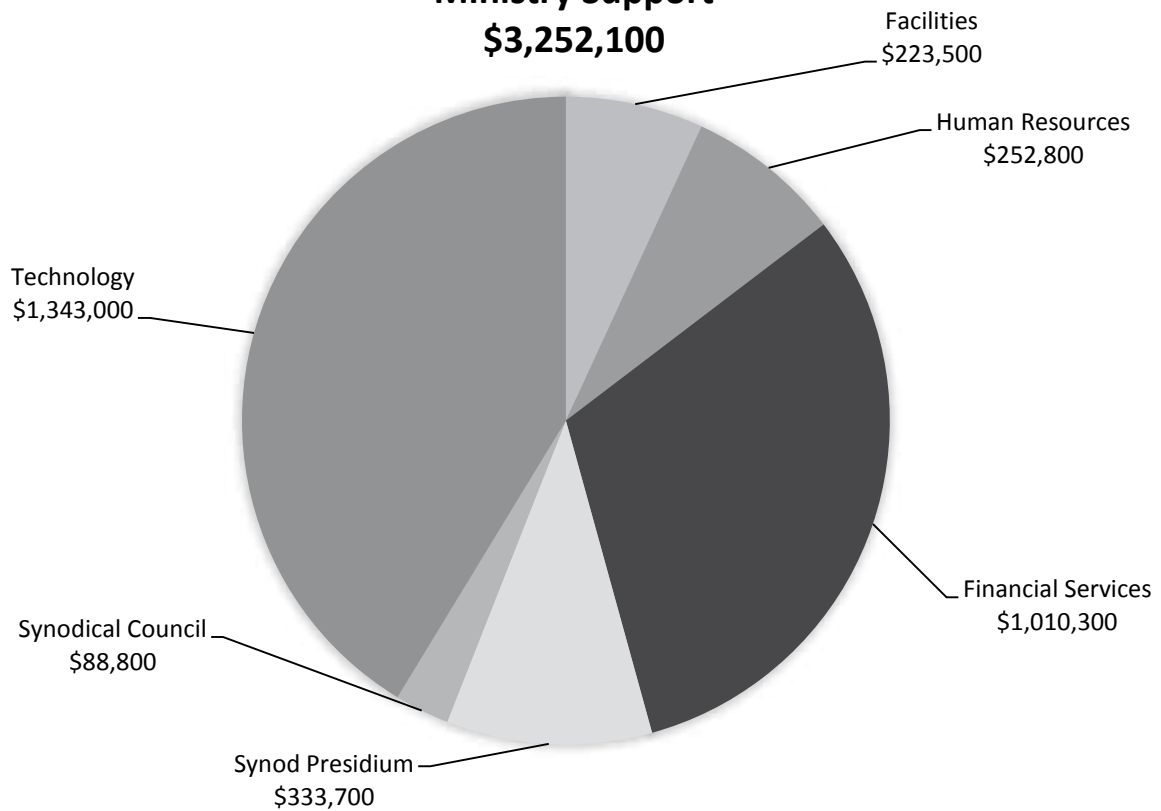
FY 2015–16 Synod Operating Support Allocation

**Ministry Support
\$3,242,000**



FY 2016–17 Synod Operating Support Allocation

**Ministry Support
\$3,252,100**



Finance and budget

Floor Committee #10

Financial results and ministry financial plan

Overview

Our heavenly Father continues to bless missions, ministerial education, and support to districts, congregations, and ministries.

The synod operates on a fiscal year (FY) that runs from July 1 to June 30. Until FY 2009–10, the ministry financial plan (budget) included only the synod’s operating fund. To increase financial transparency and to provide a more complete ministry picture, financial plan reports now include the synod’s operating and special funds and the synod’s four ministerial education schools’ operating and special funds. Prior to this change, special funds were not included in the plans approved by the convention but were utilized at the discretion of each area of ministry and the schools. Special funds continue to be used to account for gifts that donors have designated for a specific ministry or purpose.

In addition to transparency improvements, the predictability of support for the ministry financial plan was enhanced by the establishment of the Financial Stabilization Fund (FSF). The FSF holds all non-CMO (Congregation Mission Offering) sources of support until the year after receipt. Establishment of this fund has worked as hoped; as a result mid-year plan adjustments due to non-CMO support decreases have not been necessary during the last four years.

Fiscal year 2013–14 (FY14)

For the year, unrestricted reserves for the synod and schools increased a collective \$2.1 million or significantly better than the planned decrease of nearly \$1.2 million. This increase or favorable variance is the result of greater than planned enrollments, gifts, and investment earnings that more than offset higher costs associated with enrollment increases and the Early Childhood Learning Center (ECLC) at Martin Luther College. In addition, temporarily restricted reserves increased \$11.2 million, almost entirely due to investment performance, gifts to the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary 150th anniversary appeal, and bequests.

Although the year ended positively, support from CMO—the synod’s cornerstone for financial support—was \$220,000 less than planned. The plan assumed that congregations would meet their 2013 subscriptions and increase their support by 4.0 percent for 2014. Actual receipts for 2013 were 1.0 percent more than subscriptions but even with a spring 2014 effort by the Conference of Presidents (COP) to request congregations revisit their 2014 subscriptions, CMO subscriptions increased only 0.9 percent for 2014.

For the year, the Financial Stabilization Fund (FSF) received support of \$6.6 million and transferred \$7.7 million to the Operating Fund for synod support funding of missions, ministry, and ministry support services. At year end, the FSF balance remained healthy at \$13.1 million, down \$1.1 million from the prior year. While the balance is healthy, spending significantly more than the annual receipts is not sustainable.

A comprehensive report on the synod Operating Fund, special funds, the schools, and the FSF results for FY14 can be found online at <https://cloud.wels.net> on the “Finance” site under “Financial Reports.”

Fiscal year 2014–15 (FY15)

Like FY14, the plan for FY15 provided for a small increase in missions and ministry fueled by a 4 percent CMO increase in 2014 and 2015 and a further draw down of the FSF. As reported above, CMO has not kept pace with the approved plan and is well below the high reached in 2007. For 2015, CMO subscriptions are 1.8 percent lower than 2014 receipts. As a result, the Synodical Council was compelled to reduce synod support by \$825,000 at the start of the fiscal year. Cost reductions in the same amount were identified and acted on by the areas of ministry and schools, and ministry plans for the year were adjusted accordingly.

Through December, financial performance for WELS and the schools has been favorable compared to the adjusted plan. Unrestricted reserves have increased nearly \$1.8 million and temporarily restricted reserves have increased

\$275,000 compared to a planned use of reserves in both categories. While some of the year to date improvement is attributed to timing of support received compared to expenses, the projection for the year continues to be favorable. The positive financial performance is a result of higher than planned gifts and bequests and lower costs for ministry support services. Investment performance has not been as strong as recent years but is not expected to have a significant negative impact on results for the year.

Operating Fund								
	Actual FY 2013-14	Plan FY 2013-14	Variance		February 2015 Forecast FY 2014-15	Revised Plan FY 2014-15	Variance	
			Favorable/(Unfavorable) Amount	Percent			Favorable/(Unfavorable) Amount	Percent
Support								
Gifts from Congregations	\$ 20,937,730	\$ 21,158,000	\$ (220,270)	-1.0%	\$ 21,354,700	\$ 21,235,000	\$ 119,700	0.6%
Financial Stabilization Fund	7,699,577	7,954,100	(254,523)	-3.2%	7,706,100	8,175,800	(469,700)	-5.7%
Total Subsidy Support	28,637,307	29,112,100	(474,793)	-1.6%	29,060,800	29,410,800	(350,000)	-1.2%
Synod Support of -								
Home Missions	5,743,538	5,743,600	62	0.0%	5,705,900	5,705,900	-	
World Missions	5,427,700	5,427,700	-		5,738,000	5,738,000	-	
Ministerial Education	8,130,672	8,336,500	205,828	2.5%	7,944,546	8,094,546	150,000	1.9%
Congregation & District Ministry	4,669,985	4,733,800	63,815	1.3%	4,853,300	4,938,300	85,000	1.7%
Ministry Support	3,065,412	3,270,500	205,088	6.3%	3,219,054	3,334,054	115,000	3.4%
Debt Repayment	1,600,000	1,600,000	-		1,600,000	1,600,000	-	
Total Expenses	28,637,307	29,112,100	474,793	1.6%	29,060,800	29,410,800	350,000	1.2%
Surplus (Deficit)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	

Financial Stabilization Fund								
	Actual FY 2013-14	Plan FY 2013-14	Variance		Forecast FY 2014-15	Revised Plan FY 2014-15	Variance	
			Favorable/(Unfavorable) Amount	Percent			Favorable/(Unfavorable) Amount	Percent
Beginning Balance	\$ 14,160,618	\$ 14,160,618	\$ -		\$ 13,073,201	\$ 13,073,201	\$ -	
Additions:								
Foundation Grants	2,719,020	2,255,000	464,020	20.6%	2,305,000	2,055,000	250,000	12.2%
Gifts from Individuals								
Walking Together	101,543	300,000	(198,457)	-66.2%	75,000	75,000	-	
Mission Partners	92,848	100,000	(7,152)	-7.2%	50,000	50,000	-	
Gifts and Memorials	826,304	975,000	(148,696)	-15.3%	1,050,000	800,000	250,000	31.3%
Gifts from Individuals	1,020,695	1,375,000	(354,305)	-25.8%	1,175,000	925,000	250,000	27.0%
Unrestricted Bequests	1,767,995	1,500,000	267,995	17.9%	1,650,000	1,500,000	150,000	10.0%
Investment Income	816,938	550,000	266,938	48.5%	850,000	800,000	50,000	6.3%
Endowment Distribution	43,556	50,000	(6,444)	-12.9%	55,000	47,000	8,000	17.0%
Other Revenue	243,956	75,000	168,956	225.3%	155,000	150,000	5,000	3.3%
Total Additions	6,612,160	5,805,000	807,160	13.9%	6,190,000	5,477,000	713,000	11.5%
Transfer Out - Building	-	-	-		-	-	-	
Transfer Out- Operating	(7,699,577)	(7,823,900)	124,323	-1.6%	(7,706,100)	(8,175,800)	469,700	-6.1%
Ending Balance	\$ 13,073,201	\$ 12,141,718	\$ 931,483	7.7%	\$ 11,557,101	\$ 10,374,401	\$ 1,182,700	10.2%

Note: The Revised Plan for FY 2014–15 has been adjusted to reflect the \$825,000 reduction of synod support authorized by the Synodical Council.

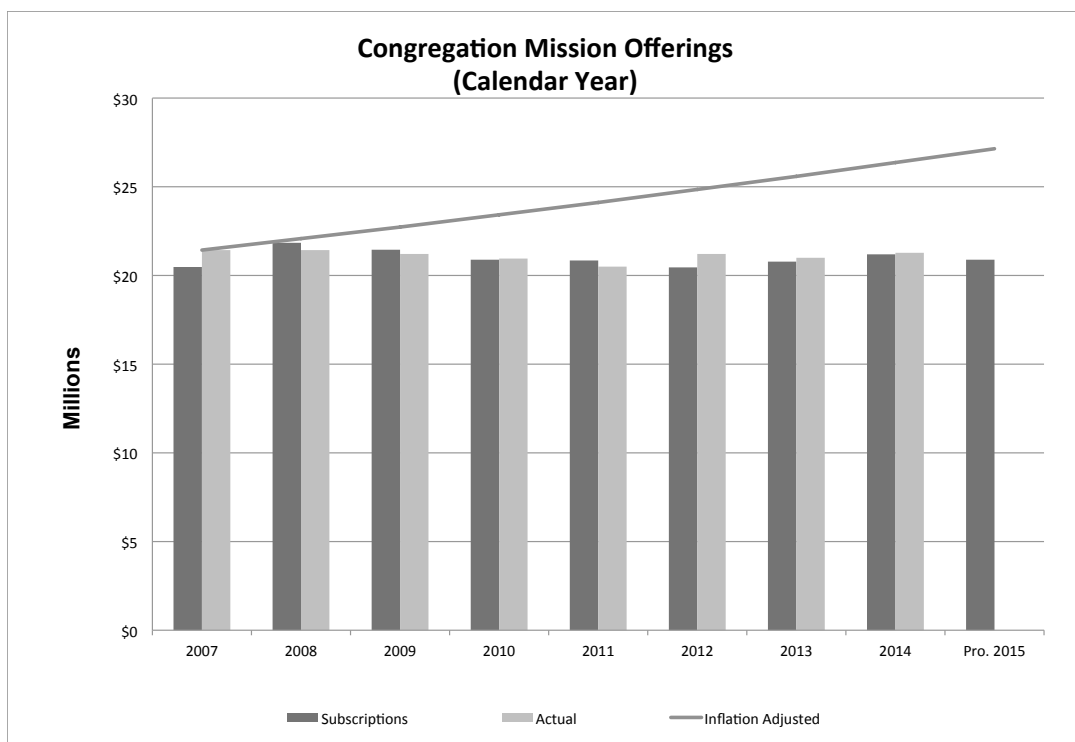
Proposed ministry financial plan for 2015–17 biennium

Planning for the 2015–17 biennium was initiated in spring 2014 or about 14 months before the start of the biennium. With CMO levels uncertain, the Synodical Council recommended that synod support funding remain flat at fiscal year 2015 (FY15) levels for each year of the upcoming biennium. The Synodical Council asked the synod president to work with the areas of ministry to draft an initial ministry financial plan within these levels for review at its fall 2014 meeting. With this general direction by the Synodical Council, the areas of ministry and schools, working with their boards or commissions, proceeded to develop their ministry plans with the goal of maintaining existing ministry or carefully expanding where levels of available reserves or special grants allowed.

For most areas, developing a flat budget while maintaining existing ministry proved challenging even with modest wage increases as costs such as insurances and some fees are expected to increase over the next biennium. If Congregation Mission Offering (CMO) support levels do not increase at a similar rate, additional funding sources would need to be found, or ministry would need to be reduced.

Thankfully, through well-informed, thoroughly analyzed actions by WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF) and WELS Foundation Boards, unrestricted net asset policies were adopted by these two subsidiaries in early FY15. These policies would allow for the distribution of the respective subsidiary's undesignated, unrestricted net assets to WELS ministries on an annual basis. CEF distributions would be directed to support Home Missions and are estimated to be about \$700,000 for each year of the upcoming biennium. WELS Foundation distributions would be directed to general WELS ministries through the Financial Stabilization Fund (FSF) and are estimated to be about \$150,000 for each year of the upcoming biennium.

Special focus will remain on identifying additional revenue sources as the future growth of CMO remains uncertain. Historical levels of CMO have been relatively flat to slightly declining since their peak of \$21.4 million in 2007. CMO 2015 subscriptions are \$20.9 million or 2.5 percent below CMO receipts from 2007, and nearly \$6 million behind a 3 percent inflation adjusted level. Communication from the Conference of Presidents will be sent to congregations in hopes of better understanding the reason for the 2015 CMO subscription decline and future CMO goals.



In November 2014, the synod president submitted a preliminary financial plan to the Synodical Council for consideration. The plan was able to preserve existing ministry, while maintaining a three-tiered, four-school ministerial education system. The proposed financial plan again relies on the drawdown of the FSF and on areas of ministry and schools to use reserves, additional funding sources, or other one-time funds to sustain ongoing ministry.

Please refer to the area of ministry reports contained elsewhere in this book for the ministry financial plans for each area. Following is a summary of the support forecast and the proposed financial plan for each year of the biennium along with comparative information for the current biennium.

Support forecast

The support forecast for the biennium is based on the following trends and assumptions.

Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO)

Congregations will meet their calendar year 2015 subscriptions, which are 1.8 percent less than 2014 receipts. CMO is planned to increase 1.0 percent for calendar years 2016 and 2017.

Financial Stabilization Fund (FSF)

The FSF holds all unrestricted non-CMO support for the year or years after receipt and includes the following:

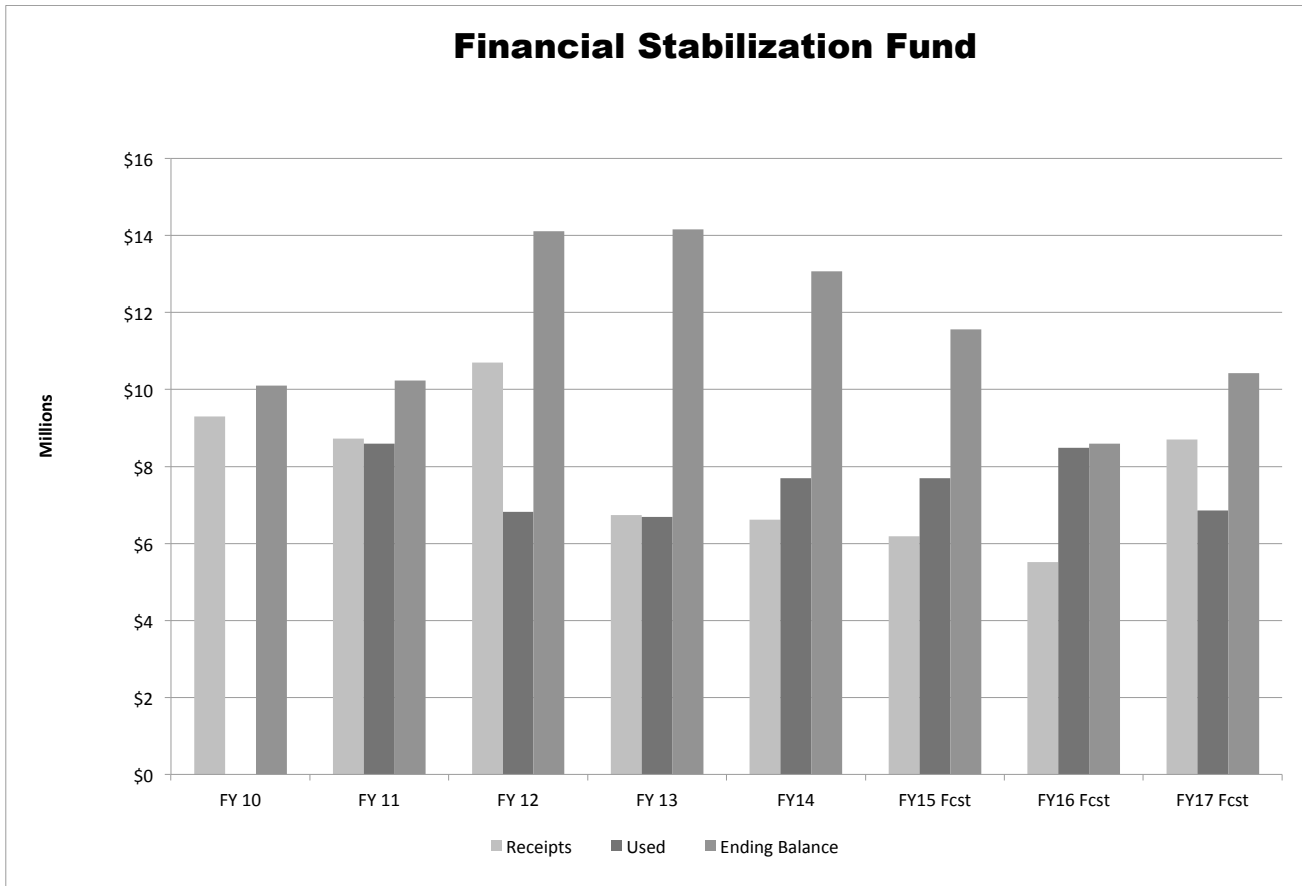
1. Foundation grants, which includes Schwan Foundation and WELS Foundation grants.
 - Schwan Foundation grants were determined based on a \$1.8 million grant for FY15 and an increase of 5.0 percent for 2016 and 2017.
 - WELS Foundation grants are based on the unrestricted net asset policy as adopted by the WELS Foundation Board with distributions of \$150,000 per year in 2016 and 2017. Also included in 2017 is a \$2.9 million dollar distribution from a gifted interest in an LLC, which is expected to fully terminate in that year. The total distribution from the LLC is expected to be approximately \$6 million with initial direction that nearly \$3 million will be endowed to support World Missions and the remainder to support general WELS ministry. Guidance for the handling of these funds are subject to change based on the donor's wishes.
2. Gifts from individuals, which includes Walking Together, Mission Partners, and other gifts from individuals and congregations.
 - Walking Together is based on a renewed emphasis in 2017 through congregation mission festivals that will accent the synod's ministry work.
 - The Mission Partners program was restructured such that gifts can now be restricted to the specified ministry. A minimal amount is planned for 2016, with nothing planned in 2017, assuming all gifts originating through this program will be directed to a specific ministry.
 - Other gifts are based on current trends showing relatively flat levels over the last several years and assumptions that donors will continue to prefer to direct their gifts to specific ministries.
3. Unrestricted bequests: Represents estate gifts to the ministry and/or mission of WELS and is based on the conservative end of actual gifts received during the prior five-year period recognizing that donors are better informed of the opportunity to restrict their estate gifts to a specific ministry.
4. Investment income: Represents returns on non-endowed funds and the continued investment in annuity contracts, the anticipated decrease in investable reserves, and market projections for rising interest rates.
5. Endowment: Distributions from general endowment funds previously reported under Other Revenue, based on modest growth rates in the WELS operating endowment.
6. Other revenue: Includes income for services provided and rental payments as defined by the building fund policy. Slight increases during the biennium were assumed.

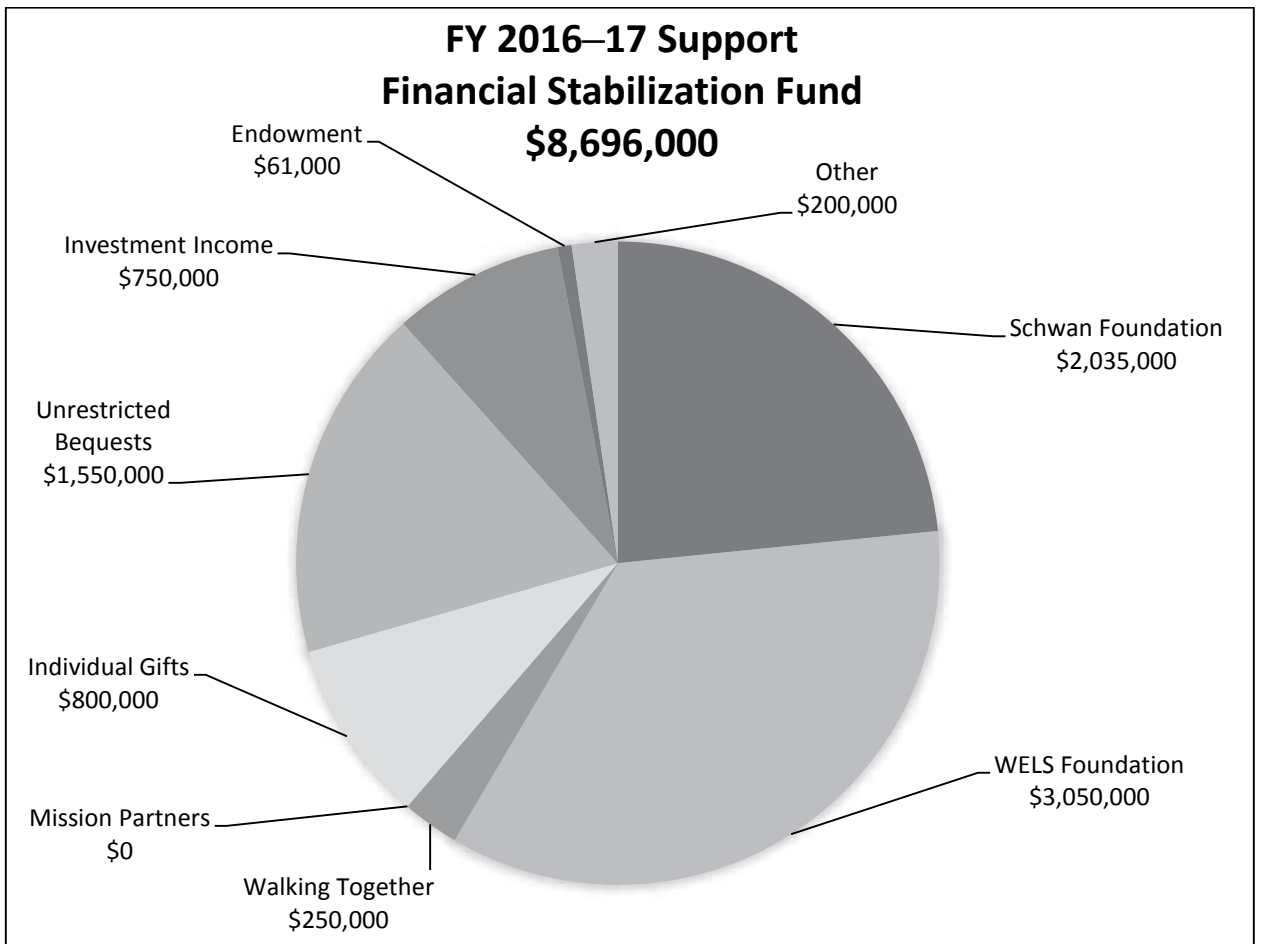
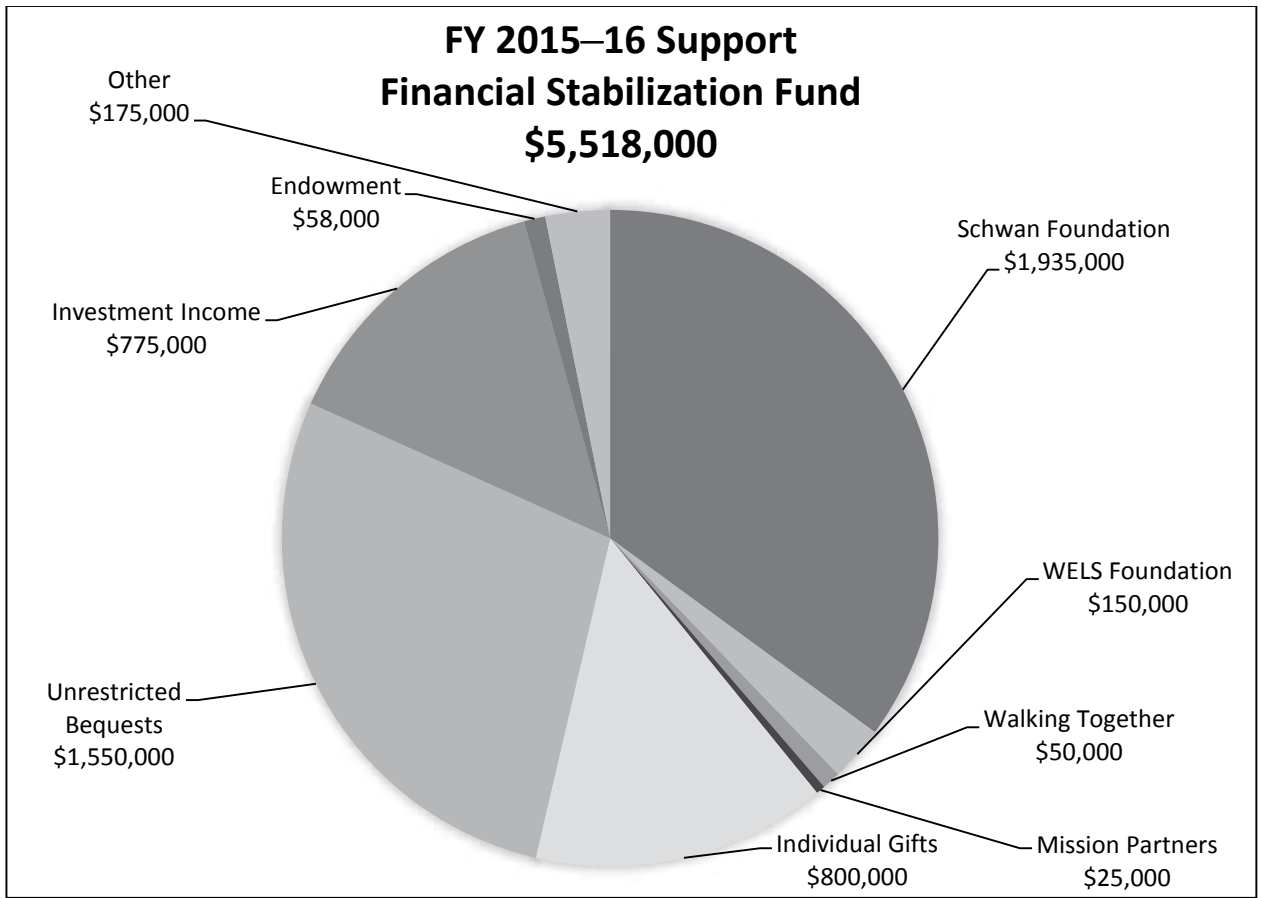
FSF ending balance

Additions to the FSF are planned at \$5.5 million for FY16. With a nearly flat to FY15's planned synod support level and a 1.8 percent decrease in CMO, transfers out of the FSF are planned at \$8.4 million, resulting in a decrease in the FSF of \$2.9 million to an ending balance of \$8.6 million.

Additions to the FSF are planned at \$8.7 million for FY17, an increase of \$3.2 million over FY16, mainly due to the one-time grant expected as a result of the termination of a gifted interest in an LLC. Transfers out of the FSF are planned at \$6.7 million or \$1.7 million lower than FY16 due primarily to expectations that \$1.6 million in debt repayment will not be needed in FY17 due to the debt retirement campaign that will begin in the fall of 2015. Based on additions of \$8.7 million and transfers out of \$6.7 million, the FSF year-end balance is expected to increase by \$2 million to \$10.6 million at the end of FY17.

The critical assumptions for the FSF balance in the upcoming biennium include the \$2.9 million of support estimated from the termination of interest in the LLC and the lack of a debt payment needed, both impacting 2017. Any variations from these assumptions could negatively impact the balance in the FSF by the end of the upcoming biennium.





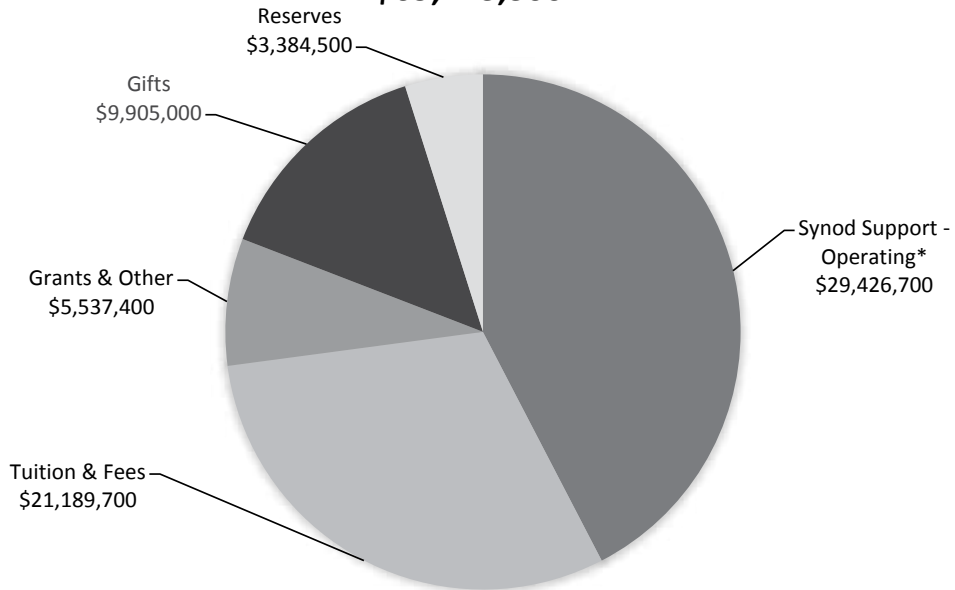
SUMMARY	Plan Summary													
	2013-14 Actual			2014-15 Adj Plan			2015-16 Plan			2016-17 Plan				
	Synod Support	Special, gifts, tuition, fees	FTE	Synod Support	Special, gifts, tuition, fees	FTE	Synod Support	Special, gifts, tuition, fees	FTE	Synod Support	Special, gifts, tuition, fees	FTE		
Home Missions	5,743,537	1,968,998	7,712,535	5,705,900	2,032,300	7,738,200	5,705,900	3,228,901	8,934,801	10.40	5,705,900	2,320,700	8,026,600	10.40
World Missions	5,427,701	3,949,208	9,376,909	5,738,000	3,868,000	9,606,000	5,763,000	4,024,110	9,787,110	52.35	5,788,000	4,092,290	9,880,290	51.35
Ministerial Education	8,130,672	30,045,952	38,176,624	8,094,546	29,528,295	37,620,841	8,132,550	29,372,165	37,504,715	331.75	8,132,550	30,262,642	38,395,192	331.75
Congregation & District Ministry	4,669,986	1,560,069	6,230,055	4,938,300	1,912,800	6,851,100	4,983,200	2,008,980	6,992,180	37.95	5,012,200	1,315,530	6,327,730	37.95
Ministry Support	3,065,411	874,957	3,940,368	3,334,054	1,457,750	4,791,804	3,242,050	1,382,400	4,624,450	29.20	3,252,150	1,383,300	4,635,450	28.95
Debt Retirement	1,600,000	-	1,600,000	1,600,000	-	1,600,000	1,600,000	-	1,600,000	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	28,637,307	38,399,184	67,036,491	29,410,800	38,797,145	68,207,945	29,426,700	40,016,556	69,443,256	461.65	27,890,800	39,974,462	67,865,262	460.40
Synod Support	2013-14	% of total	2014-15	% of total	2015-16	% of total	2016-17	% of total	% change	% change	2016-17	% of total	% change	% change
Home Missions	5,743,537	20.1%	5,705,900	19.4%	5,705,900	19.4%	5,705,900	19.4%	0.0%	0.0%	5,705,900	20.5%	0.0%	0.0%
World Missions	5,427,701	19.0%	5,738,000	19.5%	5,763,000	19.6%	5,788,000	20.8%	0.4%	0.4%	5,788,000	20.8%	0.4%	0.4%
Ministerial Education	8,130,672	28.4%	8,094,546	27.5%	8,132,550	27.6%	8,132,550	29.2%	0.5%	0.0%	8,132,550	29.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Congregation & District Ministry	4,669,986	16.3%	4,938,300	16.8%	4,983,200	16.9%	5,012,200	18.0%	0.9%	0.6%	5,012,200	18.0%	0.6%	0.6%
Ministry Support	3,065,411	10.7%	3,334,054	11.3%	3,242,050	11.0%	3,252,150	11.7%	-2.8%	-0.3%	3,252,150	11.7%	-100.0%	-0.3%
Debt Retirement	1,600,000	5.6%	1,600,000	5.4%	1,600,000	5.4%	1,600,000	5.4%	0.0%	-100.0%	-	0.0%	-100.0%	-5.2%
TOTAL	28,637,307		29,410,800		29,426,700		27,890,800				27,890,800			
Total Funding	2013-14	% of total	2014-15	% of total	2015-16	% of total	2016-17	% of total	% change	% change	2016-17	% of total	% change	% change
Home Missions	7,712,535	11.5%	7,738,200	11.3%	7,738,200	11.3%	8,934,801	12.9%	15.5%	15.5%	8,934,801	12.7%	-3.4%	-3.4%
World Missions	9,376,909	14.0%	9,606,000	14.1%	9,606,000	14.1%	9,787,110	14.1%	1.9%	1.9%	9,880,290	14.6%	1.0%	1.0%
Ministerial Education	38,176,624	56.9%	37,620,841	55.2%	37,620,841	55.2%	37,504,715	54.0%	-0.3%	-0.3%	38,395,192	56.6%	2.4%	2.4%
Congregation & District Ministry	6,230,055	9.3%	6,851,100	10.0%	6,851,100	10.0%	6,992,180	10.1%	2.1%	2.1%	6,327,730	9.3%	-9.5%	-9.5%
Ministry Support	3,940,368	5.9%	4,791,804	7.0%	4,791,804	7.0%	4,624,450	6.7%	-3.5%	-3.5%	4,635,450	6.8%	0.2%	0.2%
Debt Retirement	1,600,000	2.4%	1,600,000	2.3%	1,600,000	2.3%	1,600,000	2.3%	0.0%	1.8%	-	0.0%	-100.0%	-2.3%
TOTAL	67,036,491		68,207,945		69,443,256		67,865,262				67,865,262			

Plan Summary

	2013-14 Actual			2014-15 Adj Plan			2015-16 Plan			2016-17 Plan						
	Synod Support	Special, gifts, tuition, fees	Total Funding	FTE	Synod Support	Special, gifts, tuition, fees	Total Funding	FTE	Synod Support	Special, gifts, tuition, fees	Total Funding	FTE	Synod Support	Special, gifts, tuition, fees	Total Funding	FTE
Home Missions																
Board and Administration	570,504	485,932	1,056,436	5.15	569,600	317,500	887,100	4.40	603,100	375,300	978,400	4.40	616,200	314,600	930,800	4.40
Multi-Cultural Ministry	1,859,005	384,480	2,243,485	1.00	1,764,100	260,900	2,025,000	1.00	1,849,900	469,600	2,319,500	1.00	1,703,912	328,500	2,032,412	1.00
Campus Ministry	383,433	21,990	405,423	1.00	407,600	25,000	432,600	1.00	438,400	14,000	452,400	1.00	443,900	19,000	462,900	1.00
Outreach Ministry	2,929,215	756,334	3,685,549	3.00	2,961,300	1,324,100	4,285,400	3.00	2,811,500	2,244,200	5,055,700	3.00	2,938,988	2,130,600	5,069,588	3.00
Joint Mission Council Ministry	1,380	320,262	321,642	1.50	3,300	104,800	108,100	1.50	3,000	125,801	128,801	1.00	3,000	127,600	130,600	1.00
TOTAL	5,743,537	1,968,998	7,712,535	11.65	5,705,900	2,032,300	7,738,200	10.90	5,705,900	3,228,901	8,934,801	10.40	5,705,900	2,920,700	8,626,600	10.40
World Missions																
Board and Administration	356,674	118,379	475,053	4.35	412,054	140,100	552,154	4.60	421,450	134,600	556,050	4.60	434,150	224,558	658,708	4.60
Africa	1,391,554	688,144	2,079,698	12.50	1,204,000	946,200	2,150,200	12.50	695,885	1,497,900	2,193,785	11.50	695,885	1,531,950	2,227,835	11.00
Europe	478,424	180,720	659,144	3.00	539,400	186,000	725,400	3.00	538,804	462,895	1,001,699	2.50	539,615	455,395	995,010	2.50
Latin America	578,679	421,970	1,000,649	6.75	455,400	393,200	848,600	6.25	541,512	182,895	724,407	5.25	541,512	184,395	725,907	5.25
Native America	215,660	136,719	352,379	2.00	242,100	213,500	455,600	2.00	301,129	209,500	510,629	3.00	301,319	123,000	424,319	3.00
East Asia	1,045,457	662,484	1,707,941	9.50	804,600	1,128,300	1,932,900	10.50	708,930	1,074,960	1,783,890	9.50	749,891	1,069,951	1,819,842	9.50
South Asia	331,920	380,145	712,065	3.50	350,700	423,900	774,600	3.50	542,402	270,160	812,562	5.00	591,274	213,610	804,884	4.50
Asia-Pacific Rim	570,165	184,532	754,697	4.00	629,700	173,000	802,700	4.00	732,363	98,200	830,563	4.00	741,258	103,500	844,758	4.00
Multi-Language Publications	158,206	852,927	1,011,133	7.00	888,600	167,000	1,055,600	7.00	1,016,126	73,000	1,089,126	7.00	1,016,126	73,500	1,089,626	7.00
Other	300,962	323,188	624,150	0.00	211,446	96,800	308,246	0.00	264,359	20,000	284,359	0.00	176,970	112,431	289,401	0.00
TOTAL	5,427,701	3,949,208	9,376,909	52.60	5,738,000	3,868,000	9,606,000	53.35	5,763,000	4,024,110	9,787,110	52.35	5,785,000	4,092,290	9,880,290	51.35
Ministerial Education																
Board and Administration	173,844	1,268,359	1,442,203	0.50	127,220	813,800	941,020	0.50	141,950	820,000	961,950	1.00	146,800	845,000	991,800	1.00
Retiree Health Care	27,968	-	27,968	0.00	196,000	-	196,000	0.00	61,000	-	61,000	0.00	64,100	-	64,100	0.00
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary	1,188,060	3,993,866	5,181,926	37.00	1,123,600	5,014,015	6,137,615	39.00	1,042,780	4,406,075	5,448,855	39.00	1,042,780	4,559,345	5,602,125	39.00
Martin Luther College	3,193,500	17,404,167	20,597,667	175.50	3,079,300	15,533,320	18,612,620	183.00	3,011,660	16,491,830	19,503,490	185.00	3,011,660	17,206,980	20,218,640	185.00
Luther Preparatory School	2,340,800	4,925,200	7,266,000	65.00	2,355,800	5,016,100	7,371,900	64.25	2,531,830	5,087,370	7,619,200	62.75	2,523,880	4,957,920	7,481,800	62.75
Michigan Lutheran Seminary	1,206,500	2,454,380	3,660,880	43.50	1,212,626	3,149,060	4,361,686	44.00	1,343,330	2,586,890	3,930,220	44.00	1,343,330	2,693,997	4,036,727	44.00
TOTAL	8,130,672	30,045,952	38,176,624	321.50	8,094,546	29,526,295	37,620,841	330.75	8,132,550	29,372,165	37,504,715	331.75	8,132,550	30,262,642	38,395,192	331.75

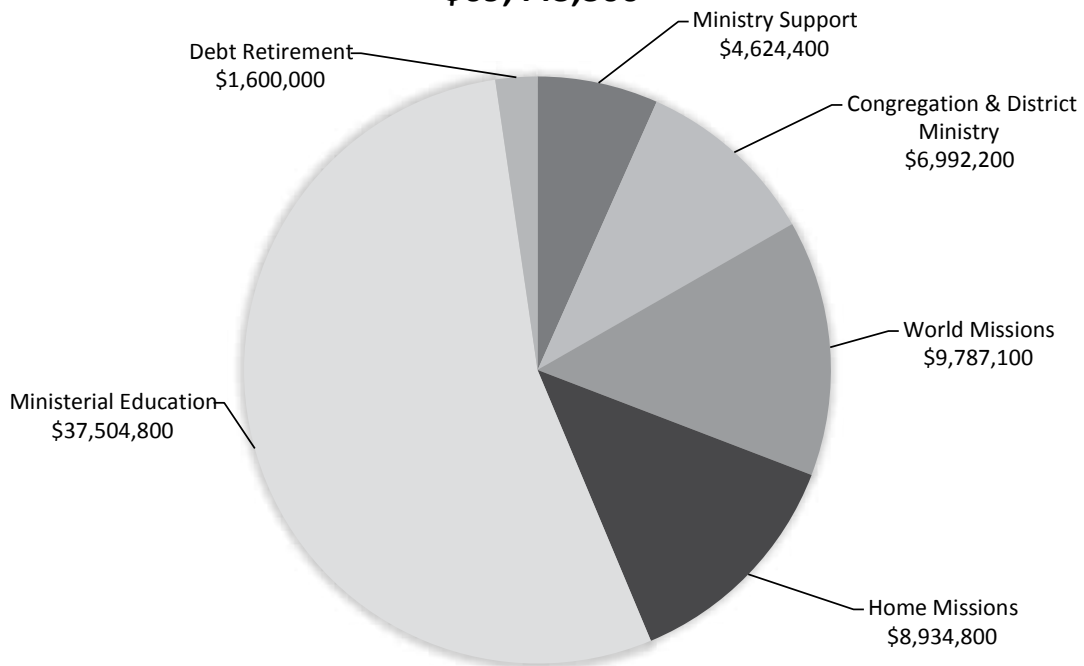
	Plan Summary															
	2013-14 Actual				2014-15 Adj Plan				2015-16 Plan				2016-17 Plan			
	Synod Support	Special, gifts, tuition, fees	Total Funding	FTE	Synod Support	Special, gifts, tuition, fees	Total Funding	FTE	Synod Support	Special, gifts, tuition, fees	Total Funding	FTE	Synod Support	Special, gifts, tuition, fees	Total Funding	FTE
Congregation & District Ministry																
Congregation & Ministry Support Group	1,003,750	1,039,330	2,043,080	15.30	1,058,600	1,634,000	2,682,600	15.60	1,058,600	1,779,580	2,838,180	15.65	1,058,600	1,175,930	2,234,530	15.65
Conference of Presidents	103,423	47,653	146,076		138,700	25,000	153,700		98,100	23,700	121,800		98,200	13,900	112,100	
Christian Giving	1,583,349	216,694	1,800,043	16.80	1,814,800	51,300	1,866,100	16.80	1,804,800	4,800	1,809,600	16.80	1,894,800	4,800	1,899,600	16.80
Communication Services	478,877	63,826	540,703	4.50	526,900	185,500	712,400	5.50	526,900	78,000	604,900	5.50	526,900	78,000	604,900	5.50
District Ministries	1,026,713	-	1,026,713	0.00	1,013,200	-	1,013,200	0.00	1,017,100	-	1,017,100	0.00	1,046,400	-	1,046,400	0.00
Convention	109,337	87,957	197,294	0.00	-	-	-	0.00	97,500	90,000	187,500	0.00	-	-	-	0.00
Commission on Inter Church Relations	46,238	83,709	129,947	0.00	50,100	17,000	67,100	0.00	24,200	29,900	54,100	0.00	24,300	39,900	64,200	0.00
Special Support	83,935	25,900	109,835	0.00	96,000	10,000	106,000	0.00	96,000	3,000	99,000	0.00	103,000	3,000	106,000	0.00
Support	236,364	-	236,364	0.00	250,000	-	250,000	0.00	260,000	-	260,000	0.00	260,000	-	260,000	0.00
TOTAL	4,669,986	1,560,069	6,230,055	36.60	4,938,300	1,912,800	6,851,100	37.90	4,983,200	2,008,980	6,992,180	37.95	5,012,200	1,315,530	6,327,730	37.95
Ministry Support																
Facilities	198,438	227,938	426,376	0.00	223,500	412,850	636,350	0.00	223,500	365,000	588,500	0.00	223,500	365,000	588,500	0.00
Synodical Council	76,843	(12,965)	63,878	0.00	119,300	67,000	186,300	0.00	85,900	-	85,900	0.00	88,800	-	88,800	0.00
Synod Praesidium	270,761	2,700	273,461	2.00	334,600	50,000	384,600	2.00	315,400	100,000	415,400	3.00	322,600	100,000	422,600	3.00
Special Task Forces	9,156	-	9,156	0.00	12,500	-	12,500	0.00	11,100	-	11,100	0.00	11,100	-	11,100	0.00
Technology	1,336,942	20,727	1,357,669	12.75	1,381,029	55,200	1,436,229	13.00	1,343,025	34,600	1,377,625	13.00	1,343,025	34,600	1,377,625	12.75
Financial Services	933,328	78	933,406	11.55	1,010,325	-	1,010,325	10.80	1,010,325	-	1,010,325	10.20	1,010,325	-	1,010,325	10.20
Human Resources	239,943	559	240,502	2.00	252,800	-	252,800	2.00	252,800	-	252,800	2.00	252,800	-	252,800	2.00
Christian Aid and Relief	-	635,920	635,920	1.00	-	872,700	872,700	1.00	-	882,800	882,800	1.00	-	883,700	883,700	1.00
TOTAL	3,065,411	874,957	3,940,368	29.30	3,334,054	1,457,750	4,791,804	28.80	3,242,050	1,382,400	4,624,450	29.20	3,252,150	1,383,300	4,635,450	28.95
Debt Retirement	1,600,000	-	1,600,000	29.30	1,600,000	-	1,600,000	28.80	1,600,000	-	1,600,000	29.20	1,600,000	-	1,600,000	28.95
TOTAL	4,665,411	874,957	5,540,368	29.30	4,934,054	1,457,750	6,391,804	28.80	4,842,050	1,382,400	6,224,450	29.20	3,252,150	1,383,300	4,635,450	28.95

**FY 2015–16 Total Ministry Plan Support
\$69,443,300**

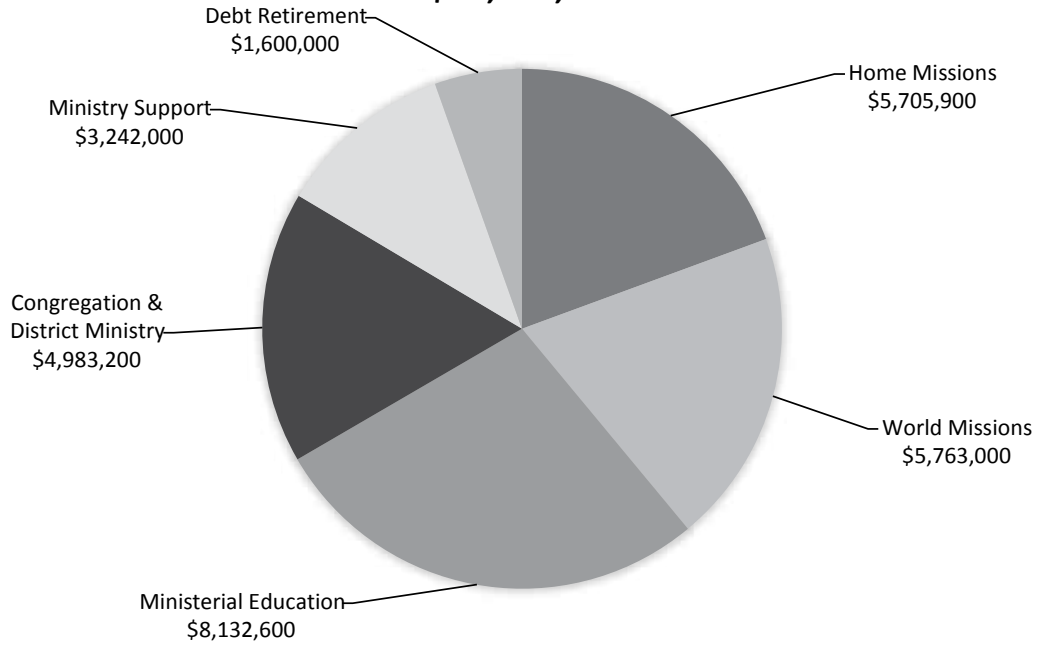


* Funding from Congregation Mission Offerings and the Financial Stabilization Fund

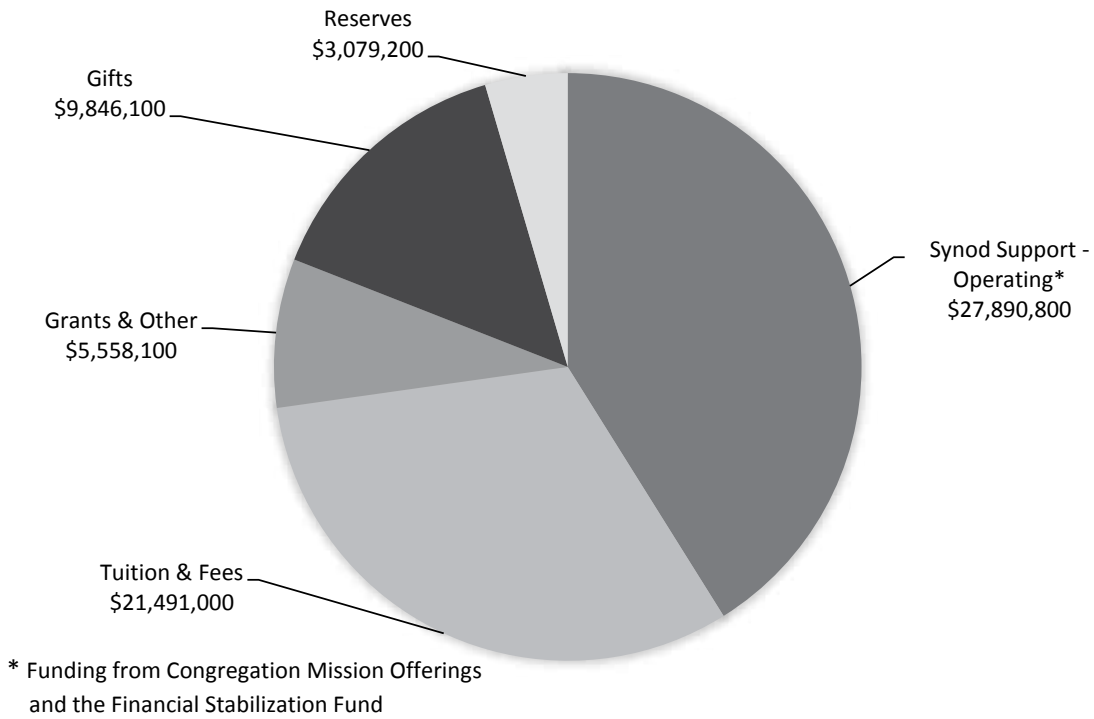
**FY 2015–16 Total Ministry Plan Expenses
\$69,443,300**



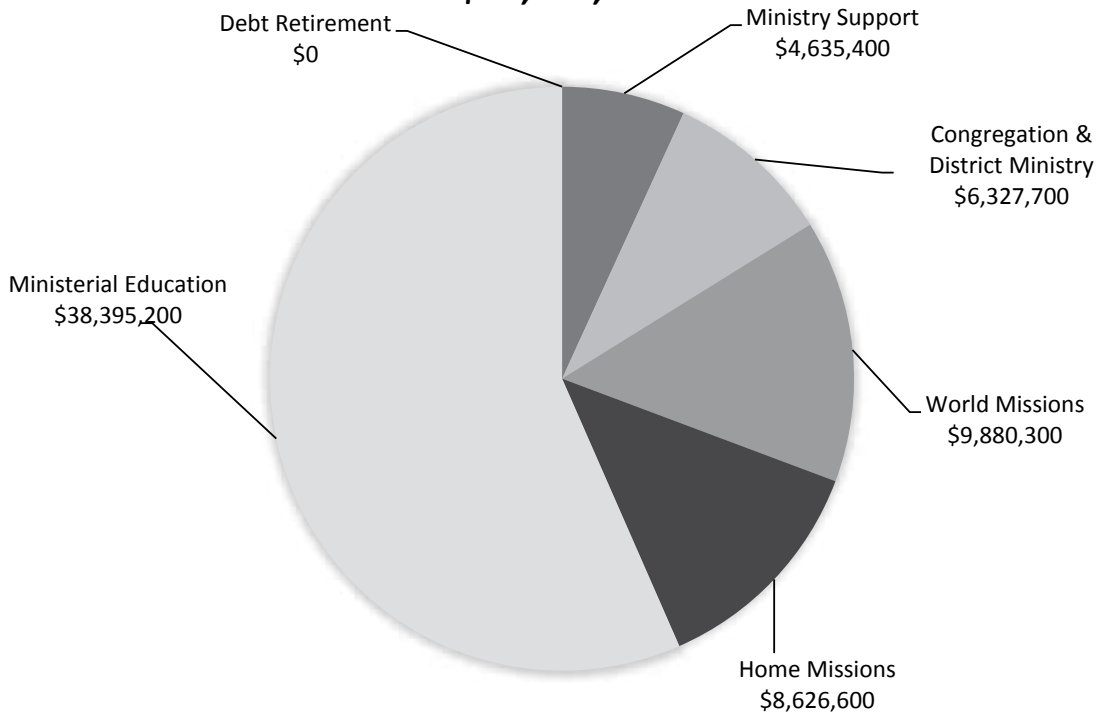
**FY 2015–16 Synod Operating Support Allocation
\$29,426,700**



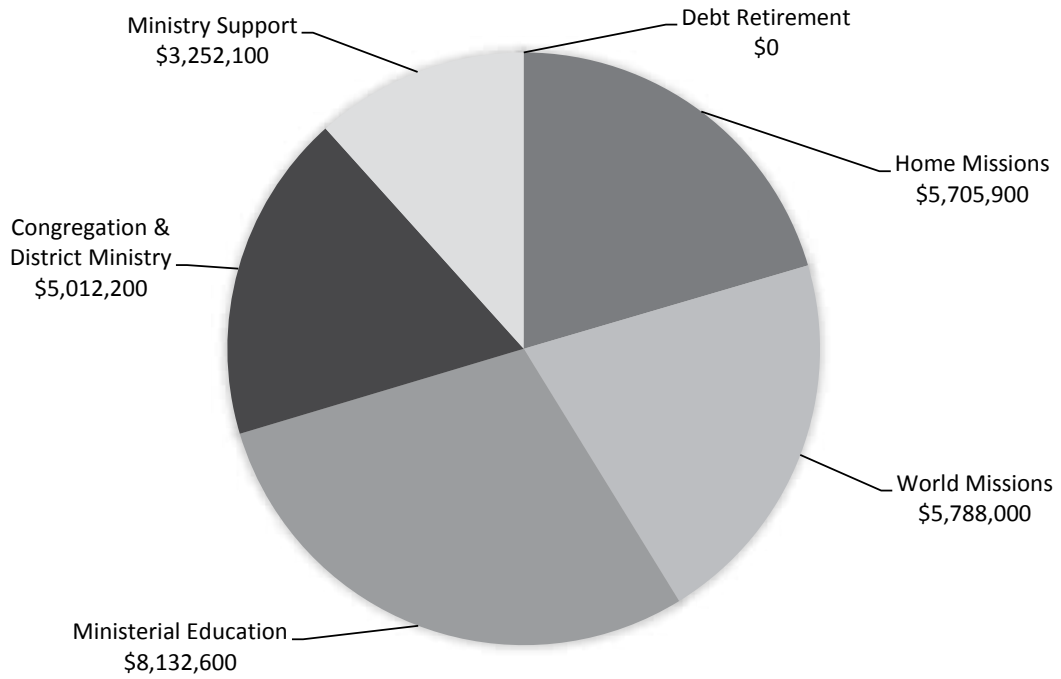
**FY 2016–17 Total Ministry Plan Support
\$67,865,200**



**FY 2016–17 Total Ministry Plan Expenses
\$67,865,200**



FY 2016–17 Synod Operating Support Allocation
\$27,890,800



Synod schedule

0.50% Inflation Rate Adjustment

WELS COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

Salary Matrix

2015-16

Range Spread	14,356	15,074	15,822	16,540	17,287	18,005	18,753	19,471
Range Spread	14,356	15,074	15,792	16,510	17,227	17,945	18,663	19,381
<i>Service Incr.</i>	479	502	527	551	576	600	625	649
Ranges	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
<i>Experience</i>								
0	28,712	30,148	31,584	33,019	34,455	35,891	37,326	38,762
1	29,191	30,651	32,111	33,571	35,031	36,491	37,951	39,411
2	29,670	31,153	32,639	34,122	35,607	37,091	38,576	40,060
3	30,148	31,656	33,166	34,673	36,184	37,691	39,202	40,709
4	30,627	32,158	33,693	35,225	36,760	38,291	39,827	41,358
5	31,105	32,660	34,221	35,776	37,336	38,891	40,452	42,007
6	31,584	33,163	34,748	36,327	37,912	39,492	41,077	42,656
7	32,062	33,665	35,275	36,879	38,489	40,092	41,702	43,305
8	32,541	34,168	35,803	37,430	39,065	40,692	42,327	43,954
9	33,019	34,670	36,330	37,981	39,641	41,292	42,952	44,603
10	33,498	35,173	36,858	38,533	40,217	41,892	43,577	45,252
11	33,976	35,675	37,385	39,084	40,794	42,493	44,202	45,901
12	34,455	36,178	37,912	39,635	41,370	43,093	44,827	46,550
13	34,934	36,680	38,440	40,187	41,946	43,693	45,453	47,199
14	35,412	37,183	38,967	40,738	42,522	44,293	46,078	47,848
15	35,891	37,685	39,495	41,289	43,099	44,893	46,703	48,497
16	36,369	38,188	40,022	41,841	43,675	45,493	47,328	49,146
17	36,848	38,690	40,549	42,392	44,251	46,094	47,953	49,795
18	37,326	39,193	41,077	42,943	44,827	46,694	48,578	50,444
19	37,805	39,695	41,604	43,494	45,404	47,294	49,203	51,093
20	38,283	40,197	42,132	44,046	45,980	47,894	49,828	51,742
21	38,762	40,700	42,659	44,597	46,556	48,494	50,453	52,391
22	39,240	41,202	43,186	45,148	47,132	49,094	51,078	53,041
23	39,719	41,705	43,714	45,700	47,709	49,695	51,704	53,690
24	40,197	42,207	44,241	46,251	48,285	50,295	52,329	54,339
25	40,676	42,710	44,769	46,802	48,861	50,895	52,954	54,988
26	41,155	43,212	45,296	47,354	49,437	51,495	53,579	55,637
27	41,633	43,715	45,823	47,905	50,014	52,095	54,204	56,286
28	42,112	44,217	46,351	48,456	50,590	52,696	54,829	56,935
29	42,590	44,720	46,878	49,008	51,166	53,296	55,454	57,584
30	43,069	45,222	47,406	49,559	51,742	53,896	56,079	58,233
31	43,547	45,725	47,933	50,110	52,319	54,496	56,704	58,882
32	44,026	46,227	48,460	50,662	52,895	55,096	57,330	59,531

See p. 108 for synodical salary range assignments and above base compensation for called workers.

Synod schedule

0.50% Inflation Rate Adjustment

WELS COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

Salary Matrix

2016-17

Range Spread	14,428	15,149	15,901	16,622	17,374	18,095	18,846	19,568
Range Spread	14,428	15,149	15,871	16,592	17,314	18,035	18,756	19,478
<i>Service Incr.</i>	481	505	530	554	579	603	628	652
Ranges	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
<i>Experience</i>								
0	28,856	30,299	31,742	33,184	34,627	36,070	37,513	38,956
1	29,337	30,804	32,272	33,739	35,206	36,673	38,141	39,608
2	29,818	31,309	32,802	34,293	35,785	37,276	38,769	40,260
3	30,299	31,814	33,332	34,847	36,365	37,880	39,397	40,912
4	30,780	32,319	33,862	35,401	36,944	38,483	40,026	41,565
5	31,261	32,824	34,392	35,955	37,523	39,086	40,654	42,217
6	31,742	33,329	34,922	36,509	38,102	39,689	41,282	42,869
7	32,223	33,834	35,452	37,063	38,681	40,292	41,910	43,521
8	32,704	34,339	35,982	37,617	39,260	40,895	42,539	44,174
9	33,184	34,844	36,512	38,171	39,839	41,499	43,167	44,826
10	33,665	35,349	37,042	38,725	40,418	42,102	43,795	45,478
11	34,146	35,854	37,572	39,279	40,998	42,705	44,423	46,131
12	34,627	36,359	38,102	39,833	41,577	43,308	45,051	46,783
13	35,108	36,864	38,632	40,387	42,156	43,911	45,680	47,435
14	35,589	37,369	39,162	40,941	42,735	44,514	46,308	48,087
15	36,070	37,874	39,692	41,496	43,314	45,118	46,936	48,740
16	36,551	38,379	40,222	42,050	43,893	45,721	47,564	49,392
17	37,032	38,884	40,752	42,604	44,472	46,324	48,192	50,044
18	37,513	39,388	41,282	43,158	45,051	46,927	48,821	50,696
19	37,994	39,893	41,812	43,712	45,631	47,530	49,449	51,349
20	38,475	40,398	42,342	44,266	46,210	48,133	50,077	52,001
21	38,956	40,903	42,872	44,820	46,789	48,737	50,705	52,653
22	39,437	41,408	43,402	45,374	47,368	49,340	51,334	53,305
23	39,918	41,913	43,932	45,928	47,947	49,943	51,962	53,958
24	40,398	42,418	44,462	46,482	48,526	50,546	52,590	54,610
25	40,879	42,923	44,992	47,036	49,105	51,149	53,218	55,262
26	41,360	43,428	45,522	47,590	49,684	51,752	53,846	55,914
27	41,841	43,933	46,052	48,144	50,264	52,356	54,475	56,567
28	42,322	44,438	46,582	48,699	50,843	52,959	55,103	57,219
29	42,803	44,943	47,112	49,253	51,422	53,562	55,731	57,871
30	43,284	45,448	47,642	49,807	52,001	54,165	56,359	58,523
31	43,765	45,953	48,172	50,361	52,580	54,768	56,987	59,176
32	44,246	46,458	48,703	50,915	53,159	55,371	57,616	59,828

See p. 108 for synodical salary range assignments and above base compensation for called workers.

Synodical salary range assignments

Teacher	A-C
Principal	B-D
Prep professor	B-D
Staff minister	B-D
Prep vice president	C-E
Prep dean	C-E
College professor	C-E
Home missionary	C-E
World missionary	C-E
Associate administrator	C-E
Mission counselor	C-E
Prep president	D-F
College vice president	D-F
College dean	D-F
Seminary professor	D-F
Seminary vice president	D-F
Administrator	D-F
College president	E-G
Seminary president	E-G

Note: A periodic review (minimally once per year) should be undertaken to evaluate an individual's compensation level. Changing call responsibilities and educational levels may lead to a salary range reassignment.

Above base compensation components for called workers

1. Cost of living adjustment (using ACCRA or similar COLA index).
2. Cash housing allowance if not provided housing (using HUD Fair Market Rental Values established upon hire date + adjusted annually based on the percent change for the salary matrix. For 2015–16 and 2016–17 this adjustment would be .5%).
3. Social Security allowance (7.65% of salary, cost of living, and housing value/cash housing/fair market rental of parsonage-teacherage).
4. Housing equity of 2% of entry-level base for workers in provided housing (parsonage/teacherage).
5. VEBA health insurance.
6. WELS Pension.
7. Reimbursement for business-related expenses such as travel and conferences.

Note: An Excel compensation spreadsheet is available for download on the Human Resources page under "compensation" at <http://cloud.wels.net>

Compensation for synod president and congregational support for vice presidents

The synod president is compensated with a salary based on column "H." In addition to the base salary and the other components of compensation listed with the compensation guidelines, in 2015–16 the president will receive above base compensation the amount of \$41,225, which reflects a .5% increase from 2014–15. In 2016–17, this component of the president's compensation will be increased by .5% to \$41,431.

The proposed budget for the next biennium includes funding for the first and second vice presidents' congregations in the amount of \$20,000 and \$10,000, respectively. The congregations of the vice presidents are free to request and utilize these funds as they see fit to cover expenses and lost ministry time as a result of the synodical duties of their pastors.

Note: Salary matrices and compensation worksheets are available for download on the Human Resources page under "compensation" at <http://cloud.wels.net>

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD
Consolidating Schedule of Financial Position
June 30, 2014

	WELS	MLC	WLS	MLS	LPS	CEF	Foundation	WIF	NPH	Eliminations	Consolidated
Assets											
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 24,097,060	\$ 4,289,175	\$ 1,339,320	\$ 26,903	\$ 864,621	\$ 11,350,322	\$ 1,369,077	\$ -	\$ 811,469	\$ -	\$ 44,147,947
Cash restricted for gift annuities and trusts payable	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,116,242	-	-	-	2,116,242
Accounts receivable, net	315,504	63,223	48,684	111,729	2,360	-	2,459	17,269	421,132	3,102	985,472
Predeceases receivable, net	747,224	130,359	65,035	-	61,309	168,803	5,158	-	-	-	1,175,888
Accrued interest receivable	-	33	-	-	-	544,867	270	135,757	578	(881)	680,624
Inventories	-	100,385	82,397	11,800	15,298	-	-	-	2,238,661	-	2,457,572
Mortgages and land contracts receivable	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Loans to students	-	1,035,840	-	-	1,592,931	22,378,388	82,221,406	165,644,747	4,240,451	(131,305,948)	1,035,840
Investments	17,660,658	13,076,132	11,213,707	1,288,223	19,155	-	-	-	-	-	187,900,695
Certificates of Deposit	1,141,500	-	-	19,155	-	495,323	970,836	-	-	-	159,712
Property and real estate held for sale, net	-	-	-	-	-	137,717,969	-	-	-	-	137,717,969
Loans receivable from congregations, net	-	119,426	85,172	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	204,598
Cash surrender value on life insurance policies	-	1,307,472	-	80,211	-	-	1,206,714	-	-	-	2,607,659
Cash surrender value on life insurance policies	-	463,652	63,425	12,305	59,977	7,416	-	-	-	-	1,423,569
Other assets	13,588,903	3,025,959	1,916,828	2,106,523	176,684	1,224,127	-	-	85,012	-	1,889,351
Contributions receivable - Foundation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(22,039,024)	-
Beneficial interest - assets held by WELS Foundation	12,962,570	1,893,129	1,813,595	256,860	371,766	-	-	-	-	(17,287,917)	52,431,322
Property, plant, and equipment, net	8,115,993	25,110,942	3,494,019	5,090,099	6,012,592	-	51,552	-	2,030,568	(13,251,717)	44,613,947
Investment in CEF certificates	9,065,523	1,027,332	1,689,350	-	-	-	-	-	637,954	-	12,400,869
Short term investments with WELS	-	-	75,227	-	-	145,965	-	-	-	(75,227)	145,965
Due from related party	2,106,101	4,985,000	42,657	-	-	-	1,097,493	-	-	(8,377,216)	-
Collections and works of art	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total assets	\$ 91,284,350	\$ 56,619,685	\$ 22,110,002	\$ 9,566,694	\$ 11,157,538	\$ 174,113,026	\$ 89,041,207	\$ 165,797,803	\$ 10,472,845	\$ (192,539,012)	\$ 437,624,128
Liabilities and Net Assets											
Liabilities:											
Accounts payable	\$ 1,019,110	\$ 595,591	\$ 40,950	\$ 40,698	\$ 79,679	\$ 24,601	\$ 99,099	\$ -	\$ 182,931	\$ (1,653)	\$ 2,091,004
Accrued expenses and other liabilities	1,337,174	447,945	69,743	54,163	167,202	1,063,368	1,815	102,808	257,435	(881)	3,500,793
Deferred revenue	1,892,728	300,340	81,040	5,843	38,385	-	-	-	430,995	-	1,154,531
Retiree health benefits payable	1,864,435	-	-	-	-	80,834,550	8,385,921	-	-	(13,251,717)	1,864,435
Certificates payable	75,227	1,293,018	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	67,382,833
Liabilities to other beneficiaries	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9,676,939
Deposits held in custody	-	6764	6,294	50,300	38,617	-	-	-	-	-	103,035
Liabilities to outside agencies and organizations	2,209,095	240,024	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34,286,393	30,746,912
Gift annuities and trusts payable	-	855,710	-	-	-	-	26,956,260	-	-	-	26,956,260
U.S. Government grants refundable	-	4,985,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(4,985,000)	855,710
Bonds payable	4,985,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(3,481,646)	4,985,000
Due to related party	1,238,184	932,548	-	52,903	190,911	1,077,100	-	-	-	-	-
Total liabilities	\$ 13,141,533	\$ 9,657,541	\$ 204,027	\$ 203,995	\$ 516,994	\$ 82,999,639	\$ 35,443,115	\$ 102,608	\$ 881,361	\$ 12,450,469	\$ 155,641,472
Net assets:											
Unrestricted	27,960,401	5,926,057	6,791,724	82,592	1,012,220	64,724,479	13,703,126	165,694,995	9,549,817	(124,122,115)	171,323,298
Temporarily restricted	28,752,805	32,940,784	8,386,149	8,354,199	8,844,324	1,305,021	23,774,722	-	41,667	(65,416,756)	46,983,916
Permanently restricted	21,429,590	8,695,303	6,728,102	925,928	784,000	25,082,887	16,120,242	-	-	(15,480,610)	63,675,442
Total net assets	\$ 78,142,797	\$ 46,962,144	\$ 21,905,975	\$ 9,302,719	\$ 10,640,544	\$ 91,113,387	\$ 53,598,092	\$ 165,694,995	\$ 9,591,484	\$ (705,029,481)	\$ 281,982,656
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 91,284,350	\$ 56,619,685	\$ 22,110,002	\$ 9,566,694	\$ 11,157,538	\$ 174,113,026	\$ 89,041,207	\$ 165,797,803	\$ 10,472,845	\$ (192,539,012)	\$ 437,624,128

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD
Consolidating Schedule of Activities
Year Ended June 30, 2014

	Unrestricted										Eliminations	Consolidated	
	WELS	M.L.C.	W.L.S.	M.L.S.	L.P.S.	C.E.F.	Foundation	W.I.F.	N.P.H.				
Member Support and Revenues													
Member support:													
Offerings from congregations	\$ 20,837,730	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,837,730
Gifts and memorials	5,105,178	535,193	412,921	150,226	200,175	120,815	433,288	-	-	-	(2,087,404)	4,870,370	
Bequests	1,767,965	73,750	756,289	-	-	823,038	176,435	-	-	-	-	3,602,508	
Total member support	27,810,903	608,943	1,169,710	150,226	200,175	943,853	609,702	-	-	-	(2,087,404)	29,410,608	
Revenues:													
Net student tuition and fees		10,322,125	704,617	1,410,425	3,279,401	-	-	-	30,076,917	-	-	-	15,725,568
Activity fees and retail sales	2,101,936	617,627	69,720	130,715	162,072	-	-	-	3,789,252	-	(30,774,665)	7,906,496	
Interest and dividends	615,074	134,923	127,455	3,540	35,462	6,125,488	78,800	-	105,074	-	(6,330,925)	7,864,783	
Net realized and unrealized gain on investments	5,179	199,806	648,938	250	72,601	2,050,877	452,287	20,284,172	517,216	-	(20,284,172)	3,946,882	
Change in value of trust agreements	-	52,773	-	47,430	-	-	110,325	-	-	-	(47,430)	163,348	
Redesignated fixed asset additions below historical gift value	-	-	8,901	-	-	-	224	-	-	-	-	9,125	
Other	274,715	79,107	0,082	12,402	78,985	254,996	1,350,235	-	283,926	-	(7,875)	2,335,063	
Transfers from other funds	6,664,816	3,735,536	2,310,648	1,696,707	2,805,618	750	-	-	-	-	(17,414,274)	-	
Total revenues	10,162,321	15,142,097	3,879,559	3,210,559	6,454,109	8,432,121	1,981,851	54,159,741	6,409,008	-	(71,859,561)	37,981,805	
Donor redesignation	-	-	-	-	-	(7,000)	-	-	-	-	-	(7,000)	
Net assets released from restrictions	9,484,352	4,290,388	1,249,811	421,129	511,207	6,076	2,278,591	-	38,333	-	(5,505,860)	12,773,927	
Total member support and revenues	47,457,576	20,041,428	6,298,560	3,781,914	7,165,551	9,357,050	4,873,144	54,159,741	6,447,341	-	(79,452,925)	60,159,400	
Expenses													
Program services:													
Ministerial education	9,359,030	20,597,677	5,181,920	3,712,834	7,265,862	-	-	-	-	-	(12,080,313)	33,471,130	
World missions	9,376,908	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(134,869)	9,242,039	
Home missions	7,712,534	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(472,910)	7,239,624	
Congregational and district ministries	6,230,055	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(316,674)	5,913,381	
Northwestern Publishing House	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,273,424	-	(32,940)	6,240,484	
Total program services	32,718,527	20,597,677	5,181,920	3,712,834	7,265,862	-	-	-	6,273,424	-	(13,643,705)	62,106,684	
Support services:													
Ministry support - subsidiaries	-	-	-	-	-	5,514,124	1,614,886	616,257	-	-	(88,090)	7,656,877	
General and administrative	11,857,716	-	-	-	-	-	3,360,583	27,360,779	-	-	(7,811,611)	4,046,105	
Transfers to other funds	1,186,010	-	-	-	-	1,300,000	-	-	-	-	(33,207,372)	-	
Total support services	13,043,726	-	-	-	-	6,814,124	4,975,469	27,977,336	-	-	(41,107,673)	11,702,902	
Total expenses	45,762,253	20,597,677	5,181,920	3,712,834	7,265,862	6,814,124	4,975,469	27,977,336	6,273,424	-	(54,751,379)	73,809,646	
Change in Net Assets	1,656,323	(566,249)	1,116,654	60,080	(100,431)	2,572,926	(102,325)	26,182,405	173,917	-	(24,701,546)	6,340,754	
Net Assets (deficit) - Beginning of Year	26,265,076	6,482,306	5,675,070	13,512	1,112,651	62,151,553	13,805,453	139,512,290	9,375,900	-	(89,420,569)	164,673,344	
Net Assets - End of year	27,921,401	5,916,057	6,791,724	62,592	1,012,220	64,724,479	13,703,128	165,694,695	9,549,817	-	(124,122,115)	171,323,298	

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNCD
Consolidating Schedule of Activities
Year Ended June 30, 2014

	WELS	MLC	WLS	MLS	LPS	Temporarily Restricted			Eliminations	Consolidated
						CEF	Foundation	NPH		
Member Support and Revenues										
Member support:										
Gifts and memorials:										
Bequests	\$ 6,928,400	\$ 1,020,532	\$ 1,414,187	\$ 187,589	\$ 286,120	\$ -	\$ 1,140,577	\$ -	\$ (1,134,840)	\$ 9,601,565
Total member support	567,174	610,845	298,739	-	-	-	31,306	-	-	1,506,054
	7,495,574	1,640,377	1,710,926	187,589	286,120	-	1,171,883	-	(1,134,840)	11,407,029
Revenues:										
Activity fees and retail sales										
Interest and dividends	332,027	345,185	106,862	7,960	18,602	-	1,292,969	-	-	2,103,605
Net realized and unrealized gain on investments	2,162,004	1,024,002	778,004	153,389	124,817	-	8,192,442	-	-	12,432,688
Change in value of trust agreements	3,858,947	1,080,624	816,753	327,739	67,886	151,037	(3,669,169)	-	(7,119,010)	(4,465,213)
Redesignated fixed asset additions	-	3,121,353	44,343	66,208	79,188	-	-	-	(3,311,182)	-
Change in value - endowments below historical gift value	-	-	(8,801)	-	-	-	(224)	-	-	(9,125)
Other	8,787	42	(955)	-	-	-	50,952	-	-	59,226
Transfers from other funds	1,300,000	-	-	-	-	-	1,183	-	(1,301,183)	-
Total revenues	7,661,765	5,571,206	1,734,506	555,396	290,493	151,037	5,668,133	-	(11,731,375)	10,101,101
Donor redesignation										
Net assets released from restrictions	(9,484,352)	(4,200,388)	(1,249,811)	(421,120)	(511,207)	(6,078)	(2,278,561)	-	5,505,960	(12,773,927)
Change in Net Assets	5,072,987	2,921,195	2,195,621	321,950	65,406	144,901	4,701,425	-	(7,300,255)	8,734,803
Net Assets (donor) - Beginning of year	23,079,819	30,019,589	6,199,528	8,032,343	8,778,918	1,161,050	19,013,297	-	(58,096,501)	38,249,053
Net Assets - End of year	\$ 28,152,806	\$ 32,940,784	\$ 8,395,149	\$ 8,354,199	\$ 8,844,324	\$ 1,306,021	\$ 23,714,722	\$ -	\$ (66,416,756)	\$ 46,983,916

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD
Consolidating Schedule of Activities
Year Ended June 30, 2014

	WELS	MLC	WLS	MLS	LPS	CEF	Foundation	WIF	NPH	Eliminations	Consolidated
Member Support and Revenues											
Member support:											
Gifts and memorials	\$ 21,451	\$ 277,900	\$ 117,446	\$ -	\$ 2,500	\$ -	\$ 199,003	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 619,200
Bequests	-	25	105,000	-	-	-	279,010	-	-	-	393,035
Total member support	21,451	278,005	222,446	-	2,500	-	477,893	-	-	-	1,002,303
Revenues:											
Change in value of trust agreements	744,646	137,063	78,563	6,760	23,508	-	178,267	-	-	(86,792)	1,072,025
Other	-	(78)	(1,211)	-	-	-	968	-	-	-	(531)
Transfers from other funds	-	-	5,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	(5,000)	-
Total revenues	744,646	136,985	82,342	6,760	23,508	-	179,225	-	-	(91,792)	1,071,894
Donor redesignation	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,000	-	-	-	7,000
Net assets released from restrictions	766,097	414,990	304,788	6,760	25,016	-	654,118	-	-	(101,792)	2,089,997
Change in Net Assets	20,663,493	7,660,313	6,423,314	919,148	757,864	25,032,887	15,456,124	-	-	(15,388,818)	61,594,445
Net Assets (deficit) - Beginning of year	21,429,590	9,065,303	6,720,102	925,928	794,000	25,032,887	16,120,242	-	-	(15,460,610)	63,075,442
Net Assets - End of year	\$ 21,429,590	\$ 9,065,303	\$ 6,720,102	\$ 925,928	\$ 794,000	\$ 25,032,887	\$ 16,120,242	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (15,460,610)	\$ 63,075,442

Board for World Missions

Floor Committee #11

Our calling

Christ's love has done what no human being could ever imagine. He came to this world and gave himself to guarantee our eternity at his side. This love fills our hearts and by God's powerful Spirit overflows to touch the lives of those around us. Christ has called us to keep reaching even further with his love. Our calling includes being witnesses to the multitudes on this planet who still do not know what our loving Savior has done. In response to our calling, the Board for World Missions is directed to carry out "... the responsibility of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ for the discipling of all people living outside the United States of America and Canada and those people who, because of cultural barriers, have not been made the responsibility of other agencies of WELS" (WELS Bylaws, Sec. 6.1). Into a world that desperately needs it, our missionaries and national church partners bring the light of God's Word. With this powerful tool deployed and in the hands of the Lord of the Church, our work is bearing much fruit.

Our current situation

World Missions is serving more than 80,000 people in the 23 fields where WELS is training and partnering to do mission work. This does not include the many people who are being served through correspondence and online courses in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East but who have not been fully organized into congregations or national churches. More than 50,000 households are receiving printed material or mailings or are connected online.

Worldwide the national churches have called just fewer than 400 national workers who serve the spiritual needs in around 700 places where people gather to hear God's Word. The expatriate missionary force numbers 41 full-time missionaries and 9 teachers. More than 60 layworkers from the United States are also presently serving in various fields.

The Board for World Missions has appointed seven administrative committees to facilitate this work around the globe. They are the

- Africa Administrative Committee, working with Cameroon, Malawi, Nigeria, and Zambia;
- Asia-Pacific Rim Committee, working with Indonesia, Japan, and Thailand;
- East Asia Administrative Committee, working among Chinese-speaking peoples;
- Europe Administrative Committee, working with Albania, Bulgaria, Russia, and Ukraine;
- Latin America Administrative Committee, working with Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Mexico;
- Native American Administrative Committee, working with the White Mountain and San Carlos Reservations; and
- South Asia Administrative Committee, working with India, Nepal, and Pakistan.

Information concerning independent sister churches who receive specialized help from WELS can be found in the report of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations (p. 23).

The five-man Board for World Missions consists of two pastors, one teacher, and two laymen who are elected by the synod in convention. The administrative committees consist of pastors, teachers, and laymen who volunteer to facilitate the work of the world fields assigned to them. The administrative committee members are appointed by the Board for World Missions and work on behalf of the board to administer the activities in their respective fields. Of course the heart of this work is carried out by our missionaries and the national leaders who are hard at work as Christ's ambassadors in many lands.

Every aspect of the work our mission teams carry out in so many ways and so many places is worthy of note. Summaries of this work can be found at www.wels.net/missions. What follows are some highlights to give an example of what the Lord is using us to do on your behalf.

A **coordinator for Pakistan and Nepal** has been called. Our missionary is exploring ways to obtain a visa to reside full time in Nepal. The Nepal government makes it very difficult for someone involved in Christian mission work to

reside there. A milk farm to train local leaders in a trade and hopefully provide some security with the authorities may make permanent residence more likely. In Pakistan it would be illegal and extremely dangerous. That means that much of this training work happens from afar and relies on local leaders to carry the work forward. More than 4,000 people are gathering in Nepal, and more than 50,000 are enrolled in correspondence courses in Pakistan. A television broadcast is being made in Pakistan and airs every week over a satellite that targets the Muslim far-eastern world. Local violence in Pakistan directed at Christians has yet to touch our group directly, but the danger is near and very real. The courageous faith of these new Christians is a humbling reminder of the power of our God.

A changing of the guard in the **world mission seminary professor** is taking place. Prof. Ken Cherney will remain on the faculty at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wis., but will leave his role as world mission seminary professor to newly called Prof. Bradley Wordell. This position provides the worker training programs in our fields direct contact with our experienced faculty in the United States. It facilitates visiting professors and keeps our task of world missions before the students' eyes.

The 1LA (**One Team for Latin America**) was formed, and the Latin American Traveling Theological Educators (LATTE) has been rolled into this group, which will focus on church planting. All the missionaries to Latin America are now part of this team and will be assigned to countries or tasks as needed. One member of the team will be located in the United States to visit Hispanic members of our WELS churches to help them reach back to their birth countries.

To help this work, online tools that can be downloaded all across Latin America have been developed. The *Academia Cristo* website began operating in March with a small Facebook advertising campaign. The site is designed to be a comprehensive tool that can provide materials to be printed, watched, or downloaded and also be a place for new disciples who are separated by great distances to bring questions and discussion about their faith. After the first three weeks of operation there were more than 400,000 views on Facebook. Three thousand had watched the whole *Come Follow Me* movie, and two hundred had signed up for further instruction on the website. A more robust advertising campaign is underway.

The **Lutheran Church of Central Africa** in Zambia and Malawi is advancing toward the goal of independence and true partnership with WELS. Our missionaries work at mentoring, teaching, and equipping leaders who will carry the gospel to the next generations. Flooding earlier this year directly affected thousands of members in Malawi. The response of love and support from their brothers and sisters in WELS during this difficult time was a welcome breeze of comfort in very trying times.

Joint planning meetings are taking place with all our Africa mission team to investigate how to use resources on this continent to strengthen current work and further the work in **Cameroon and Nigeria**. Each of these countries has a missionary who assists the national churches to train leaders and explore opportunities. Full missionary teams are not yet possible in these places, but the needs in these areas are great. The threat from Boko Haram, which is active on both sides of this border, is removed from our areas of work, but it is a reminder that our ability to work in these countries can ebb and flow based on the relative security these governments can provide.

New missionaries have been added to the team to work in **East Asia**. Asia Lutheran Seminary, operating in Hong Kong; missionaries on the ground to the north; and volunteer friends from the United States form a team that is sharing the Good News and training leaders to reach the multitudes in this area of the globe. A strategic planning session with this team took place in February, and the work continues to grow quickly. We need to be careful about sharing too much detail here, but this work is advancing in ways that would have been unexpected even five years ago. Keep an eye out for missionaries and volunteers involved in this work who may be speaking at congregations near you. This is a story you need to hear.

Our partnership with the **Ukrainian Lutheran Church** continues to grow. The war in the east of Ukraine has made life more difficult all across the country. Our sister church provides a harbor in the storm with the sweet news about Jesus. Support for refugees fleeing the east is a welcome opportunity to share the truth about Jesus. As the Lord allows stability to hold, we continue to work with this church to stand more and more independently as a gospel light shining among souls who are hurting.

The work of **Multi-Language Publications** continues to evolve. Work that still includes the production of books has progressed to embrace the digital age. The use of tablets and cell phones is growing by leaps and bounds in even some of the poorest countries of the world. Digital media that catches the eye, works well on mobile devices, while still providing ways to connect to more in-depth teaching, are being produced. After many years of faithful service,

Pastor Paul Hartman is retiring as the coordinator of Multi-Language Publications. The new coordinator will reside in Wisconsin and work out of the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry as this work continues to grow and be connected to the many resources God has provided in the schools, churches, and membership of WELS.

A look ahead

The number of people on this planet who need to hear about the love of the Savior God who came into this world to save them is not shrinking. More than six billion people need what we already have. Without the gospel message they will be lost for eternity.

World Missions appears to be able to continue to support the current mission work into the next biennium. A steady goal of our mission work is to help our sister churches stand in partnership with WELS and grow out of the need for deep subsidy. The training of pastors and lay leaders will continue to be a priority of our work as such leaders will be needed for a young confessional Lutheran church to weather the storm that the devil will try to throw their way.

The Board for World Missions also serves as the world mission exploration arm of WELS. The board is very excited about the work of the **Global Ministry Committee** under the direction of the Joint Mission Council. The Global Ministry Committee is working to connect people groups across the WELS world. Immigrants in stateside WELS churches can connect with people from their home countries to explore potential for reaching even further with the gospel treasure in our hands. There are two great examples of the potential of this kind of work:

- Hmong immigrants to the United States have been working together for years to reach their families in America. Some of the leaders in the Hmong community have also been called to go back to Thailand and are establishing more and more congregations in the villages there. In addition there are Hmong families in this people group who reside in Laos, Vietnam, and Western China. Hmong leaders are looking at how to stretch resources to take the gospel to more than two million Hmong who stretch across these borders.
- South Sudanese immigrants have also had similar desires to reach back home. The political situation in South Sudan has forced many Sudanese to reside in refugee camps in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda. Through the efforts of South Sudanese members of WELS congregations in the United States, contact has been made with Christian leaders known by our WELS members, who are ready to be trained to carry the gospel to more than 600,000 refugees who still reside in these camps.

We pray that these examples can be multiplied as the Global Ministry Committee continues to connect people who have a heart for reaching out with the gospel they have found in our WELS churches.

These exploration efforts have also led to contacts being nurtured in Mozambique, the Philippines, Turks and Caicos, Korea, and the possibility of connecting Lutheran brothers in Portugal to the work of our sister churches in Brazil. The opportunities before us continue to grow, and we thank the Lord for the privilege of being his ambassadors.

The Board for World Missions will continue to enhance its efforts to tell the story of our mission work together to the members of WELS. Stories shared on www.wels.net/missions, *Forward in Christ* magazine, *WELS Connection*, printed handouts, and other means will be produced.

Your World Missions team treasures the ongoing support of the members of WELS. Your prayers, attention, and gifts allow us to carry out the witnessing work the Lord has given to us all. May the Lord bless our work together as we hear his calling and take the treasure of Christ's love to share it with a world that will be lost without it.

Rev. Larry M. Schlomer, reporter

Rev. Howard Mohlke, chairman

Dr. Robert Anderson, secretary

Rev. Glen Hieb

Mr. Mark Schulz

Mr. Danny Wehmeyer

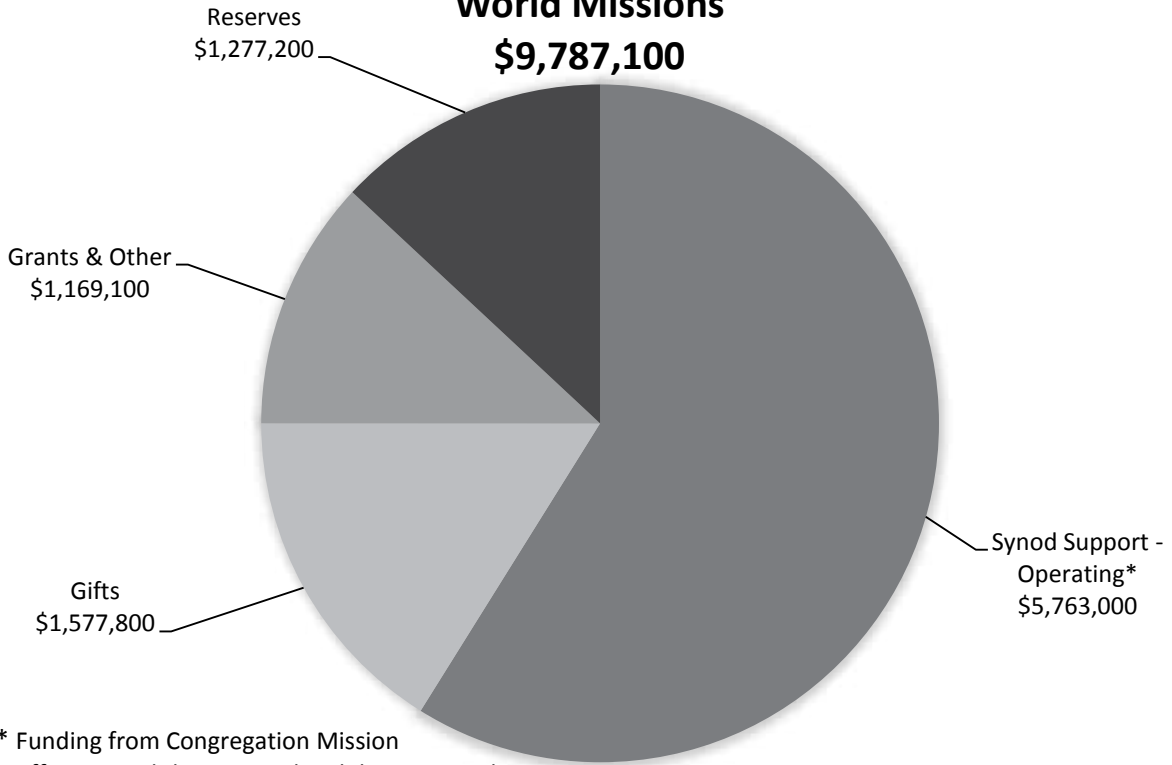
Advisory:

Rev. Larry M. Schlomer, administrator of WELS Board for World Missions

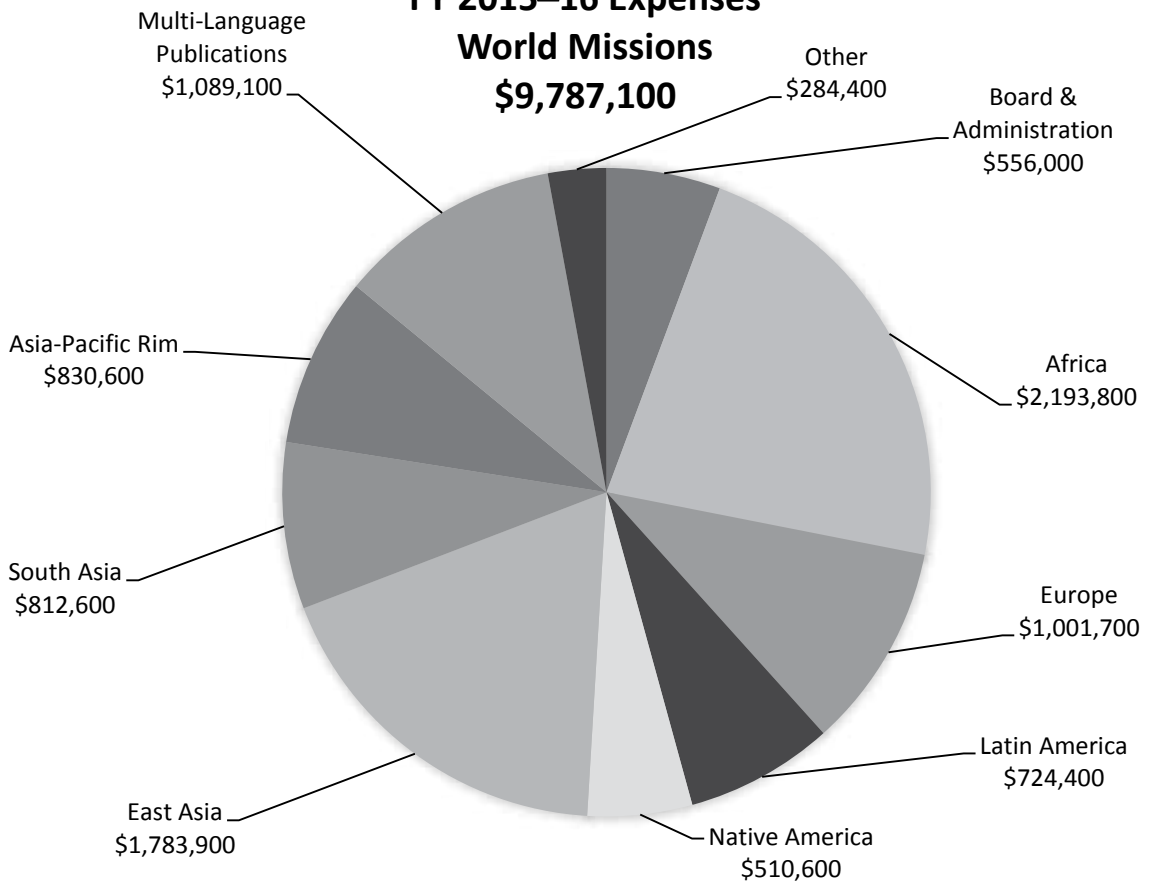
Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president

Mr. Sean Young, director of WELS Missions Operations

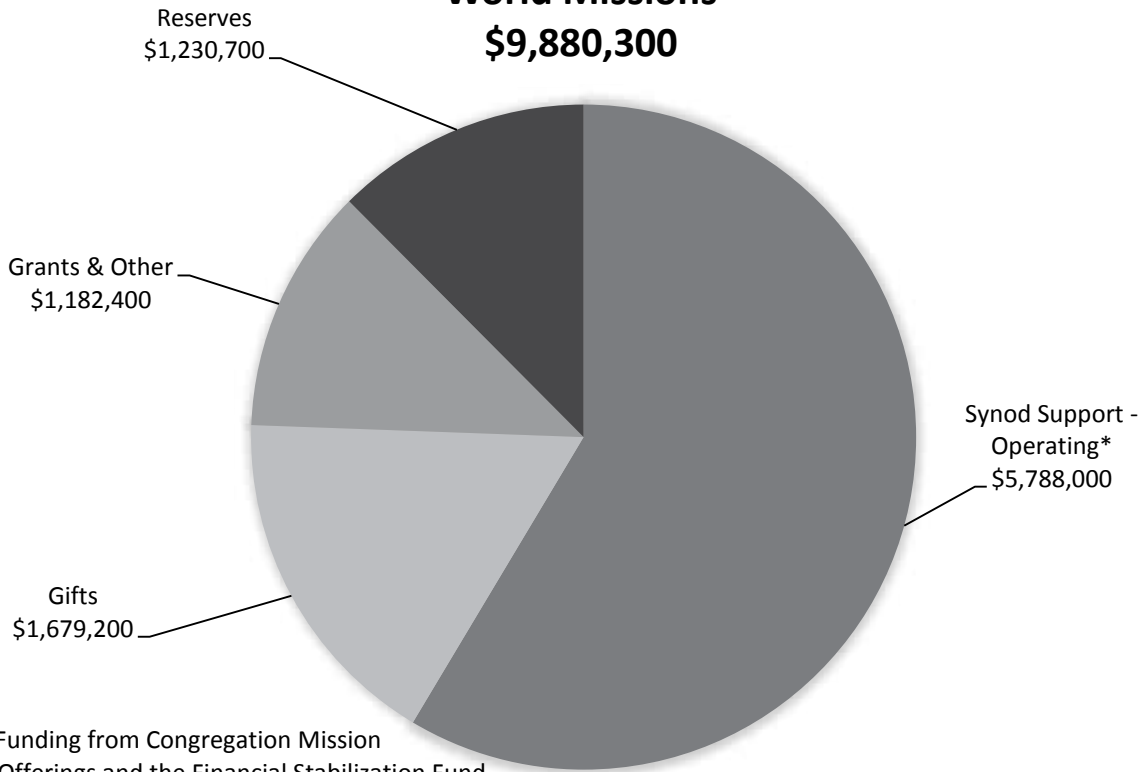
**FY 2015–16 Support
World Missions
\$9,787,100**



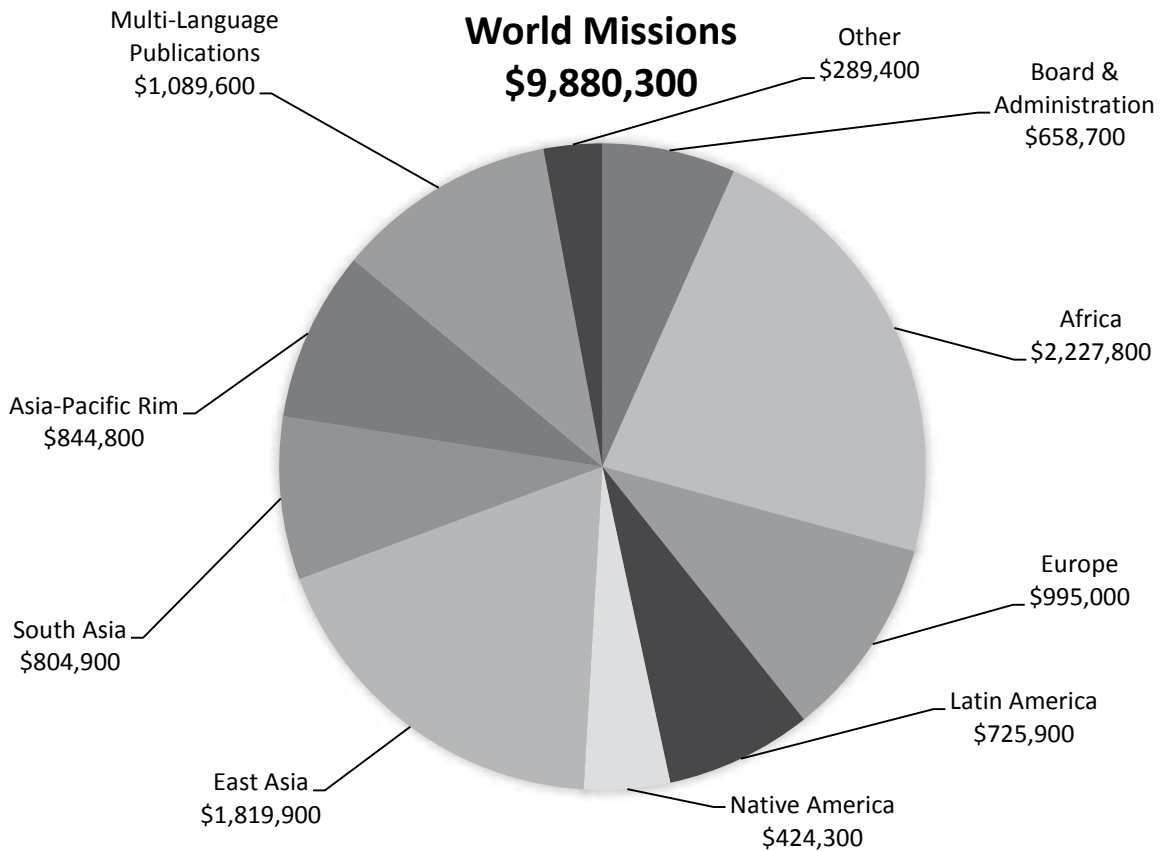
**FY 2015–16 Expenses
World Missions
\$9,787,100**



**FY 2016–17 Support
World Missions
\$9,880,300**



**FY 2016–17 Expenses
World Missions
\$9,880,300**



Joint Mission Council

Floor Committees #11 and #12

Our calling

The Joint Mission Council (JMC) oversees those mission opportunities that are the operational responsibility of both the Boards for World and Home Missions. The members of the council are the elected chairmen and administrators of both boards, the director of Missions Operations, and a representative designated by each board.

The present focus of the Joint Mission Council is to

- coordinate the future expansion of multi-cultural ministries to enhance the reaching of more lost souls both in North America and the homelands of those being served,
- continue to work on developing a structure that will best facilitate the mission outreach of these areas of ministry,
- coordinate the actions of World Missions and Home Missions in situations where normal ministry responsibilities of both boards overlap, and
- provide resolution of conflicts between the two boards as a result of overlapping ministries.

Our current situation

A 2010 U.S. Census Bureau report shows that 40 million foreign born people currently reside in the United States. The percentage of the U.S. population that is foreign born is near the all-time highs that our country has ever seen. The Census Bureau estimates that 85 percent of this population speaks a language other than English at home. The percentages and statistics can wax and wane over the years, but no matter how you look at it, 40 million people is a huge mission field. When you add this to the number of second and third generations of families with foreign ties, the flavor of these cultures among us gets even more complex.

The challenge, need, and opportunity that these numbers demonstrate to us are huge.

As such, Pastor Paul Prange was called to serve as the coordinator of global cross-cultural outreach. This new position, under the synod's Joint Mission Council, is currently responsible for exploring ways to coordinate people working in the same ethnic groups both stateside and in international settings.

Prange made the recommendation to create a sub-committee of the JMC to review the multiple opportunities for collaboration within the same ethnic groups here in the United States as well as to connect stateside ministries to new opportunities in international settings. A Global Ministry Committee (GMC) was assembled and has identified more than 30 opportunities for immigrants who are already members of WELS congregations to take the gospel back to their countries of origin. That new committee has identified resources in our fellowship to help with that effort and is connecting the people with the resources. That committee has also identified ways to help WELS congregations reach out to immigrant groups in their own communities with an eye toward the overseas connections that come with those opportunities.

This effort is a top priority for the JMC as it works with both the Home and World Mission Boards, as the opportunity is tremendous. Hmong, Spanish, Chinese, Sudanese, and Korean ministries are current examples in our fellowship of the impact reaching into an immigrant community can have not only on our synod here at home but reaching around the globe to where families and relatives of these new WELS members reside.

While the newly formed GMC works on making those connections, the Joint Mission Council continues to focus on the various cross-cultural ministries it has traditionally supported.

Hmong ministries

In the United States there are nine Hmong congregations. Most of these ministries receive support from district mission boards as well as the Hmong Asian Committee (HAC). The HAC assists district mission boards in their service to Hmong pastors. Ministry that took place over the past biennium includes:

- The Hmong National Conference was hosted by Trinity Hmong, Manitowoc, Wis., from July 11-13, 2014. More than 150 Hmong were able to attend, including four Hmong pastors from Thailand.
- A Hmong Asian Conference was held at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., on Nov. 12 and 13, 2014. Hmong, Korean and Vietnamese ministries were represented.
- With a special grant from the Church Extension Fund, Grace Hmong in Kansas City has purchased a church. This is the first Hmong ministry with its own worship facility.

Certainly the Hmong members in the churches in the United States do reach back to family and friends in Thailand as well as to other countries. As the gospel has touched their hearts and the Spirit has led them to believe in Christ Jesus as their Savior, their desire is for more Hmong, both in America and throughout the world to hear this precious message.

Cristo Palabra de Vida

The Cristo Palabra de Vida National Council continues to help congregations plan, develop, and implement outreach plans to reach the Hispanic population in their immediate vicinity as well as work with the congregations already doing work among Hispanics. Cristo Palabra de Vida works with all the congregations in WELS. By the grace of God, 19 congregations hold worship services in Spanish while an additional 91 are working among Hispanics and welcoming them into their English services.

Cristo Palabra de Vida also continues to promote and direct lay leadership training. By developing the Bible Institute for Leadership Training, local pastors can teach a variety of materials that will lead members to assist their pastors as teachers, evangelists, and elders. Right now, Cristo Palabra de Vida is blessed to have more than 35 Hispanics who are participating at their local congregation in these Bible institute courses.

Another area of Cristo Palabra de Vida's work is facilitating a biennial Hispanic Pastor's Conference by searching for a location, securing a grant to help cover the costs, setting the agenda, directing the worship leaders, and leading the conference. Cristo Palabra de Vida is always looking at ways in which the work done north of the border with Mexico could better be coordinated with the work done south of the border with Mexico.

Cristo Palabra de Vida has as another of its tasks the coordination of the instruction of men who move from the Bible institute program into the Pastoral Studies Institute, operated by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. At this time, there are no students enrolled in this program. Cristo Palabra de Vida is also looking at new, innovative, and personal ways to mentor men currently involved with Hispanic outreach, especially those men who are working in areas that are far removed from other Hispanic work.

As the demographics show us, the Hispanic population in the United States continues to grow, and by the grace of God, is it growing around many of our established congregations. Cristo Palabra de Vida desires to help those established congregations reach out with the clear gospel. To this end, Cristo Palabra de Vida members attend at least three district conventions during the even years (2014, 2016, etc.).

Muslim outreach

After reviewing this program over the last few years, the JMC is preparing to take the ministry in a new direction. The council determined it would be better stewardship of resources to focus assistance in Muslim outreach at the congregational level in areas with Muslim populations around them and to new congregations that may be started in the future in areas with high density Muslim populations. A promising area of growth lies within New York City. In addition, funding will be directed toward World Missions' efforts in countries with Muslim populations such as Nepal and Pakistan.

With this change, the position of Muslim outreach coordinator, held by Pastor Pieter Reid, will end on June 30, 2015. The Outreach to Muslims Committee will continue to function to assist in efforts, utilizing the expertise of Reid when possible.

The Joint Mission Council wishes to thank Reid for the 22 years of ministry to Muslims in Indonesia as well as in the United States. He and his wife, Marlys, certainly have raised our church body's awareness about reaching out to Muslims.

Sudanese outreach

Life has not been easy for refugees from South Sudan. Even so, the Lord continues to bless the outreach opportunities throughout the United States and Canada to reach more and more Sudanese refugees with the gospel. This work has

spread from Good Shepherd, Omaha, Neb., to many other WELS congregations in North America. Just one example is Seattle, Wash., where there is a core group of six families working to reach out to more than 300 other Sudanese families in the South Sound area.

Since this opportunity is growing by leaps and bounds, a coordinator of South Sudanese ministry position will be created to work with the PSI program and appropriate district mission boards to coordinate the training of South Sudanese evangelists and pastors in North America. The goal is that at the end of two years there will be South Sudanese men in training in 20 locations in North America. The coordinator will also work with the Board for World Missions and the Africa Administrative Committee in coordinating the training of Sudanese pastors and evangelists for South Sudanese refugees in Africa. At the end of two years there will be South Sudanese men in training in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda to reach out to the more than 600,000 refugees that have fled fighting in their home country.

With the lack of materials in the Nuer language, more outreach and training materials will be needed as well. The Christian Worship liturgy has been translated and will be reviewed for the Sudanese who attend regular services at our congregations. *The Promise* booklet has been translated and will be published by Multi-Language Publications so that an easy tool is available to put in the hands of those who need to know the Savior. Multi-Language Publications stands ready to assist in translating additional materials as needed, especially materials that will facilitate ongoing teaching and sharing of the gospel within this tight knit people group.

Although opportunities exist in the country of South Sudan, the ongoing fighting and brutality are interfering with possible mission trips into this area.

In conclusion

The Lord continues to bless the work of the Joint Mission Council and our mission boards as they continue to share the gospel message. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will provide us with the resources to meet these opportunities.

Mr. Sean Young, reporter

Dr. Robert Anderson, member of WELS Board for World Missions
Rev. Keith Free, administrator of WELS Board for Home Missions
Mr. John Isleb, representative of WELS Board for Home Missions
Rev. Howard Mohlke, chairman of WELS Board for World Missions
Rev. Larry M. Schlomer, administrator of WELS Board for World Missions
Rev. Charles Westra, chairman of WELS Board for Home Missions
Mr. Sean Young, director of WELS Missions Operations

Board for Home Missions

Floor Committee #12

Our calling

There are many ways for us to proclaim what Christ has done. An individual may build a relationship with a co-worker and in that context share Christ. A church may send out a mailing to its neighborhood with the gospel message being offered in print. Teens may take a mission trip to another state or country to work with a mission with the intent of proclaiming Christ. Yes, there are many ways and many opportunities for God's people to take his saving message to others.

Within our church body, a way we work together in proclaiming Christ is by planting mission churches. At its core, a mission church has as its purpose to let many people know about the Savior Christ. Outreach plans will be established. Calling nights will be set up. Special events will be planned where the clear message of salvation can be offered. Members will be trained and encouraged to witness as well as to invite their unchurched acquaintances to hear more about Jesus.

In our church body, Home Missions has been directed to work at planting missions. Using a portion of the synod's Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) along with special gifts to Home Missions, the Board for Home Missions authorizes new missions. Almost 70 percent of the current Home Missions budget is being used in mission plant locations. Through these missions we look to reach more people with the gospel. And as the Spirit works faith and connects people to Christ in these missions, we then work to continue to bring these saved souls the message of Scripture so they can grow as disciples of Jesus Christ as well as join us in being proclaimers of Christ Jesus.

Our current situation

Since 1960 almost 600 missions have been authorized. Since 2010, 23 of those missions have been authorized. In most of those 23 locations, prior to a mission church being planted, preliminary work was done. Preliminary work might mean that a pastor was offering his services to a small group who were looking to start another church. That "core group" saw a need in their location to reach out with the gospel and started a mission prior to receiving Home Missions financial support. In other locations a church saw a growing area in its city. That growing area had three, five, or ten active families from its church. Those families were approached to see if they would like to be a part of a new mission effort. For those who responded "yes," they became a part of the core group. Through these avenues and others, preliminary work for a mission church is cultivated.

The reason for sharing this is to ask our congregations to keep their eyes open for such opportunities. While district mission boards (DMBs) and mission counselors look for locations that could be the next site for a mission, when DMBs and mission counselors can work with congregations that have already started to do some cultivation of a field, that often proves to be very beneficial. Thanks for keeping your eyes open for these opportunities.

Understanding that district mission board members are volunteers, Home Missions offers annual training sessions for them. The past three years the focus of the training sessions has been on the implementation of Home Missions' Strategic Ministry Plan. At the 2015 training, discussion centered on missions working to be self-supporting after eight years of financial support. Everyone realizes that the sooner a new mission is able to reduce its subsidy, Home Missions has more funds to start the next mission.

In addition to the annual training sessions, every two years a two-day training session is offered for newly elected DMB members as well as any current DMB members. Having an orientation training session for these new men helps them to acclimate into district mission board ministry as well as gives them the overall picture as to how a DMB fits into Home Missions.

While some might wonder if it is necessary to give DMB members this much ink, without their volunteer service, as a church body we would be hard pressed to do what we have been doing for so many years. And so I offer thanks to the members of the 14 district mission boards as they serve over and above their active lives and full-time vocations or full-time ministries.

Working closely with DMBs as well as with mission pastors and mission congregations are three mission counselors—Pastors Mark Birkholz, Peter Kruschel, and Ed Schuppe. These men each serve and work with several DMBs. In addition to serving DMBs and missions, they keep abreast of mission trends in North America and help keep Home Missions informed as to what might serve our church body.

New missions

In FY 2014–15, five missions were authorized. Here is a brief overview of those new missions:

- **Goodyear, Ariz.:** Located on the southwest side of Phoenix, Goodyear has an active core group that has been served part time by a pastor from 30 miles away. With synod subsidy, the congregation was able to call Pastor Lincoln Albrecht. He accepted the call to serve River of Life, Goodyear, Ariz., and began serving during summer 2014.
- **Watertown, N.Y.:** Located 90 miles north of Syracuse, Watertown has been served by Pastor Jeremiah Gumm (also serving Liverpool, N.Y.) two times a month for the past seven years. At the end of May, Pastor Aaron Goetzinger was assigned to serve this mission. He was installed in July 2014.
- **Maryville, Tenn.:** Looking forward, Maryville (30 miles south of Knoxville) plans to build an early childhood center to further its outreach. Pastor David Panitzke, who currently serves in Knoxville, will serve both sites for two to three years. As the Maryville site moves forward, the goal is to call a full-time pastor for the Maryville ministry as the core group grows.
- **Fulshear, Texas:** Located on the southwest side of Houston, members from nearby Katy, Texas, have gathered to form the core of this mission that lies within a fast-growing community. In addition to the support that members from Katy offer, WELS members from around Houston are lending a hand to get Fulshear on its feet. At the end of May 2014, Pastor Ben Reichel was assigned to serve the mission. He was ordained and installed in August 2014.
- **Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada:** This active core group has been served by a pastor from Red Deer, Alberta, Canada, on a monthly basis for the past few years. Home Missions, the Joint Mission Council, and WELS–Canada are all contributing to the financial support of this mission. Plans for this site include using a full-time pastor, a staff minister for Chinese ministry, and a 2012 Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduate who is pursuing a doctorate in linguistics who is studying in the area. Developing relationships will be the key thrust of this mission. Pastor Geoff Cortright accepted the call to serve as pastor. Teacher Ashley Mozak accepted the staff ministry call to serve in the Chinese ministry. Cortright and Mozak were installed in September 2014.

Mission strategies

When district mission boards look to start the next mission, there are various models to consider. At the fall Board for Home Missions meeting in September 2014, a presentation was given about urban missions, also called global city missions. How we can start and the importance of starting missions in the larger cities of our country were main points of the presentation. Research is showing that in a number of areas the suburban spread is slowing, and more people are moving back into cities.

On Feb. 9 and 10, 2015, a multi-site conference was held. We understand that there are 20 ministries in our church body doing multi-site ministry. That means there is one church but at least one second location where ministry is done. Usually worship is taking place at both sites. That second location may be a second church or a rented facility. While there are at least two sites, there is just one leadership team. At the Feb. 2015 conference, those present shared a constant theme as to why they went to multi-site ministry—they saw this as the best way to reach more souls with the gospel of Jesus Christ. While urban missions or multi-site missions won't work in every setting, Home Missions is being flexible as to the ways new mission churches are being planted.

Cross-cultural ministry

Around 28 percent of the Home Missions budget for FY 2014–15 supports cross-cultural ministry or ministries whose membership includes a number of cultures. Each Sunday 17 locations offer Hispanic worship; 1,600 to 1,700 attend weekly worship. Along with a number of bilingual Anglo pastors serving in Hispanic ministry, our church body has four Hispanic pastors. In Hmong ministry all nine congregations are served by Hmong pastors. In each culture new opportunities for outreach ministry are being explored. For example, with the last three Hispanic ministries, rather than starting a totally new mission with a Hispanic-speaking man (cost could be at least \$100,000 or higher per year for a number of years), Home Missions has been following a ministry plan that has a bilingual Anglo or a Hispanic pastor becoming the second pastor at an established church. Home Missions will provide financial support for three to four years at \$60,000 to \$70,000 per year. During that time frame the ministry has the opportunity to evaluate if the congregation will be a bilingual ministry or remain an Anglo ministry. During this time the congregation can also

evaluate if it is able to support two pastors once subsidy would end. This ministry plan allows us as a church body to reach into a Hispanic community in a more prudent economic fashion.

Home Missions offers ongoing training for those serving in cultural ministries. On an annual basis the Hmong Asian Conference has been held at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. While our Asian pastors have received thorough training through the Pastoral Studies Institute program established and supported by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, most did not grow up in a ministry environment. Continued training and instruction are valuable. Every two years those involved in Hispanic ministry come together. The first ever Sudanese Conference was held in February 2014 at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Spiritual leaders in the Sudanese congregations along with their Anglo pastor counterparts enjoyed the opportunity to meet and dream about ministry to the Sudanese in North America as well as in Africa. And on June 18 and 19, 2015, at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, a first ever WELS Global Ministry Committee Tool Kit Conference will be held. A number of the cultures doing ministry in North America will come to discuss best practices in their culture as well as to learn from each other.

Assisting Home Missions in cultural ministry are two men—Pastor Tim Flunker, the national Hispanic consultant; and Pastor Pieter Reid, the national Muslim consultant.

Joint Mission Council

Since Home Missions is working with a number of cultures in mission outreach throughout North America through the Joint Mission Council (JMC), Home Missions and World Missions have been discussing how to tie this outreach ministry with outreach ministry throughout the world. Please read the Joint Mission Council report on p. 119 for an update on that discussion and ministry direction.

Church Extension Fund

A vital partner to Home Missions is WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF). CEF is a lending institution that makes loans to mission and mission-minded congregations. While most missions would not qualify for a loan from a bank to purchase land or build a worship facility, working with Home Missions, CEF makes such loans. Since 1993 CEF has offered grants to eligible mission congregations. At this time, missions that meet certain criteria receive a four to one grant on the purchase of land if they raise 10 percent of the cost of land. And if the mission meets certain criteria regarding building a worship facility, it will receive a two to one grant if the mission raises 10 percent of the facility cost. The grant program started in 1993. Since that time CEF has made more than \$26 million in grants to missions in North America.

Since late fall 2014, CEF has been considering offering Home Missions additional financial support. At the 2013 synod convention, the WELS Bylaws were changed so that the CEF Board of Directors could allocate funds to Home Missions for operational costs (new missions) if that was financially feasible for CEF. At its Feb. 22 and 23, 2015, CEF Board of Directors meeting, the CEF board approved an unrestricted net asset policy. Operating like a quasi endowment fund, for FY2016 and FY2017 Home Missions will be receiving at least \$700,000 each year. Home Missions is extremely thankful for this step. By taking this step, Home Missions is looking to authorize two more missions over and above what they had been planning to do in spring 2015.

Partners with Home Missions

It truly is amazing to see all the partners assisting Home Missions. We are thankful for the active support of missions through the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society. From their Befriend a Missionary program to their spring and fall rallies to the National Lutheran Women's Missionary Society Convention, Home and World Missions receive so much support. In 2015 the national convention takes place in Rapid City, S.D., from June 25–June 28.

Kingdom Workers continues to provide volunteers to missions in reaching out with the gospel. In addition, Builders for Christ is well received for its expertise in assisting with the construction of worship facilities.

Christian Aid and Relief offers assistance to missions throughout the world in humanitarian ways and some home missions have benefited.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary helps support the Vicar in Missions program; the Summer Student Assistant program; and the training, instruction, and continued education of men from various cultures serving in missions and mission settings throughout North America.

All these partners offer valuable service.

Campus ministry

Due to the outreach opportunities on college campuses, Campus Ministry is under the Home Missions umbrella. Not only do campus ministries reach out to WELS students, many also have outreach programs to reach out to those who don't believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin.

At its November 2014 meeting, the Campus Ministry Committee determined to take some active steps to encourage more congregations to consider campus ministry or to assist congregations doing campus ministry. The committee asked Home Missions administrator, Pastor Keith Free, to make some initial visits to congregations to help those congregations consider campus ministry or to ask how their campus ministry might take the next step. Another way the Campus Ministry Committee is taking an active step to encourage campus ministry is by offering financial support for at least two fiscal years to Divine Word, Plover, Wis. In its ministry plan, Divine Word is calling a second pastor to do additional campus ministry at UW-Stevens Point as well as to look at starting a church in Stevens Point. A third way the Campus Ministry Committee is encouraging campus ministry is by hosting a Campus Ministry Conference in Waukesha, Wis., on May 18 and 19, 2015. And an annual way in which the committee encourages more activity in campus ministry is by requesting the names and school information for those going to college from all congregations. Check to see if your congregation annually sends in this list to Campus Ministry.

The weekend of Oct. 17-19, 2014, Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel in Madison, Wis., celebrated 50 years of campus ministry at UW-Madison. This campus ministry reaches hundreds of souls each week. Worship on Sundays and Wednesday Vespers averages close to 350. In its 50-year history there have been many blessings. One of those blessings was the "new" chapel, which was dedicated in February 2006. We pray the Lord continue to bless this and all our campus ministries.

For eight years, Pastor Ken Brokmeier has served as chairman of the Campus Ministry Committee. His term is coming to an end. We thank him for his faithful service and his steady leadership. Pastor Charlie Vannieuwenhoven, Campus Ministry Committee member for many years, will be the next chairman. We ask the Lord's blessings on his service.

A look ahead

At the beginning of this report, the work of district mission boards and mission counselors to help open mission churches was highlighted. Encouragement was also offered for individual churches to consider how they might assist in helping Home Missions open missions. Truly the majority of missions didn't just pop up as our church body sent a pastor to "start a mission." Lots of work goes into cultivating a field as a potential mission field. As a church body, it is a huge blessing when Home Missions through district mission boards and mission counselors can partner with active congregations looking to have a hand in starting the next mission. While Home Missions will continue to work at being good stewards of the resources it has to start and support missions and while Home Missions will continue to be flexible and adaptable in how a mission is started, as we work toward the goal of opening eight to ten missions a year, the active partnership of mission minded churches will be a key component.

Thank you for considering if your church might be one of those active partners. Thank you for your prayers that the Lord move more churches to consider mission partnership opportunities with Home Missions. And thank you for asking the Lord of the harvest to bless the proclamation of the gospel taking place through mission members and mission pastors. There are many ways to reach lost souls with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Planting missions is truly one of those ways.

Rev. Keith Free, reporter

Rev. Charles Westra, chairman

Mr. John Beeskow, Michigan Mission District

Mr. Bruce Burger, Nebraska Mission District

Rev. John Dorn, Northern Wisconsin Mission District

Mr. Dwayne Coryell, North Atlantic Mission District

Mr. John Deschane, Northern Wisconsin Mission District

Dr. Keith Eldred, Colorado Mission District

Rev. Mark Gabb, South Atlantic Mission District

Dr. August Gabert, Pacific Northwest Mission District

Rev. Jeremy Glowicki, Minnesota Mission District

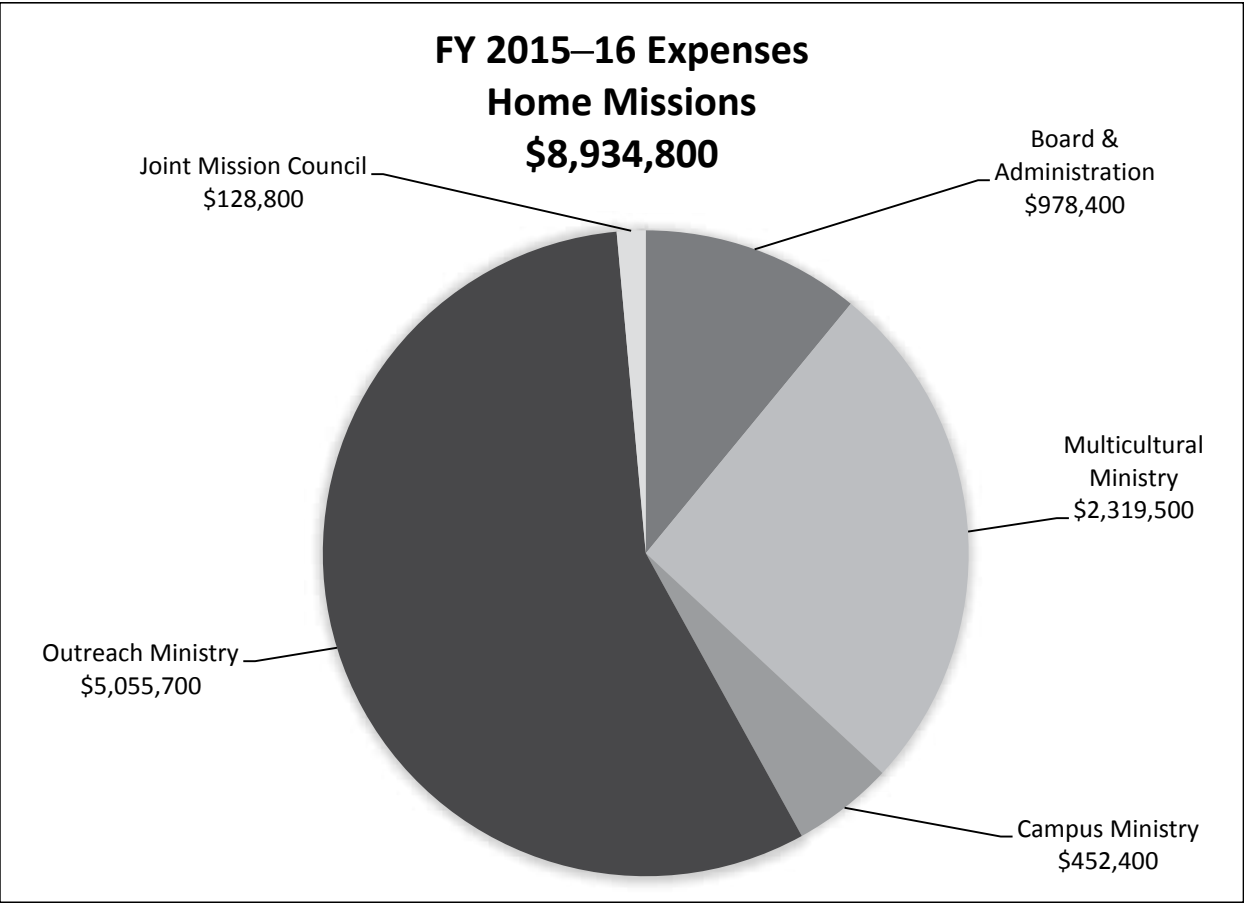
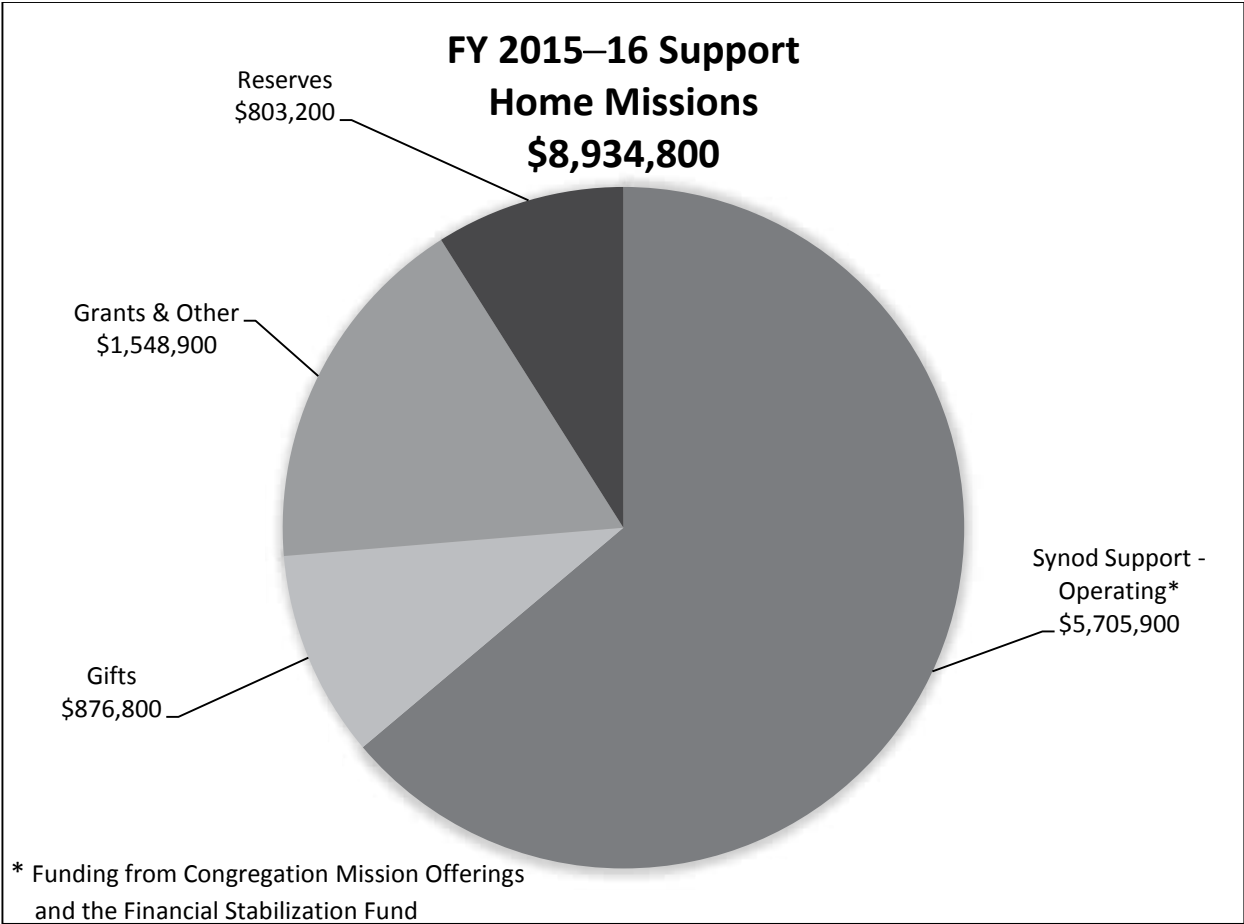
Rev. Harland Goetzinger, WELS-Canada Mission District

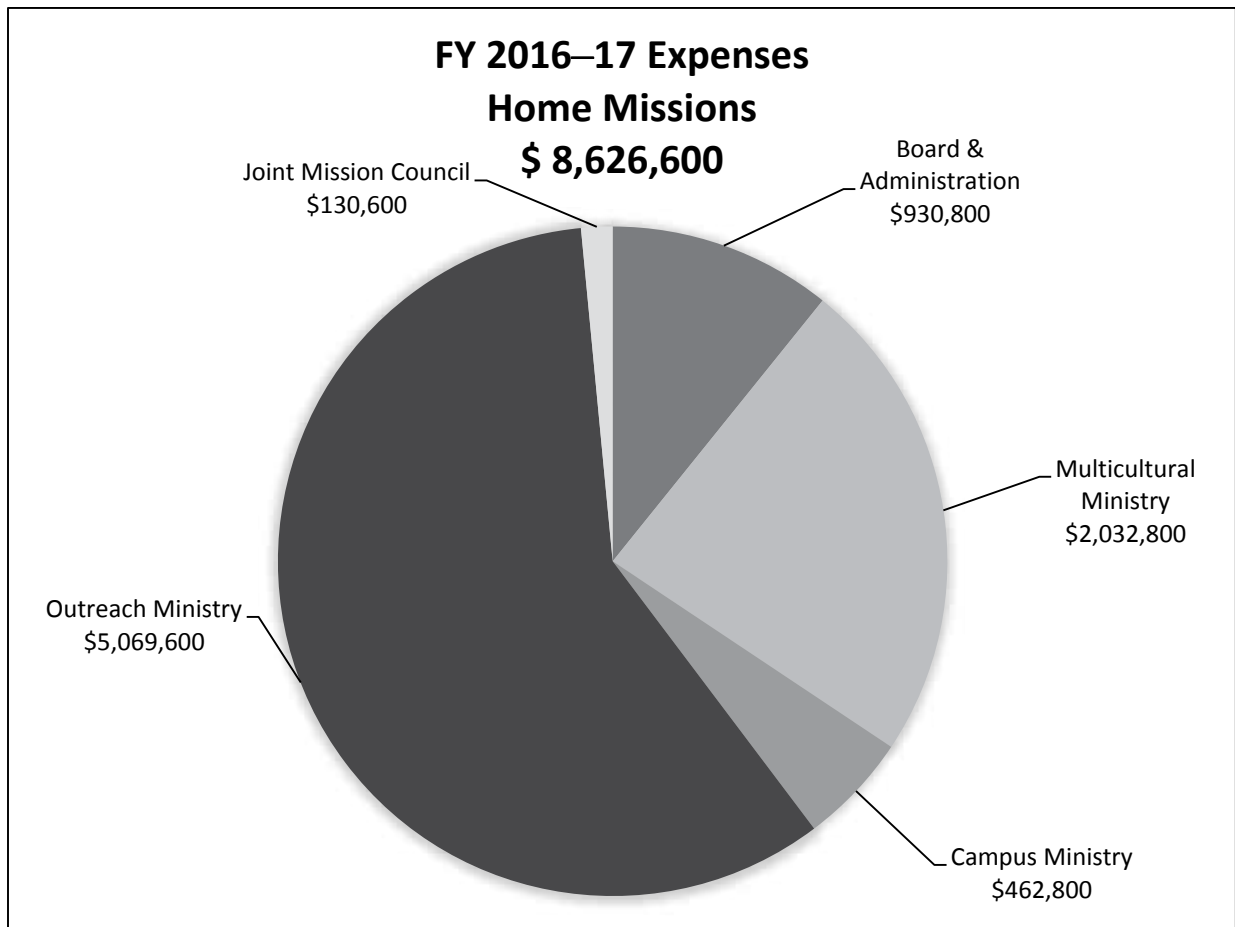
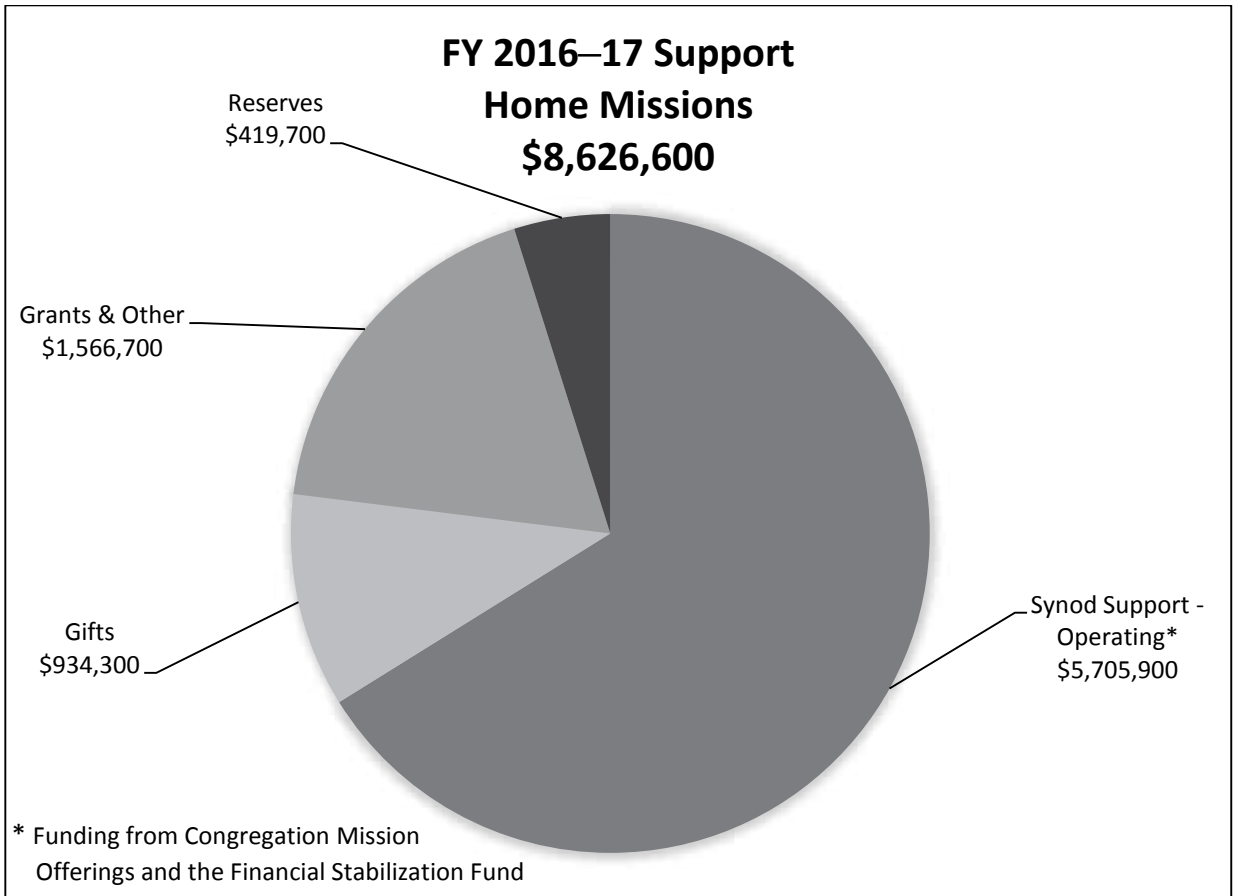
Mr. Thomas Hansen, Dakota-Montana Mission District

Mr. Mark Hartman, South Central Mission District
Rev. Stephen Helwig, Nebraska Mission District
Mr. Steven Kalscheuer, Western Wisconsin Mission District
Rev. Robert Krueger, Michigan Mission District
Mr. Noel Ledermann, Arizona-California Mission District
Mr. Jude Peck, South Atlantic Mission District
Mr. David Sauer, Minnesota Mission District
Rev. Caleb Schoeneck, South Central Mission District
Rev. Nathan Strutz, Western Wisconsin Mission District
Rev. Wayne Uhlhorn, Colorado Mission District
Rev. Matthew Vogt, Arizona-California Mission District
Rev. Mark Wagner, Southeastern Wisconsin Mission District
Rev. Craig Wasser, Pacific Northwest Mission District
Rev. Kevin Wattle, North Atlantic Mission District
Mr. Byron Weihmann, WELS-Canada Mission District
Rev. Jonathan Werre, Dakota-Montana Mission District
Mr. Steven Wolf, Southeastern Wisconsin Mission District

Advisory:

Rev. Keith Free, administrator of WELS Board for Home Missions
Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president
Mr. Sean Young, director of WELS Missions Operations





Board for Ministerial Education

Floor Committee #13

Our calling

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Timothy 2:2).

The continuing scriptural purpose of our ministerial education schools is the preparation of candidates for the public ministry of the gospel to proclaim Christ’s love in the congregations, schools, and mission fields of our fellowship. The schools also include in their purpose the continuing education of those who already serve in the ministry of the gospel. A special emphasis of the last biennium has been to identify and strengthen the partnerships with all of the areas and groups in our church body. Our report gives you an overview of the efforts to facilitate the coordination of that work. The reports from the four ministerial education schools demonstrate how they are carrying out their mission on your behalf.

Our current situation

The Board for Ministerial Education (BME) distributes subsidy to the ministerial education schools from a block grant supplied by the Synodical Council. The model has resulted in stable reserves and normal annual tuition increases for Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Martin Luther College. The model gives more emphasis in 2015–17 to the prep schools building up stable reserves as well.

The BME has a working group on financial assistance with the goal that no student is denied the ability to train for the ministry of the gospel for financial reasons. The ministerial education schools are developing their partnership with the Ministry of Christian Giving to be sure that financial assistance programs are adequately supported. The largest project continues to be reducing the educational debt of Martin Luther College graduates.

The BME has a working group on programmed maintenance to address capital needs on our campuses. This working group will be re-evaluating the effectiveness of the formula it uses for the allocation of programmed maintenance funding to individual schools. Capital campaigns at the schools are conducted in coordination with the Ministry of Christian Giving, reviewed and adopted as a regular part of the synod budget process. The 2013 synod convention created a Capital Projects Committee to work on both the maintenance and facilities needs of the synod. The work of the committee will be an integral component of the next synodical long-range plan, scheduled to be adopted in 2017. See the separate report of the Capital Projects Committee on p. 88.

With the blessing and encouragement of Home and World Missions administrations, the ministerial education schools are establishing increasingly close partnerships with the world mission fields in our fellowship in order to help in the development of their individual ministerial education programs.

Over the last biennium, the ministerial education schools have put considerable effort into partnerships with the Conference of Presidents and the Congregation and Ministry Support Group, especially the Commission on Lutheran Schools, to expand current efforts in continuing education of called workers. See the separate report of the Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee on p. 13.

A look ahead

We give thanks that the Lord of the Church continues to supply our synod with young men and women who are willing to serve anywhere that the Church needs them, who believe that the Bible is the infallible Word of God, who treasure the precious Lutheran heritage of the unconditional gospel that has been passed to our generation with remarkable clarity, and who present themselves for service as faithful ministers of the gospel who subscribe without reservation to the Lutheran Confessions. We also give thanks for the individual congregations and members in those

congregations who still think—contrary to the practice of just about every other national church body—that the investment of energy and financial resources in the thorough preparation of candidates for the public ministry of the gospel and the deepening of those who are already serving is a sound and wise synodical commitment.

Rev. Paul Prange, reporter

Rev. Philip Hirsch, chairman

Rev. John P. Bortulin

Rev. Kenneth Brokmeier

Rev. Gregory Gibbons

Teacher Richard Gibson

Mr. Hogey Holtz

Mr. Kyle Koltz

Teacher Kurt Rosenbaum

Mr. Brian Scheele

Mr. Dean Waldschmidt

Rev. Thomas Westra

Teacher Jon Woldt

Rev. Michael Woldt

Advisory:

Pres. Matthew Crass, Luther Preparatory School

Pres. Joel Petermann, Michigan Lutheran Seminary

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer

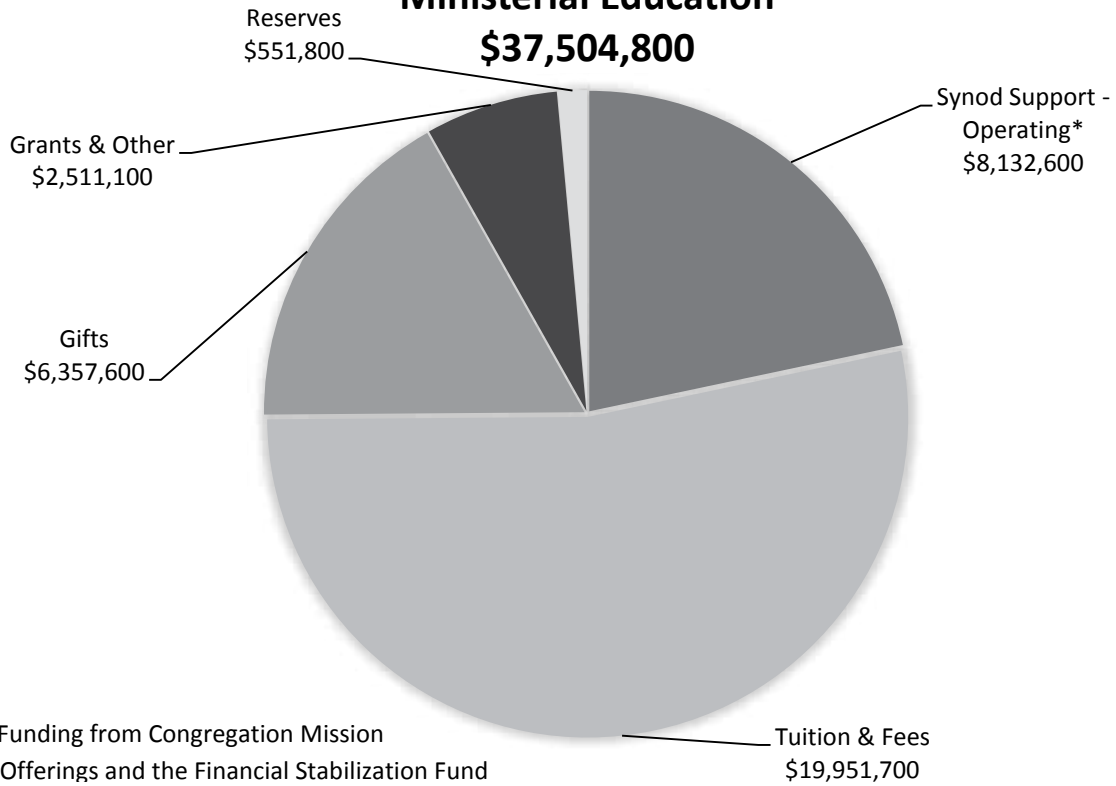
Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of WELS Board for Ministerial Education

Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president

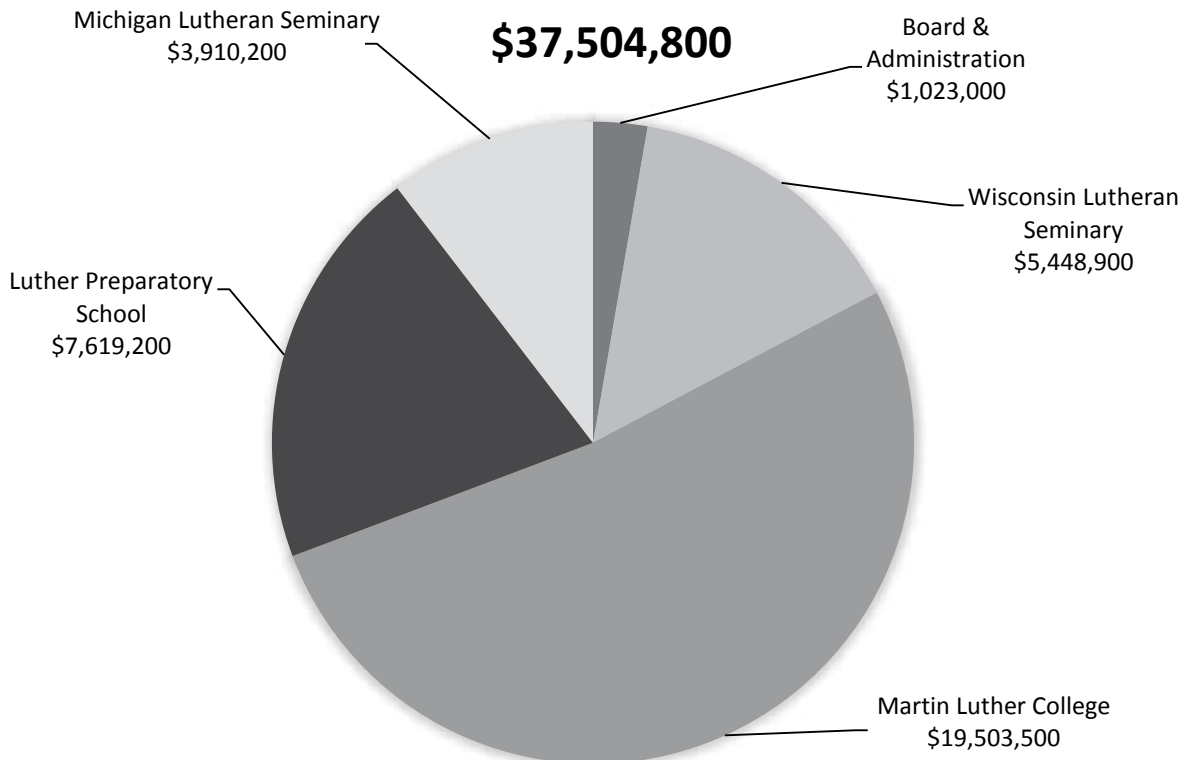
Pres. Paul O. Wendland, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

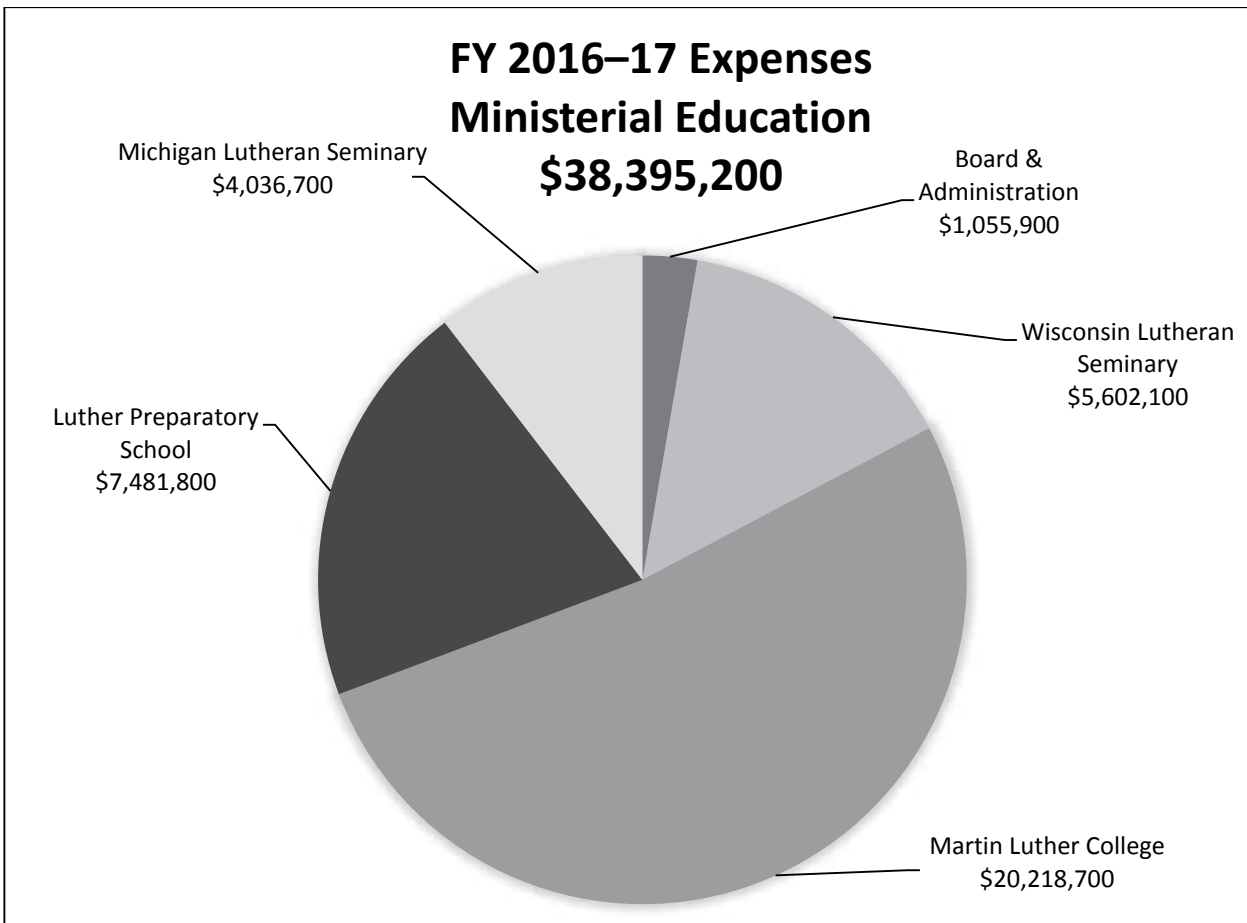
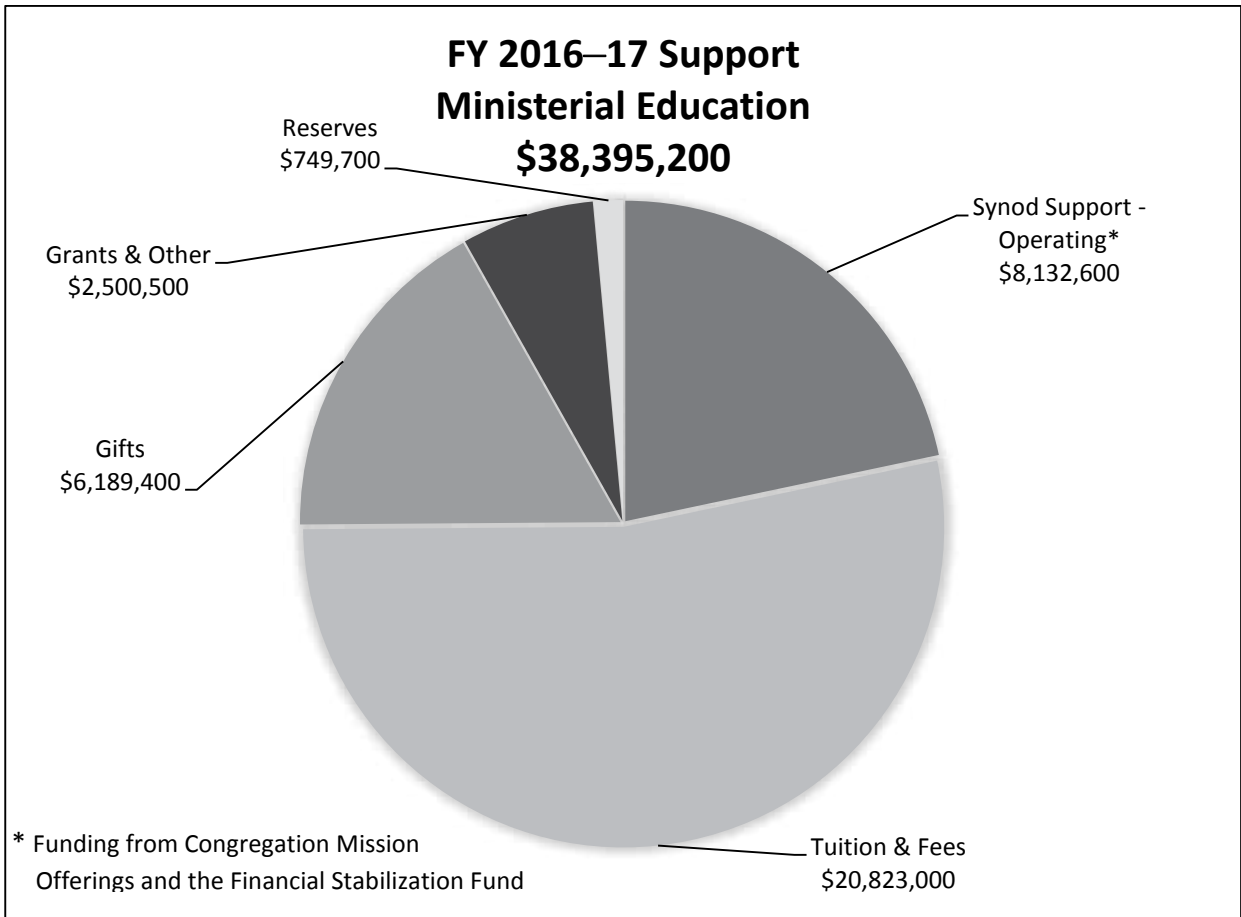
Pres. Mark Zarling, Martin Luther College

**FY 2015–16 Support
Ministerial Education
\$37,504,800**



**FY 2015–16 Expenses
Ministerial Education
\$37,504,800**





Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Floor Committee #13

Our calling

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) prepares pastors for the worldwide mission of WELS. The seminary also offers continuing spiritual and professional growth opportunities for pastors.

Our current situation

Enrollment

Traditional students

This year we had 28 juniors, 29 middlers, and 30 seniors on campus. Two students served in emergency assignments. In addition, 32 vicars are serving in congregations throughout the United States and Canada this year. One man from Nepal studied on campus for two months.

In May we look forward to placing 30 candidates into permanent fields of ministry and 29 vicars into congregations for a year of practical ministry experience.

Enrollment projections

For the 2015–16 school year we anticipate 30 juniors, 28 middlers, and 32 seniors. With 29 vicars in the field, this would put our total student enrollment at 119.

Educational costs

The total cost of education is around \$25,000 per student per year. Only part of this cost is borne by the student, however. This year, tuition was \$8,765. Dormitory students paid an additional \$7,225 for room and board. The rest of the educational cost is funded through Congregation Mission Offerings and gifts from individuals. In addition, students receive gifts and grants from the seminary's financial aid funds.

This year, 83 of 87 students (95 percent) received an average of \$3,822 in grants. We disbursed \$317,200 in grants and awards as follows:

- scholarship grants, awarded on the basis of declared financial need: \$262,600;
- campus service awards, which acknowledge student faithfulness in carrying out tasks for the well-being of our whole campus family: \$20,100; and
- academic achievement awards, which recognize classroom performance as reflected in GPAs: \$34,500.

The seminary's financial aid represents only about a half of the total package of financial aid received by our students. Generous grants from foundations such as Siebert and Salem combined with direct gifts from congregations and individuals raise the average amount of aid to those students receiving aid to an amount equal to or even exceeding tuition.

In 2014, 67 percent of our students carried debt. Across the entire student body, average debt per student was \$17,373.05. Financial aid makes it possible for students to make payments on college loans while not having to borrow from other sources to do so. At the same time, to encourage good stewardship of God's money, we also require students to attend financial workshops each year they are enrolled on campus. This helps them improve their money management and reduce toxic (credit card) debt.

Winterim

This two-week period between first and second semester gives students and professors an opportunity for both academic and practical enrichment. Specialized classes that are not part of the regular curriculum are offered. A student can propose his own independent study plan. Others sign up for off-campus mission trips and study tours. This year

- 66 took courses on campus.
- 18 participated in outreach opportunities in Texas.
- 7 students went on a study tour of Mexico to improve their knowledge of Spanish.

- 10 students participated in a study tour of Greece and Turkey.
- 5 conducted independent research.
- 9 pastors participated in our classes on campus.

Field services

Vicars

It costs about \$39,000 to fund a vicar. Currently, the vicar year is funded in part by congregations, some of which pay all or a substantial part of the cost. Because the expenses of this vital program exceed the financial ability of many churches, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary has identified additional sources of funding to enable more congregations to consider hosting a vicar. Our desire is to present to our students the broadest possible range of experiences in different districts and settings. Through \$50,000 in grants provided by the Conference of Presidents, the seminary is able to work with several congregations to make hosting a vicar feasible. In addition, for many years the seminary has been working in partnership with the Board for Home Missions through Vicars in Mission Settings to provide substantial funding to ensure vicars get experience in mission settings. This year the seminary has budgeted \$240,000 to fund this program. We are grateful for all the supervising pastors who act as adjunct faculty for WLS.

Summer assistants

Eight congregations, five of which received funding assistance from the Board for Home Missions, hosted first- or second-year students serving as summer student assistants. The congregations are located in Alaska, Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, Nevada, Idaho, and Washington.

Early field training

Each year, juniors and middlers are assigned to nearby congregations to participate in our Early Field Training Program. This program intends to provide a practicum for the various practical theology classes students take during their first and second years at the seminary. Under the supervision of the local pastor, students complete a list of assignments that includes both observation and actual ministry, e.g., presiding at the liturgy, assisting with communion, teaching Sunday school and teen Bible classes, visiting the sick, making evangelism calls.

Senior assistants

About half the members of the senior class serve part time in local congregations and area ministries to both assist pastors and gain additional experience.

Mandarin scholarships

Two students are auditing Mandarin classes at Wisconsin Lutheran College (WLC). They receive scholarships from both WLC and WLS that allow them to devote themselves first and foremost to their WLS student work, then secondly to the Mandarin study without having to find additional part-time employment.

Seminary Chorus

This year, the 41 members of the choir completed a five-day tour at congregations in Michigan and Ohio. This is Prof. James Tiefel's 30th year serving as director.

Pastoral Studies Institute

Our Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) guides and assists non-traditional students through their pre-seminary and seminary training. This year, four are enrolled through their home congregations in the PSI.

In addition, four Anglo pastors are working with South Sudanese spiritual leaders.

In November 2014, an Asian Conference was held where participants discussed methodologies for teaching the Bible to adults. The presenter for this discussion was Prof. Stephen Geiger. Participants also reviewed strategic plans for their mission and ministry.

Prof. E. Allen Sorum, director of the PSI, accompanied PSI student Peter Bur to Ethiopia in October on behalf of the Board for World Missions. There they spent time learning how WELS might support Sudanese refugees in Gambela. They also made contact with Pastor Kebede Yigezu to discuss the potential for membership in the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) or fellowship with WELS.

In June, a conference was held for Hispanic and Sudanese church leaders.

First graduates of GRATSI program in Central Africa

In 2010, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, under the guidance of our World Mission Seminary professor, Kenneth

Cherney, began to partner with the Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA) in offering a degree program in continuing education for LCCA pastors. The program was dubbed “GRATSI”—the Greater Africa Theological Studies Institute—and its overall purpose is to train a select group of LCCA pastors for positions of leadership in that church body. The first phase of the program envisioned conferring a BDiv degree from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary upon men who successfully completed their studies. The curriculum was taught by visiting professors from WLS working in close partnership with the faculties of the LCCA Bible Institute and Seminary. We are pleased to announce that ten men from the LCCA have completed their studies and have received BDiv degrees from the Mequon seminary at a ceremony in Lilongwe, Malawi, this past April. Prof. Cherney from WLS was on hand to award the diplomas.

World Mission Seminary Professor

In 2014–15, five different members of the WLS faculty taught and consulted on curriculum and instruction for seminaries of our fellowship around the world. Included were pastor training programs in Apacheland, central and south Asia, Ethiopia, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malawi, Nepal, Nigeria, Portugal, and Zambia. Eleven different courses were administered to more than 100 students.

Grow in Grace

Under Grow in Grace, the institute for continuing education, pastors have opportunities to grow spiritually and professionally.

In calendar year 2013, off-campus enrollment surpassed on-campus enrollment.

- Spring 2014, online: 2 courses, 22 students
- Summer Quarter, on campus: 10 courses, 60 students
- Summer Quarter, online: 3 courses, 22 students
- Summer Quarter, satellite: 4 courses, 47 students
- Fall 2014, online: 2 courses, 12 students

A comprehensive report from the pastoral side of continuing education can be found in the report of the Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee on p. 13.

Faculty and staff

Prof. Daniel Leyrer celebrated his 25th anniversary in the ministry.

Prof. Kenneth Cherney is stepping down from his duties as World Mission Seminary Professor to teach full time. Pastor Bradley D. Wordell of Tokyo, Japan, has accepted the call to serve as his successor.

Prof. Forrest Bivens and Prof. John Brug will both be retiring at the end of the 2014-15 school year, after having served at the seminary for 22 and 32 years, respectively. We ask the synod to join with the seminary in thanking God for these men of God and their many years of fruitful service in the parish and in training the next generation of pastors. His mercy endures forever!

Despite our decreased enrollment, the seminary’s increasing commitment to continuing education (through Grow in Grace) and to special programs of seminary training (through the Pastoral Studies Institute and World Mission Seminary Professor position) necessitates the calling of a professor to keep our faculty strength at seventeen and to maintain the quality and integrity of our traditional program of study. This need is all the more acute given the retirement of two seasoned professors of Old Testament and systematic theology as noted above.

Prof. Kenneth Cherney received his Ph.D. in Hebrew studies from the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. Prof. Stephen Geiger is writing his dissertation, working for a Ph.D. in Classics. Our newest professor, Thomas Kock, is taking classes for his masters degree. Prof. Joel Otto is working on his masters degree. Prof. Bill Tackmier is doing research before writing his dissertation.

Mr. Jim Volz, part of our building and grounds crew, celebrated 25 years of service to WLS.

Ms. Linda Buxa was hired as the seminary’s part-time communications coordinator.

Ms. Kim Workentine was hired part time as the marketing director and event coordinator for Grow in Grace.

Governing board

After six years of faithful service as governing board secretary, Mr. Philip Becker retired from the board this past

summer. In his place, we welcome to the board our newest member, Mr. Daniel L. Shinnick. We thank a gracious God for providing us with such gifted and willing men!

Finance

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary depends on three sources of funding to carry out its calling. The first is the regular support we receive from the synodical budget in the form of subsidy and other support. The second is the money we receive from students' tuition and room and board. The third source is from gifts, which provide operating support and student financial assistance.

The generous gifts from our donors are essential to carry out our calling. Gift totals below exclude the Heritage & Hope thank offering.

	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015 thru 12/31/2014
Unrestricted	273,086	412,921	255,091
Temporarily restricted	601,484	553,664	354,115
Permanently restricted	178,439	117,446	184,276
Total	\$1,053,009	\$1,084,031	\$793,482

In addition, many of God's saints, now gone to glory, have remembered the seminary in their wills, leaving behind a living legacy and testimony to their faith. We have received bequests totaling \$139,020 for FY2013; \$1,158,028 for FY2014; and \$168,841 for the first six months of FY2015.

These gifts and bequests allow the seminary to

- offer generous financial aid to our students,
- support the vicar in missions program,
- subsidize off-campus experiences for students,
- support professors' continuing education,
- subsidize the Grow in Grace program,
- respond to unexpected opportunities and requests, and
- establish strong reserves for future financial assistance and operating needs.

Heritage and Hope thank offering

The Lord has greatly blessed the seminary through our 150th anniversary Heritage and Hope thank offering. As of Jan. 31, 2015, we received more than 1,963 gifts totaling more than \$1,000,000. Those gifts allowed us to offer additional financial aid to our students and expand opportunities for these future pastors to get the best possible vicar experience. In addition, our 80-acre campus and aging buildings have been undergoing some vital maintenance. Gifts allowed us to upgrade the lighting and replace the organ in the auditorium. In addition, the road resurfacing project has been completed under budget at a cost of \$550,000 funded by a bequest and the anniversary appeal.

A look ahead

Internships and field experiences

Thanks to the generous gifts of the thank offering, we are giving our students more opportunities in mission settings. From cross-cultural to international experiences, the lessons they learn in the classroom are being practically applied in the field, increasing their passion to reach the lost.

Global center for theological learning

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is increasingly becoming a place where all the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) educational leaders and teachers can come together to consult, assess, find resources, and network. Our World Mission Seminary professor is tasked with building relationships with overseas programs of ministerial education and with providing opportunities for mutual encouragement. To some training programs (Apacheland, Germany, India, Nigeria, South Asia), WLS sends professors to teach in programs overseen by our missions or sister churches. In other places (e.g., the GRATSI program in Central Africa), WLS sends teaching professors and grants a degree in a program administered jointly with a national church. In still others, national students who live overseas take WLS courses online. God willing, this kind of institutional flexibility will continue to allow WLS to serve the very diverse needs of the CELC.

Forging a stronger supportive partnership with pastors in the field

Through Grow in Grace, the seminary's institute for spiritual and professional growth, WLS continues to look for ways to strengthen the gospel-centered encouragement and support it provides for its graduates serving across the country and around the world. For example, in the near future Grow in Grace is looking to expand celebration of ministry retreats from two annual retreats to four. In addition to the current retreats offered to those celebrating 10 and 25 years since graduation, retreats will be added for pastors at the end of the mentoring initiative (3 years into ministry) as well as for pastors as they move into retirement from full-time pastoral work. This brings nearer to completion the work of building Grow in Grace's Pastor Partners initiative so that it offers pastors regular support "from seminary to sunset."

Financial plan

Looking forward to the next biennium, the proposed plan outlines the revenues and expenditures needed to operate and maintain the seminary at the current level. We do not plan on any additional staffing or have any large programmed maintenance projects scheduled. The seminary has adequate financial reserves to carry out the plan for the upcoming biennium.

Accreditation Exploration Committee

The seminary's governing board has authorized the appointment of a faculty committee to explore the wisdom of seeking accreditation for our programs of study.

Archives

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is happy to announce a partnership with WELS administration to move the synod's archives, presently housed on our campus, to the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry. To help smooth the transition, WLS will fund for two years a qualified archivist who can oversee the move.

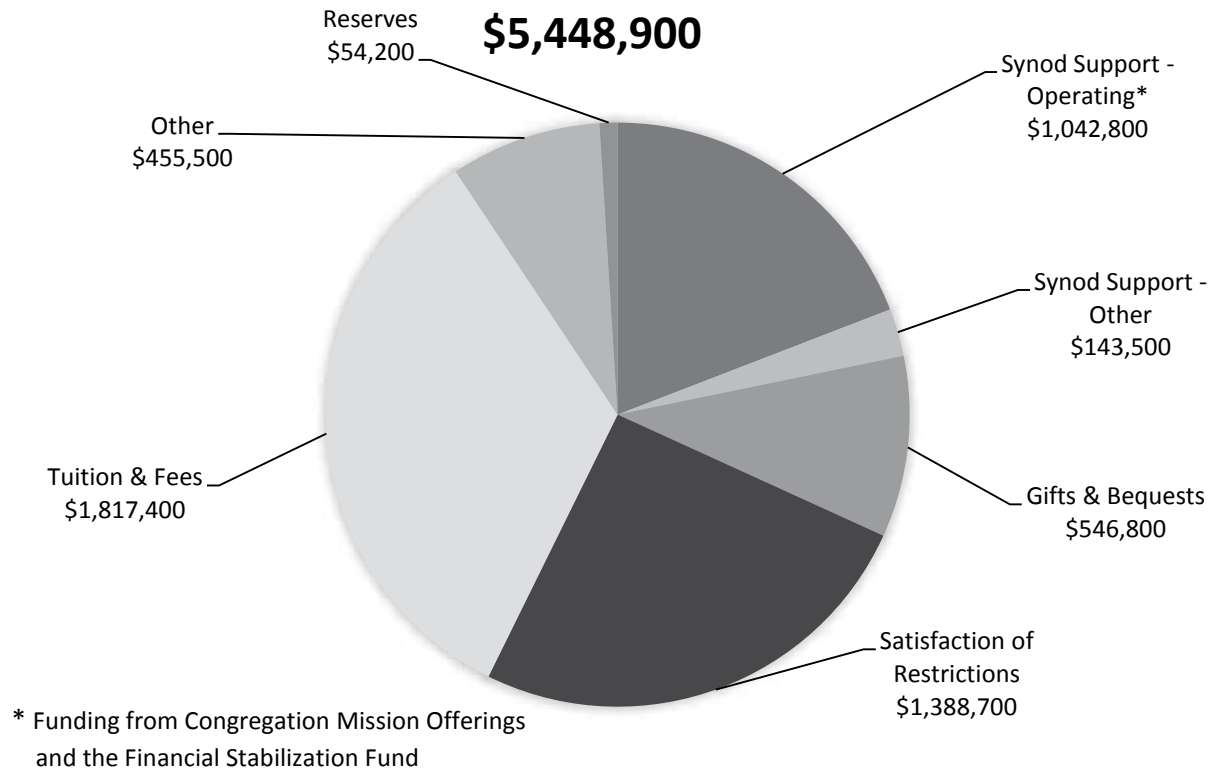
Pres. Paul O. Wendland, reporter

Pastor Thomas Westra, chairman
Pastor Jonathan Balge, vice chairman
Teacher David Wilson, secretary
Pastor John Dolan
Dr. Arthur Eggert
Pastor Eric Hartzell
Mr. Daniel L. Shinnick
Mr. Gerald Zimpelmann

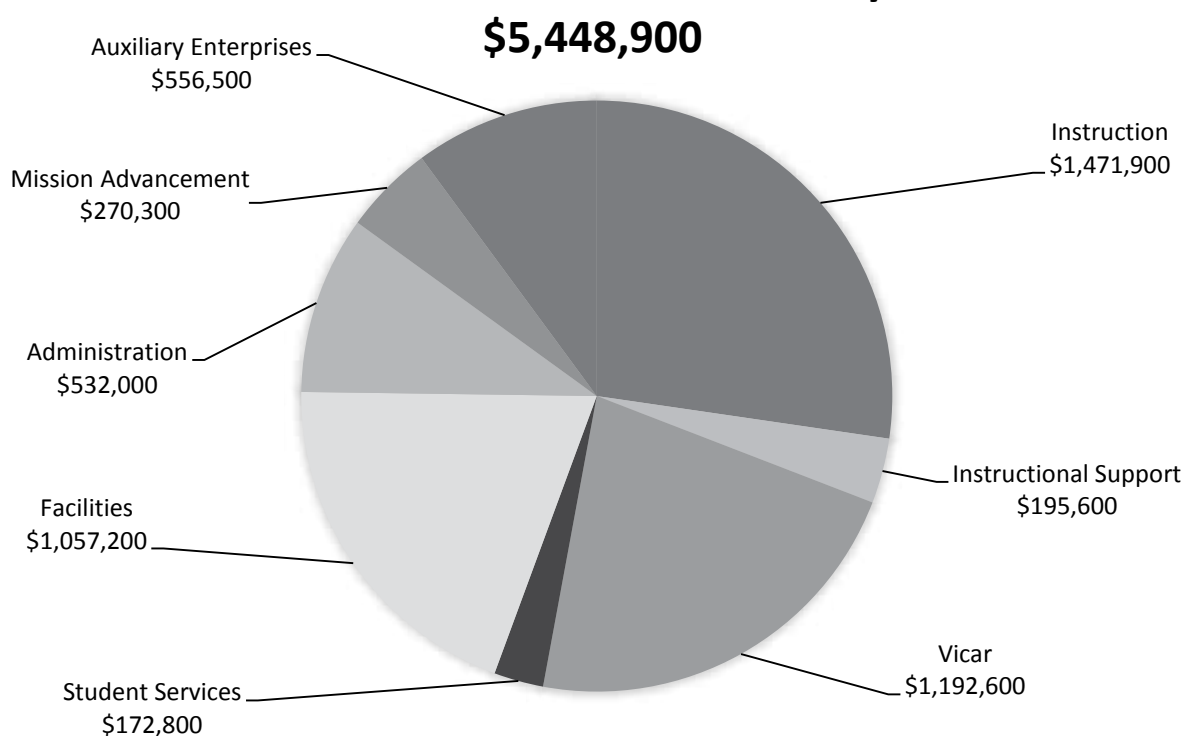
Advisory:

Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of WELS Board for Ministerial Education
Rev. David Rutschow, president of the Southeastern Wisconsin District
Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president
Pres. Paul O. Wendland, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

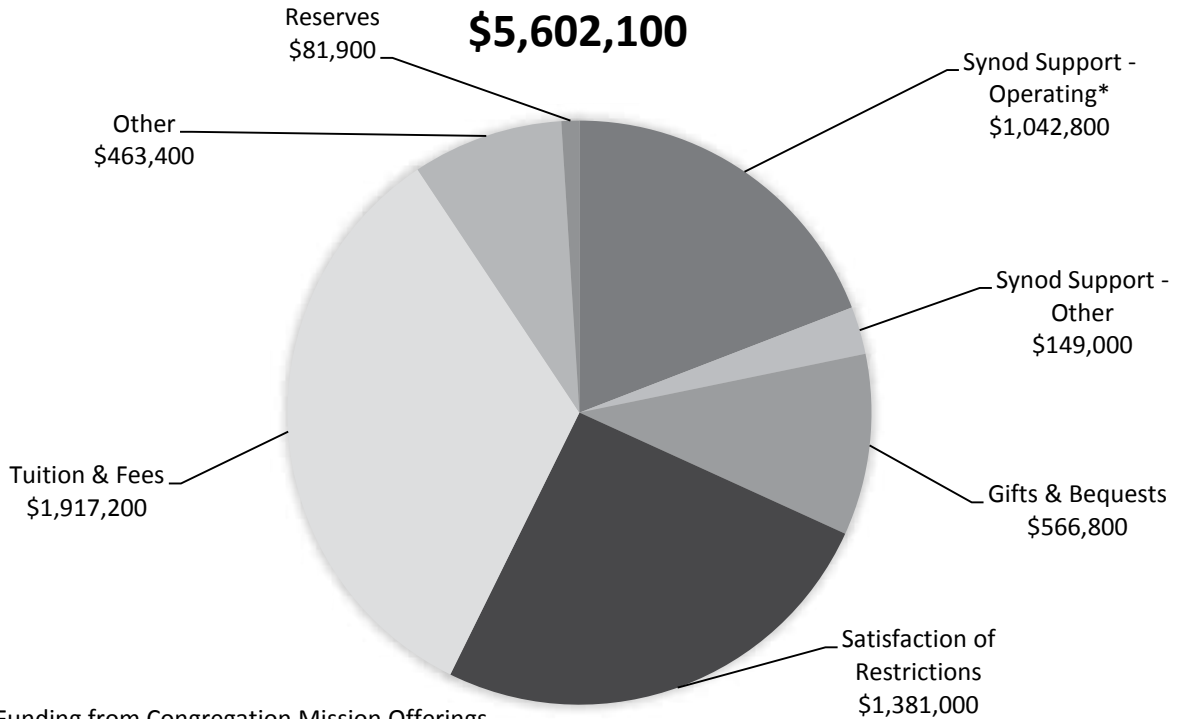
FY 2015–16 Support Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary



FY 2015–16 Expenses Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

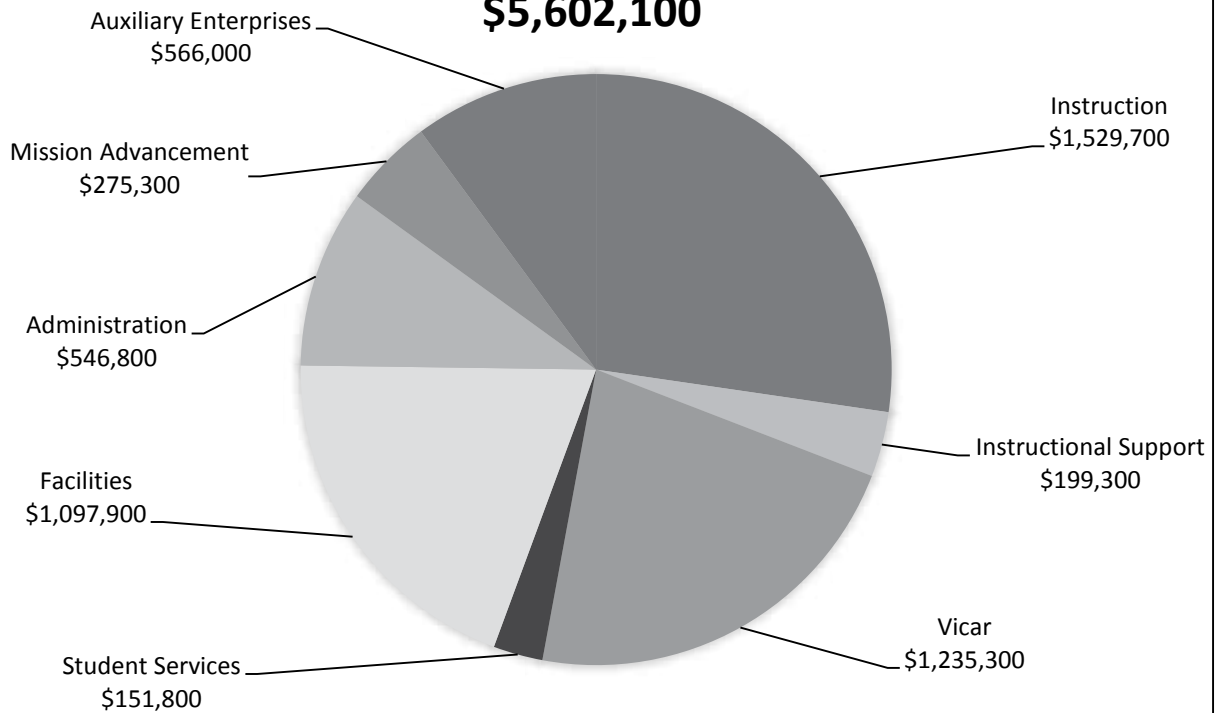


**FY 2016–17 Support
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
\$5,602,100**



* Funding from Congregation Mission Offerings and the Financial Stabilization Fund

**FY 2016–17 Expenses
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
\$5,602,100**



Martin Luther College

Floor Committee #13

The psalmist declared an amazing truth. The LORD has caused his wonders to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and compassionate (Psalm 111). What grace! What infinite love! The Savior has worked in our midst through his omnipotent Word and has caused the mighty deeds of salvation to be remembered. It is a gift of Jesus that our church body continues to prayerfully support ministerial education schools where students not only learn the saving wonders of the Savior God but also train vocationally to be used as God's instruments to cause his wonders to be remembered by future generations. On behalf of the faculty, staff, and student body of Martin Luther College (MLC), I thank the members of WELS for your ongoing support of the Great Commission endeavors at MLC. This report to the 63rd Biennial Convention of the church is a report of our stewardship of the precious gifts from God's people entrusted to us. At the same time, it is also a display of God's wonders worked in our midst, blessings achieved despite our shortcomings, to the glory of his grace.

Our calling

The mission statement of Martin Luther College clearly communicates our calling.

The mission of Martin Luther College is to train a corps of Christian witnesses who are qualified to meet the ministry needs of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and who are competent to proclaim the Word of God faithfully and in accord with the Lutheran Confessions in the Book of Concord.

To meet the current ministry needs of WELS, Martin Luther College

- Prepares men for pastoral training at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary;
- Prepares men and women for service as teachers and staff ministers in the synod's churches, schools, and other institutions;
- Prepares men and women for other church ministries, both full and part time, responding to the needs of WELS;
- Prepares international students for ministry in partnership with WELS mission fields; and
- Provides programs of continuing education that meet the ministerial needs of the WELS.

Please join the governing board and campus family of MLC in praying that Jesus bless our labors and keep us clearly focused on our purpose to servants who use the Word of life to cause God's wonders to be remembered.

Our current situation

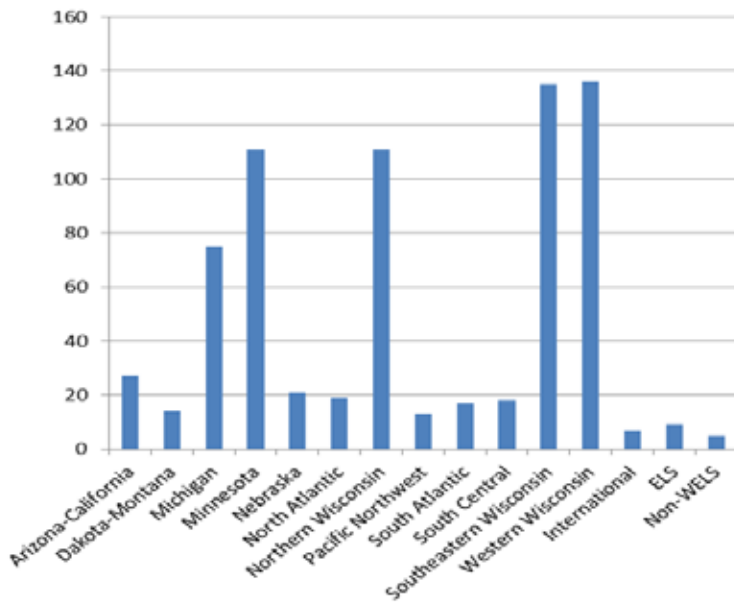
God's gifts to MLC: Students—undergraduate

Undergraduate on-campus enrollment began the 2014–15 school year numbering 727, an increase of 13 from the previous year. Second semester enrollment began at 709, an increase of 15 from January 2014. We are grateful to the ascended Lord Jesus for bringing such gifts to his church and pray for his continued blessings upon our recruitment efforts. Our pre-seminary enrollment remains low, matching levels not seen since the 1950s. Our need for teaching ministers continues to grow both domestically and for service overseas. At both terminal schools, assignment days in May 2014 saw significant unfilled requests. Please, people of God, pray as Jesus urged: Ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth workers into his harvest field.

The following charts reflect the enrollment as of Jan. 31, 2015.

Program of study	Number of students
Double major—early childhood education and elementary	45
Double major—Elementary and secondary	162
Double major—Staff ministry and education	12
Double major—early childhood education and special education	9
Double major—early childhood education and vocal music	1
Double major—early childhood education and staff ministry	1
Early childhood education	73
Educational studies	15
Elementary education	170
Pre-seminary studies	145
Unclassified	7
Secondary education	63
Staff ministry	6
Total	709

Origin of students



High school origin

<i>High school type</i>	<i>Number of students</i>
Area Lutheran high school	386
Home school	3
Other	8
Preparatory School	212
Public	100
Total	709

Enrollment trends over five years

<i>School year</i>	<i>Semester 1 enrollment</i>	<i>Semester 2 enrollment</i>
2010–11	724	699
2011–12	697	665
2012–13	708	693
2013–14	714	694
2014–15	727	709

God's gifts to MLC: Students—graduate, continuing education, and New Teacher Induction

Graduate studies

Martin Luther College provides a graduate degree program designed for WELS teachers and administrators. Since 2004, we have offered the Master of Science in Education degree with emphases in leadership, instruction, special education, and educational technology. Currently, 127 graduate students are enrolled and 63 have already received their degrees.

MLC trains school principals and early childhood directors through graduate studies. Thirty-one principals/directors have already completed their degrees, and 41 more are working on theirs. We are seeking accreditation approval to offer a more targeted program for WELS principals and early childhood directors that will lead to a Master of Science in Educational Administration degree.

We await state approval to offer licensure at the master's level for special education, and we are working toward a Master of Arts in Theology degree.

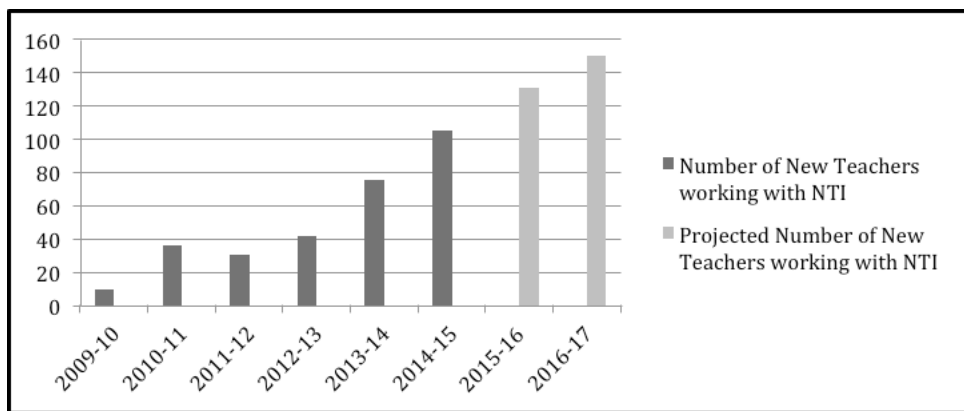
Continuing education

The college offers a wide variety of courses and certificates to meet the ministry needs of the WELS. Annually, between 800 to 900 WELS teachers, pastors, staff ministers, and laypeople receive their continuing education through MLC courses or webinars. Courses are taught online, on campus, and around the country in ways that are flexible, convenient, and affordable. Recently, we have added certificates in mentoring, chaplaincy, evangelism, technology, and teaching online. Additional certificate offerings are being considered, such as a Sunday school teacher training certificate. New courses have been added in early childhood, evangelism, geriatric care, and American Sign Language.

New Teacher Induction

Martin Luther College, together with the Commission on Lutheran Schools, provides a program of New Teacher Induction (NTI) to all new WELS teachers in their first and second years of ministry. The NTI program, first piloted in 2009, is now being directed by Prof. Jon Schaefer. The Lord has blessed NTI with steady growth (see graph below). In 2014–15, 68 trained mentors provided support to 105 new teachers in 10 WELS districts. The plan at the time of this writing was to have all new teachers in all 12 districts receive support in 2015–16. Support includes seven mentor trainings, weekly mentor-mentee contacts, monthly conversations, quarterly classroom supervisory visits, mentor forums, and beginning teacher trainings. Schools pay about two-thirds of the cost for the services or \$1,000 for each of the two years of service.

Growth of NTI



God's gifts to MLC: Personnel

During the past academic school year the following professors celebrated ministry milestones.

- Roger Klockziem—50 years
- Thomas Hunter—40 years
- John Boeder—25 years
- James Danell, Jr.—25 years

At the conclusion of the 2014–15 academic year, Dr. Roger Klockziem has announced his intention to retire.

The following chart shows faculty changes since the last synod convention in July 2013. This chart notes new professors who were called to fill vacancies in established faculty positions as well as professors called for new initiatives begun in the last biennium. These initiatives (Mandarin, special education major, New Teacher Induction, urban education ministry) respond to requests either from the synod in convention or from WELS leadership. More details on these initiatives will be forthcoming in this report.

Faculty changes in last biennium

<i>New faculty</i>	<i>Arrival</i>	<i>Reason</i>
Daniel Gawrisch—Prof. of Physical Education	July 2013	Retirement of Jack Gronholz
Daryl Hanneman—Prof. of Special Education	July 2013	New program
Brian Hennig—Prof. of Theology & History	July 2013	Retirement of Mark Lenz
Jennifer Krause—Prof. of Ed. & Student Teaching Supervision	July 2013	Retirement of Carla Melendy
Jennifer Mehlberg—Professor of Early Childhood Education	July 2013	Retirement of Susan Haar
Michael Otterstatter—Vice President for Mission Advancement	July 2013	Retirement of John Scharleman
Jonathan Schaefer—Director of New Teacher Induction	July 2013	New program
Scott Schmudlach—Prof. of Ed. & Student Teaching Supervision	July 2013	Resignation of Kurt Wittmershaus
Adrian Smith—Prof. of Music	July 2013	Retirement of John Nolte
James Carlovsky—Prof. of Mathematics & Ed. Technology	July 2014	Retirement of David Wendler
Benjamin Clemons—Director of Urban Educational Ministry	July 2014	New program
Grace Hennig—Prof. of Music	July 2014	Retirement of Robert Potratz
Matthew Pearson—Prof. of Physical Education	July 2014	Retirement of Barb Leopold
Tingting Zhang Schwartz—Prof. of Mandarin	July 2014	New program
Daniel Fenske—Prof. of Science	July 2015	Retirement of Roger Klockziem
Peter Baganz—Prof. of History & Social Science	July 2015	Resignation of David Schroeder
Other changes: New library director hired	July 2014	Retirement of David Gosdeck

Please continue to ask Jesus to grant strength, wisdom, and joy to our faculty and staff. Our professors certainly prioritize their time for their classroom duties. Yet many other duties are placed before them. Our professors serve as advisors to students and provide evangelical encouragement and guidance, not only in academic matters, but also relating to spiritual issues, vocational questions, and life concerns. Our full-time professors serve on various campus committees. In addition, some coach sports and others advise extracurricular events. Increased continuing education offerings mean more professors teaching online courses or courses at satellite locations. And the majority of our professors are also called upon by the synod to serve in various other capacities. For example, two-thirds of our professors serve the synod at large by holding membership or appointment on various committees and boards.

Growth in new academic programs

Special Education is a new major preparing MLC graduates for Minnesota state teacher licensure. Students will be eligible for a K-12 ABS (Academic and Behavioral Strategist) license. In only the second year of the program's existence, MLC has already enrolled 18 students in the major.

Work on MLC's new Teaching with Technology course is nearing completion and will be ready for implementation in all programs of education for fall 2015. Thanks to funding from the MLC Ladies Auxiliary, an Antioch II Foundation grant, and the MLC Network Services budget, students will be able to have hands-on experience with Chromebooks, iPads, interactive white boards, and other technologies often found in WELS classrooms.

In February 2015, the MLC Governing Board gave the necessary final approval for the new minor course of study in Urban Educational Ministry. As directed, MLC is now able to enhance its preparation of more students for service in urban settings. The minor consists of optional immersion trips, two new courses, two pre-existing field experiences, two summer experiences for credit, and student teaching, all in urban settings.

Chinese language study, led by Prof. Tingting Schwartz (nee Zhang), is both a minor course of study and a non-biblical language option for pre-seminary candidates. Schwartz continues to find new ways to expose students to Chinese culture on our campus and to recruit and enroll students in Chinese language study at MLC.

God's gifts to MLC—Facilities and finances

There are many reasons for MLC to be grateful to the Lord. The chart below highlights a few of the many areas in which MLC has been blessed.

	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015*
Opening enrollment	697	708	714	727
Tuition, board, and room	\$15,710	\$16,340	\$17,160	\$18,020
Synod subsidy	\$3,188,133	\$3,016,053	\$3,193,500	\$3,079,300
Gifts and bequests	\$1,521,291	\$3,232,578	\$2,450,051	\$971,299*
Unrestricted net assets end of fiscal year	\$5,892,226	\$6,482,306	\$5,926,056	

*as of January 2015

Financial aid—student cost and indebtedness

MLC shares the synod’s concern related to student debt. The chart below indicates a disturbing trend in national college graduate debt. Although MLC graduate debt is below the national average, consideration must also be given to compensation levels after graduation. At the same time, let us thank the Spirit’s work through Christian parents who have taught biblical stewardship to their children. MLC students glorify their Savior with an outstanding repayment rate. The latest report from the Department of Education (received in February 2015) shows that of the 200 MLC students who entered the Federal Student Loan debt repayment between 10/01/2011–9/20/2012, only three have defaulted on their loan repayments. This equates out to a 1.5 percent cohort default rate. The national average is 13.7 percent. To God be the glory for this Christian witness.

	% MLC graduates with debt	Average amount of debt	National debt average
2009–10	63%	\$21,799	\$25,250
2010–11	78%	\$22,176	\$26,600
2011–12	80%	\$21,671	\$27,850
2012–13	84%	\$21,997	\$28,400
2013–14	73%	\$21,519	unavailable

MLC has made every effort to limit increases to tuition, room, and board costs in order to help our students reduce their debt loads. In recent years, MLC has committed to substantial increases to student assistance and intends that each tuition increase be accompanied by a corresponding percentage increase to student assistance. However, the increases made to tuition assistance have not been able to keep pace with the reduction in WELS subsidy.

Also to note, in the past year the MLC Office of Student Life has initiated a program of financial literacy and one-on-one debt counseling that is available to students. After one year the evaluations have been very positive, and the plan is to expand these efforts for our students.

	MLC tuition assistance	Average per student receiving aid	WELS subsidy per student
2008–09*	\$2,063,794	\$3,339	\$6,203
2009–10*	\$1,934,896	\$3,257	\$5,128
2010–11*	\$1,914,100	\$3,112	\$5,085
2011–12*	\$2,036,105	\$3,434	\$4,574
2012–13*	\$2,147,421	\$3,366	\$4,260
2013–14*	\$2,221,348	\$3,072	\$4,473
2014–15**	\$2,321,000	\$3,224	\$4,236
2015–16**	\$2,437,050	\$3,385	\$4,143

*Actual

**Budgeted (estimated enrollments used for budget years)

Use of MLC unrestricted funds

As of June 30, 2014, the unrestricted fund balance at MLC totaled \$5,926,056. The MLC Governing Board has designated a large portion of these toward specific needs at MLC as follows:

Fund	Amount	Description
Economic Sustainability Fund (ESF)	\$2,194,257	Board designated funds to be spent at the approval of the MLC Governing Board. To address the Higher Learning Commission directives, the goal of this fund is to reach 25 percent of the MLC operating budget or approximately \$4.7 million.
Scholarship Fund	\$2,400,000	Amounts designated for scholarships are the equivalent of two years of MLC's internal funding for student scholarships. Should there be an economic downturn or change in eligibility for the federal financial aid program, these funds will provide MLC time to react without necessarily reducing student assistance.
Program maintenance	\$335,000	The MLC campus has great need for many facility improvements, many of which come at a cost that cannot be absorbed through normal budgetary allotments. This funding was used for two larger facility projects during the 2015 fiscal year. The entrance to the student center was remodeled to meet ADA requirements. The second project included installation of an elevator in the chapel and finishing a portion of the chapel basement.
Operating and other	\$996,799	This funding represents net assets that have been designated for other operating functions such as the library, financing costs, etc.

Our current financial situation

MLC anticipates ending the 2015 fiscal year with a small deficit that requires a small use of reserves. The plan for the 2016–17 biennium projects the use of about \$732,000 of reserves with both years combined, a significant portion of the current unrestricted reserves of about \$6 million. MLC projects slightly higher enrollments than planned, which may reduce the planned use of reserves should enrollment increases come to fruition.

There are many needs at MLC—facilities and staffing—that continue to go unaddressed because of financial constraints. As outlined above, MLC has expanded programs in order to meet the needs of WELS. These programs include Mandarin, special education, increased early childhood education instructors, New Teacher Induction, and urban educational ministry. With the implementation of these programs, an additional 11.5 FTE in personnel were added. The resulting compensation and benefit costs are approximately \$650,000 annually. Though synod subsidy has been relatively flat, we remain grateful for the gifts of God's people reflected in such support from our church body. We continually pray, as every Christian does, "give us this day our daily bread."

Good stewardship requires an ongoing examination of all our expenditures. Your college is committed to continual budget scrutiny as well as pursuing additional sources of funding through the efforts of the Mission Advancement team. The Office of Mission Advancement is responsible for overall development, public and community relations, alumni relations, and advancement efforts at MLC. Although it is difficult to quantify all of the blessings that MLC and supporting organizations receive through the efforts of the Office of Mission Advancement, as of Feb. 28, 2015, we have received \$1,259,651 in gifts, which represents 77 percent of our fiscal year goal of \$1,635,400. Those gifts were received from 1,301 donors. We have conducted 210 face-to-face visits across the United States. In addition, 24 MLC Sundays were conducted by college representatives during that same time.

Major facility upgrades over the past biennium

Over the past two years the college has tried to practice good stewardship of the physical campus and its facilities, wonderful gifts from God's people that have served the college well. Using budgeted capital and board-designated funds, the college completed just over \$1.5 million in much needed facility projects without any borrowing or indebtedness.

Ongoing projects

An aggressive program maintenance agenda has been adopted for the campus. Good stewardship of resources requires that a number of key areas be addressed on an annual basis. The following annual allocations are included in our capital projects budget:

- Classroom furniture replacement—\$40,000 (two rooms)
- Conversion of exterior lighting to LEDs—\$10,000
- Parking lot and sidewalk maintenance—\$45,000
- Grounds upkeep (includes athletic field preparation)—\$30,000
- General tuck pointing and window caulking—\$20,000
- Dormitory washing machine replacement—\$18,500

In addition to ongoing allocations, several larger, long-range projects are divided into phases because funding does not allow completion of the entire project at once. Several examples follow:

- Auditorium renovation—5-10 years @ \$75,000
- Dormitory restroom upgrades—4 years per dormitory @ \$60,000
- Dormitory lock replacement—4 years per dormitory @ \$10,000

A look ahead

Future needs—facilities

Initiative 5.4 of *Compelled to Speak: a Strategic Plan for Martin Luther College (2011-2017)* directs the college to “develop a plan for ongoing maintenance, renovation, and expansion of facilities.” The WELS Capital Projects Committee has directed all synodical entities to update master site plans by the end of calendar year 2015 as a part of its work to develop a comprehensive status report on facility needs. Although this is a work in progress, current efforts suggest the following future needs and related cost estimates to maintain and enhance college facilities during the next decade plus:

- Replacement of library roof—\$220,000
- Remodel Centennial Hall (add 50 beds to the third floor, which is the most economical construction option for additional rooms; construct handicap accessibility to the dorm that does not have any; HVAC upgrades and repair of a 65-year-old system)—\$3 million
- General campus-wide HVAC maintenance and upgrades—\$100,000 per year
- Outdoor track and field—\$1.3 million
- Locker rooms/indoor practice facility for spring sports (Boettger Rd Athletic Field)—\$4.2 million
- Completion of the Chapel of the Christ basement (offices and large classrooms)—\$500,000
- Field house on the main campus—\$10 million

Accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission

Preparations have begun for the onsite visit of the Higher Learning Commission planned for the fall of 2018. A committee of ten faculty and staff makes up our Assurance Argument Team. This team is tasked with submitting evidence that all five criteria and the 21 core components that fall under those criteria are met and/or continue to show improvement and progress on our campus. The first meeting of the team was held in January to share materials. Each member was given details surrounding the background and explanation of the assurance argument task, details about their specifically assigned core components, all information that relates to their assigned components from our last self-study in 2009, samples of assurance arguments for their assigned components, and a timeline of meetings and responsibilities from January 2015 to June 2018. The members of this team will be asking for full faculty and synodical assistance in helping them to collect and analyze the best possible pieces of evidence for their assigned components. This effort is critical for the future of MLC. May God bless our efforts! The Assurance Argument Team is co-chaired by Dr. Jeffery Wiechman, vice president for academics and Dr. John Meyer, director of graduate studies and continuing education.

A Quality Initiative study is also required of MLC for continuing accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). A Quality Initiative is a campus-chosen improvement project that is proposed in years 4-6 of the 10-year accreditation cycle and studied in years 7-9 with the onsite visit occurring in year 10. The Quality Initiative Task Force has developed a tentative strategic timeline for its proposed theme of “Retention and Assimilation of Students of Diverse Populations.” We have identified four student populations: international students, non-traditional age students, probationary and provisionally accepted students, and minority students of color. The proposal phase to the HLC is merely that—a proposed outline of our plan. Once the proposal is approved by the Higher Learning Commission, we can proceed with carrying out our plan. Our final report will include an assessment and a status report; it may include successes as well as stalemates.

The Quality Initiative Task Force, made up of 16 interdisciplinary faculty members and students, conducted an internal analysis of current practice, researched successful programs from other campuses, and interviewed stakeholders from our campus to distill the ideas to be presented. The four subcommittees worked very hard to prepare the materials. The plan was submitted to the Higher Learning Commission in early March. We have the next four years to digest, debate, plan, and, ultimately, implement these plans.

Future needs—personnel

At its 2015 meeting, the MLC Governing Board directed the college administration to prepare a strategic and comprehensive staffing plan for faculty and support staff. There are two primary considerations behind this directive. One consideration relates to the report on the accreditation visit that is on the horizon. MLC needs to address teaching loads for faculty and bring them in line with Higher Learning Commission standards. Currently, about 56 percent of our teaching faculty teaches over the recommended 27 credit hour load per year. The second consideration is the need for strategic planning in light of upcoming changeover in faculty and support staff. During the next 5 years about 20 faculty members will reach retirement age, as well as several support staff people. The college will need to plan for this transition and also prioritize funding for professional development and graduate studies for new people.

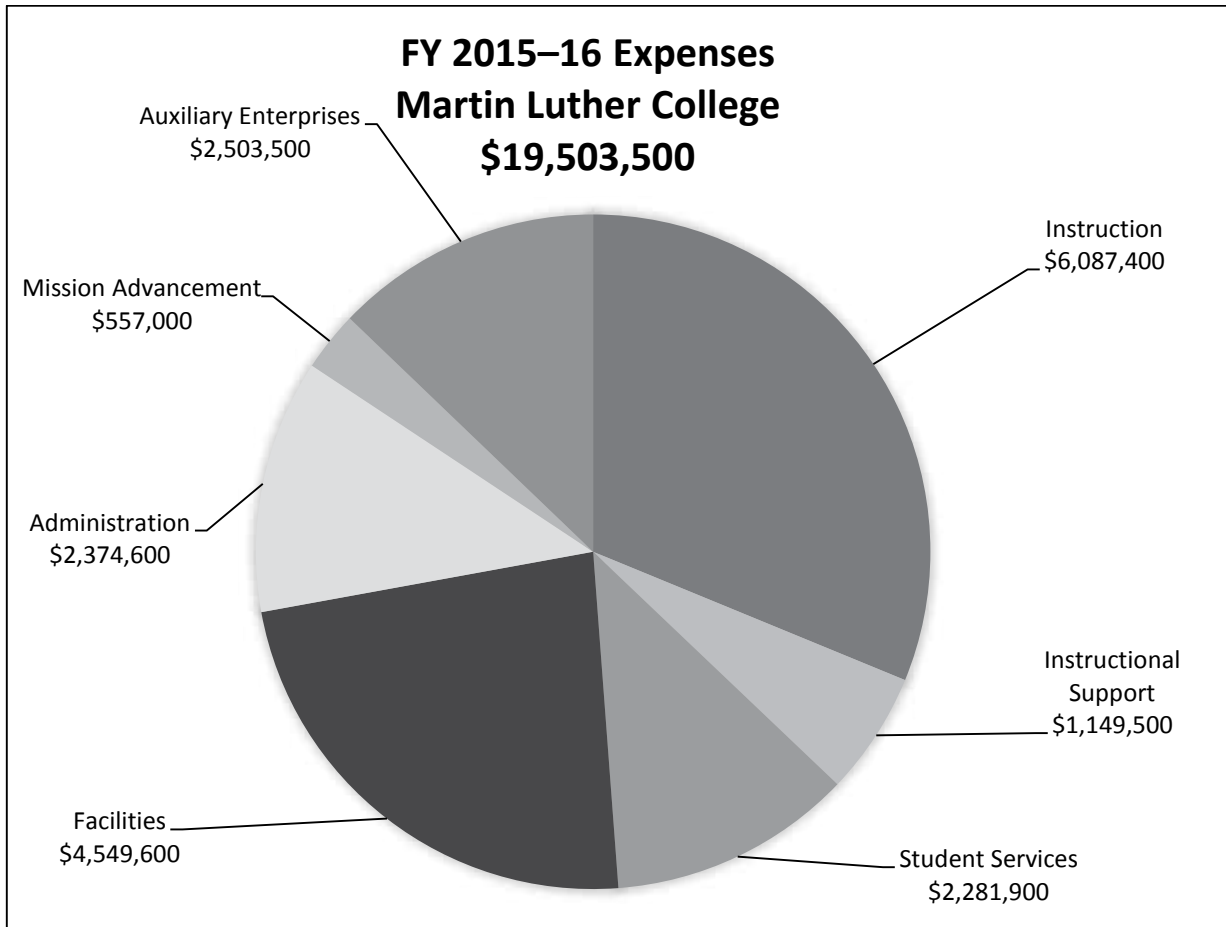
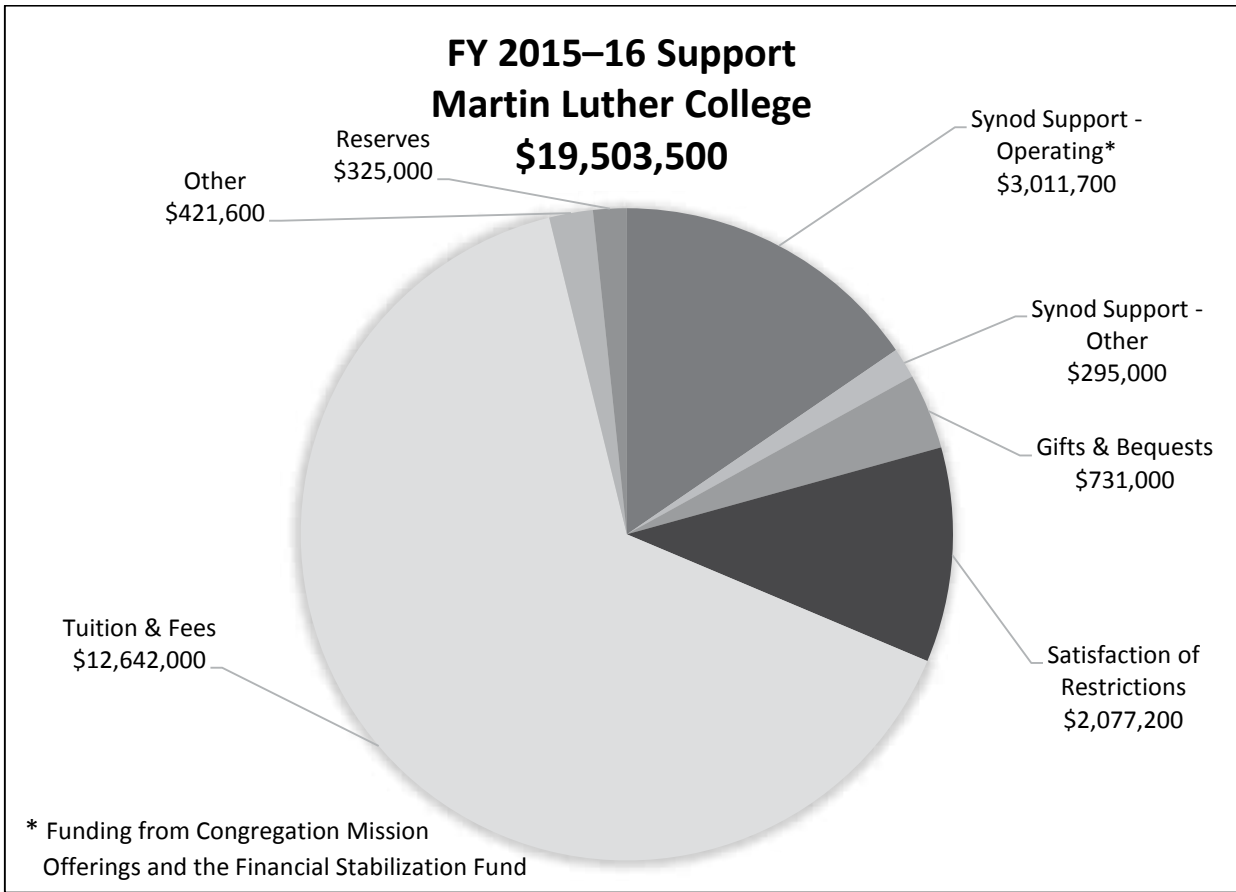
We join God's people of WELS in committing ourselves and our efforts to the grace of God in Christ. Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails (Proverbs 19:21).

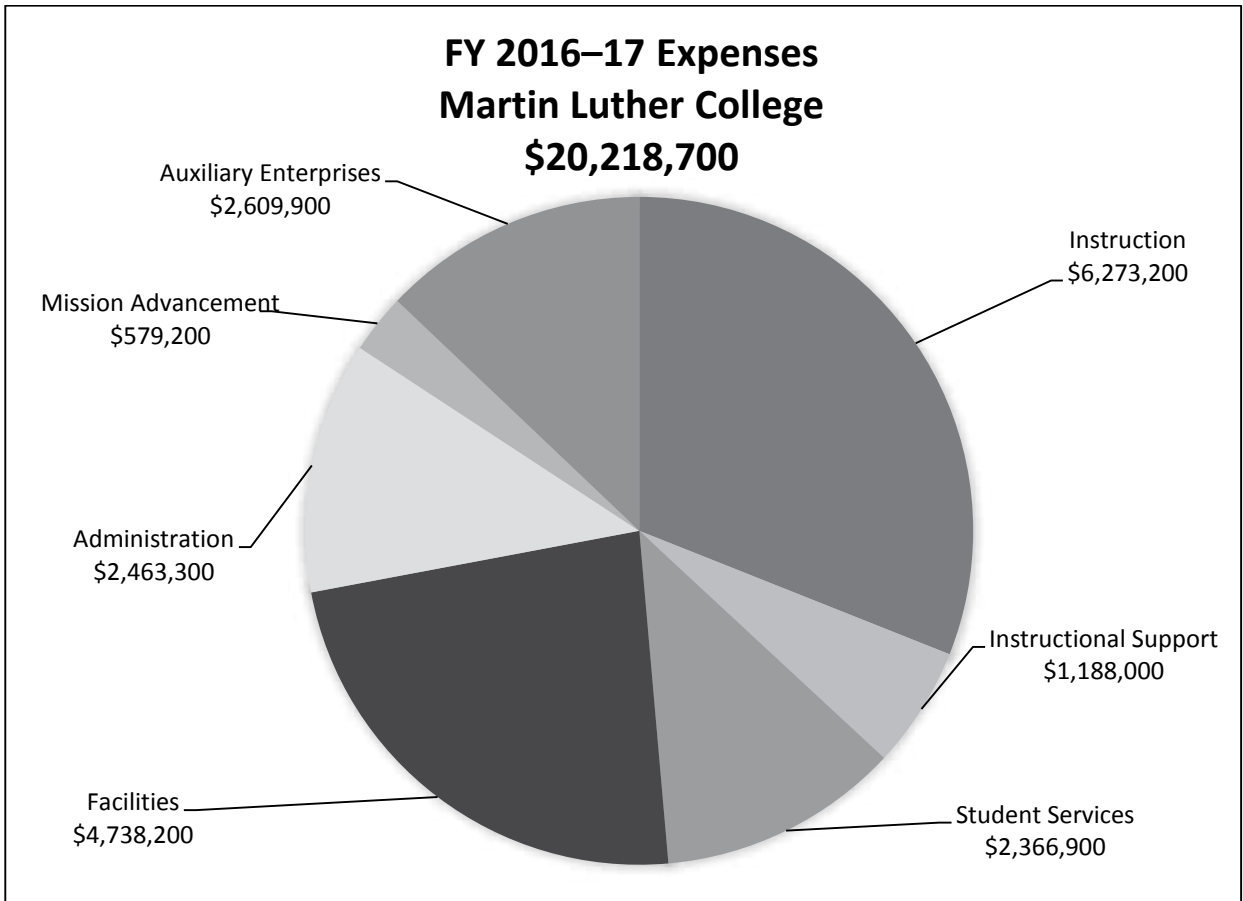
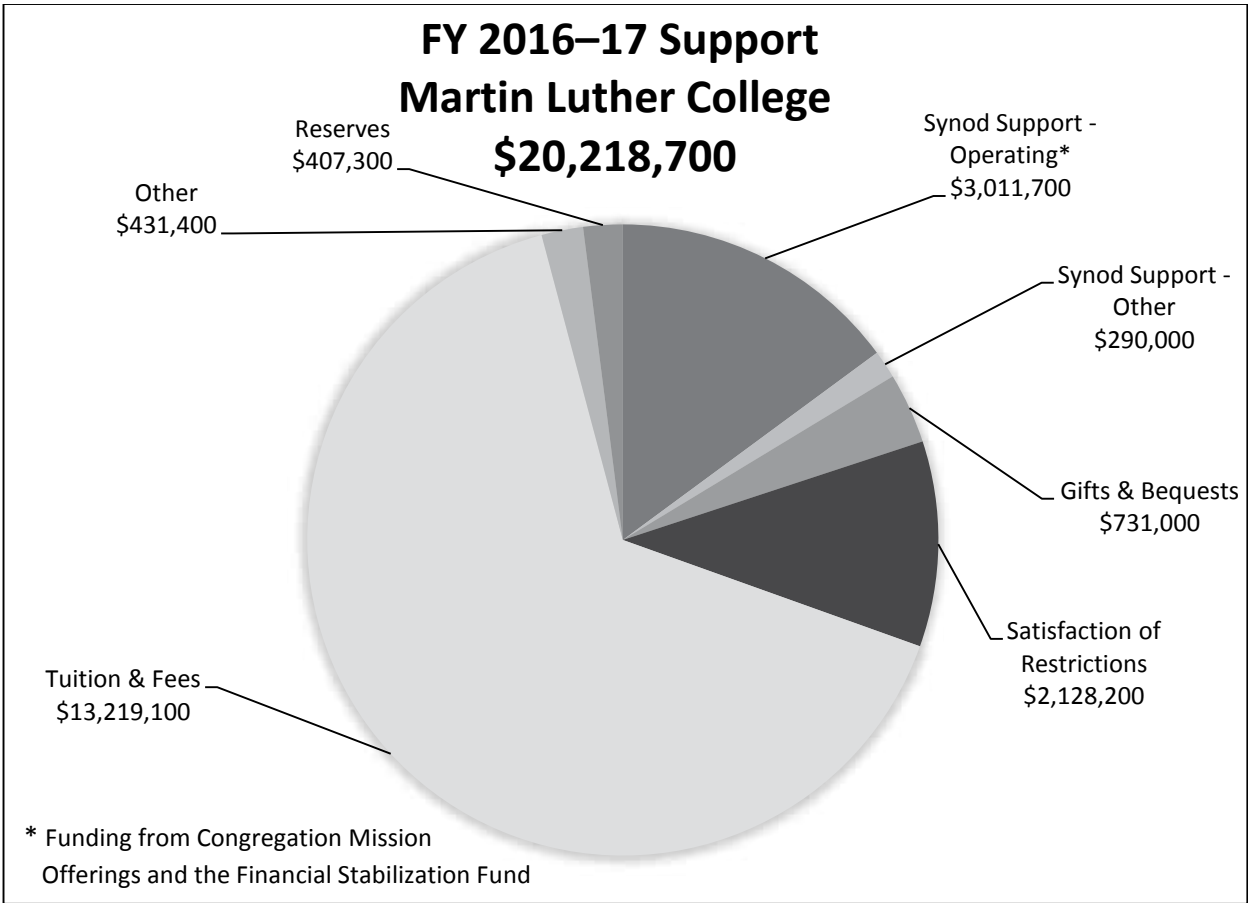
Pres. Mark Zarling, reporter

Rev. Michael Woldt, chairman
Rev. Jonathan Kolander, vice chairman
Teacher Steven Rosenbaum, secretary
Teacher Joe Archer
Teacher Drew Kock
Mr. Dale Krause
Mr. Timothy Petermann
Mr. Barry Price
Rev. Duane Schmeichel
Rev. Michael Seifert
Mr. Michael Valleau
Teacher Steven Vasold
Rev. Mark Wessel

Advisory:

Rev. Charles Degner, president of the Minnesota District
Mr. Randy Matter, board appointed advisory member
Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of the WELS Board for Ministerial Education
Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president
Pres. Mark Zarling, Martin Luther College





Luther Preparatory School

Floor Committee #13

Our calling

Luther Preparatory School (LPS), Watertown, Wis., has a single mission: To encourage and prepare young people for a lifetime of service in the public ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

LPS is owned and operated by WELS. The synod has given LPS the privilege and responsibility to carry out this important work. The LPS Governing Board, faculty, and staff are grateful to our church body, which supports the work of LPS with its prayers and gifts.

That LPS fulfills its purpose is seen by the fact that since its beginning in 1995, 55 percent of all Luther Prep graduates have enrolled at Martin Luther College (MLC). Over the past ten years, LPS graduates have comprised more than 20 percent of the MLC student body. Over the same ten year period, LPS graduates have made up one-third of students in the MLC pastor track and more than one-third of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's (WLS) student body. God graciously blesses the work done at LPS, which in turn benefits our synod.

Luther Prep depends on three sources of funding to carry out its calling: 1) synod support, 2) payments for tuition, room, and board, and 3) special gifts from congregations, groups, and individuals. We are grateful for the gospel's work of prompting such generosity and thankful hearts in God's people.

Our current situation

Enrollment

LPS opened school year 2014–15 with an enrollment of 442. After a decade of decline, the enrollment at LPS has now increased for five of the last six years. Based on the number of applications, LPS expects another modest increase in enrollment next fall. Our students come from 25 states, 9 foreign countries, 187 congregations, and all 12 WELS districts. More than two-thirds of our students come from lay families.

Recruitment to LPS, with an eye on future full-time gospel ministry, remains a top priority. We always invite and welcome all WELS upper grade students to visit our campus, "shadow" a Prep student, and spend a night in one of the dormitories to get a feel for Prep life. We host annual recruitment events such as WELS area and national co-ed basketball tournaments, Phoenix for a Day, the fall play, children's theater, and the musical, as well as summer music and athletic camps. Each year these events bring 4,500 WELS grade school students from across the country to our campus.

Preparing for the mission

The Word is central in all we do. Chapel is the heartbeat of our campus life as worship services are held twice daily. All classes are taught from a scriptural perspective, and students are encouraged in their personal devotional lives. The Holy Spirit works through the means of grace to encourage and prepare our young people for lives of gospel ministry and service.

The LPS curriculum is designed to prepare students to meet or exceed the requirements of MLC. LPS recognizes the need and desire for future musicians in our Lutheran congregations and classrooms. More than 95 percent of our students take piano lessons. The LPS organ program produces the most organ students for MLC. Many students are involved in the jazz band and string, brass, and wind ensembles. All students take at least one year of Latin and three consecutive years of a foreign language in order to thoroughly prepare them for future language studies, especially those in the biblical languages.

Because our purpose is to prepare future pastors and teachers, LPS offers age-appropriate ministry experiences to its students. All of our seniors take part in our Taste of Ministry program, in which prospective pastor students spend two days with an area WELS pastor, and our prospective teacher students spend two days in a classroom with an area elementary school teacher. Project Timothy is a program designed to provide mission, ministry, and cross-cultural experiences to LPS students. Approximately 50 students will assist with outreach and education programs of mission congregations in St. Lucia, Antigua, California, Virginia, Georgia, Texas, and Canada. Also, senior boys are given the opportunity to prepare and speak an evening devotion to the student body.

Each year the entire junior class visits Martin Luther College. By the time our students graduate, each one will have met at least four times with an MLC recruiter. An array of missionaries, professors, teachers, pastors, and MLC and WLS students present topical ministry workshops at our annual Ministry Day. The entire student body takes part in Ministry Day. Sophomores also take an annual trip to the seminary, and seniors in the LPS pastor track visit the seminary each fall for worship, class visitation, and a tour. WELS world missionaries from Russia, Nepal, and South East Asia gave presentations to the entire faculty and student body this school year.

God has given 150 years of grace to our synod's campus in Watertown, Wis. This ministerial education school opened with little fanfare and more than a little uncertainty in September 1865. God in his grace has preserved it for all of these years. So we celebrate God's gracious work with *LPS150 . . . Lives Prepared for Service—150 years*.

Luther Prep enjoyed a special relationship with WELS Ministry of Christian Giving this past year. Throughout the first semester LPS President Matt Crass was given the privilege to travel across the country with gift counselors in our synod's Ministry of Christian Giving. Together they met face to face with almost 1,000 of our synod's members from all 12 districts to tell them the "story"—past, present, and future—of ministerial education on the synod's Watertown campus. Our WELS members were most hospitable and generous.

The LPS Governing Board determined that the offering gathered for the celebration of LPS150 would be divided between long-term financial aid and refurbishment of the chapel. At a cost approaching \$10,000 for each student per year for tuition, room, and board (this does not include travel and other expenses), it's quite clear the majority of families need aid in order to offer their sons and daughters for gospel ministry. After 60 years and thousands upon thousands of worship services, the chapel is showing its age. We thank God for the rich generosity of his people who have offered more than \$500,000 toward the anniversary fund.

A look ahead

The celebration of LPS150 will reach its culmination on Nov. 15, 2015, at a 3 p.m. worship service at Luther Prep. The choirs of the four synod schools will participate. Former LPS president and current WELS President Mark Schroeder will deliver the sermon. All are cordially invited to join us in praise to our God of salvation for the thousands of young people who have been prepared for ministry and other forms of service through the education provided on this campus, whether the name was Northwestern University, Northwestern College, Northwestern Prep, or Luther Preparatory School.

Beginning with the 2015–16 school year, LPS will fully integrate a 1:1 initiative to create a technology-rich environment for both teaching and learning. Every student will be equipped with a Chromebook for use in class and in the dormitory using the wireless secure student network. This will allow LPS faculty to have additional options for presentation of information in classes along with access to current information in the classroom. It is important that our students learn to use these tools, which they in turn will utilize in their future classrooms and churches.

The chapel organ has served this campus very well for more than 50 years. It is now in need of some rather extensive and expensive repairs. Retired MLC Prof. Ed Meyer is serving as the LPS organ consultant. After hearing his recommendations, the LPS Governing Board voted to retain the current organ. On the occasion of the 150th anniversary, the LPS Governing Board also voted to enhance the organ by adding more voices, in order to adequately address the expanded chapel space built in 1995. LPS will be gathering gifts in the coming year(s) to repair and enhance the instrument that has served us so well for two generations, and, Lord willing, will serve God's people well for another two or more generations. Because the organ is a central figure in our worship, the refurbishment of the chapel will not take place until the organ specifications and location are determined.

Music is an integral component of our heritage, the Church, and Lutheran worship. The Lord has blessed LPS with an excellent music program and numerous musically gifted students, all preparing for service in the Church. The LPS music auditorium, built during the President William Howard Taft administration, is 103 years old. The Luther Prep Governing Board has addressed the potential construction of a new auditorium, once the chapel has been refurbished and the organ repaired and enhanced. The Arizona-California District encouraged this at its 2014 district convention. Should a new auditorium be built, the present auditorium would be repurposed to its original use and serve as a secondary gymnasium to accommodate our freshmen and plethora of intramural teams, as well as functioning in other capacities.

The synod's Watertown campus is well maintained. Our buildings have an average age of 65 years each. Repairs and replacement for roofs, windows, flooring, fixtures, heating, etc. remain ongoing. We ask God's blessings upon the

work of the synod's Capital Projects Committee as it addresses the maintenance needs at the synod campuses. Luther Prep will have exhausted most, if not all, of its financial reserves at the end of this biennium and will be relying more heavily upon synod support for such capital repairs and improvements.

Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Luke 10:2). The saints have been praying that prayer for the past two millennia. With the number of young men at WLS and the number of young men in the pastor track at MLC being the fewest on those campuses since the late 1950s and early 1960s, with the number of vacancies in ministry in WELS on the rise, and with our desire to establish even more home and world missions, the Lord's invitation to prayer becomes even more compelling. We pray fervently that the Lord will move the hearts of parents to offer their sons and daughters for gospel ministry, and that young people will consider the high calling of gospel ministry. We pray that for the next 150 years . . . even until Christ returns . . . God pours out on LPS his grace to "continue in what we have become convinced of" (2 Timothy 3:14).

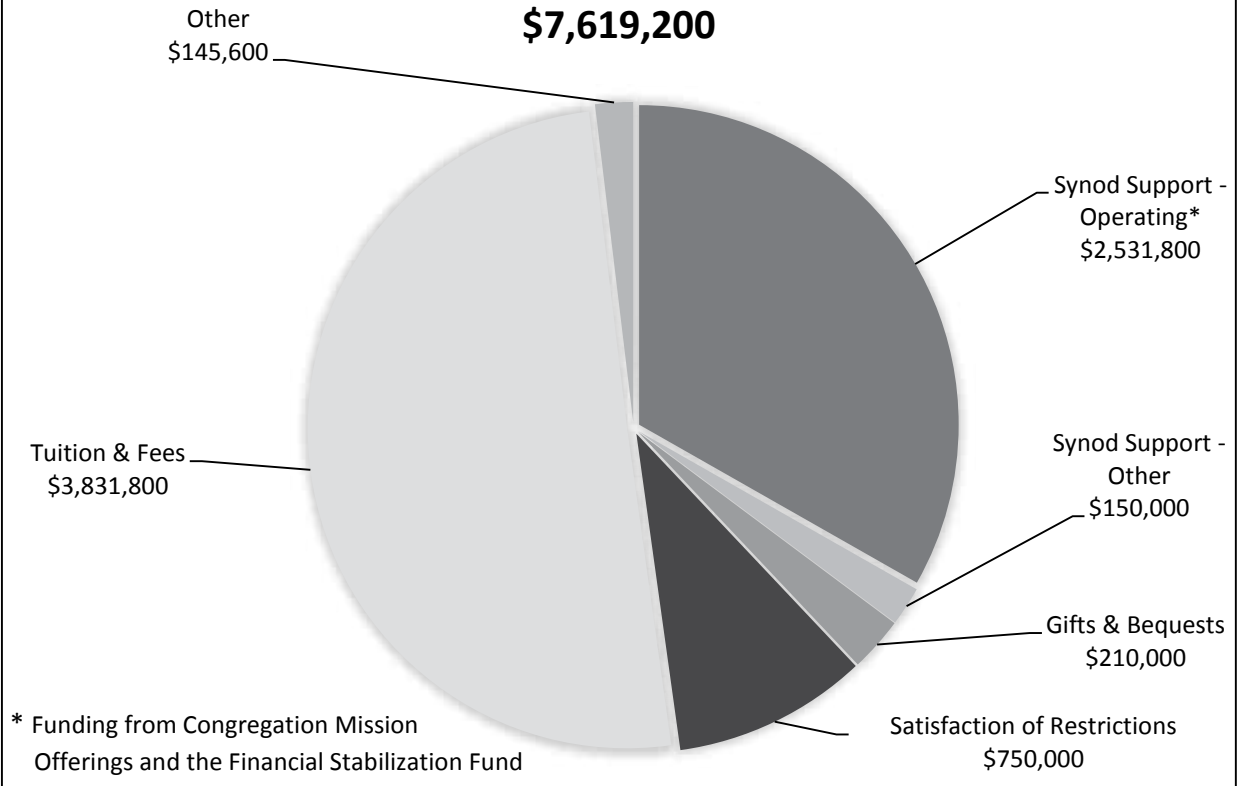
Pres. Matthew Crass, reporter

Rev. Kenneth Brokmeier, chairman
Rev. Timothy Spaude, vice chairman
Dr. John Meyer, secretary
Rev. John Eich
Teacher Adam Glodowski
Rev. Stephen Hein
Mr. Martin Madson
Mr. Joel Scott

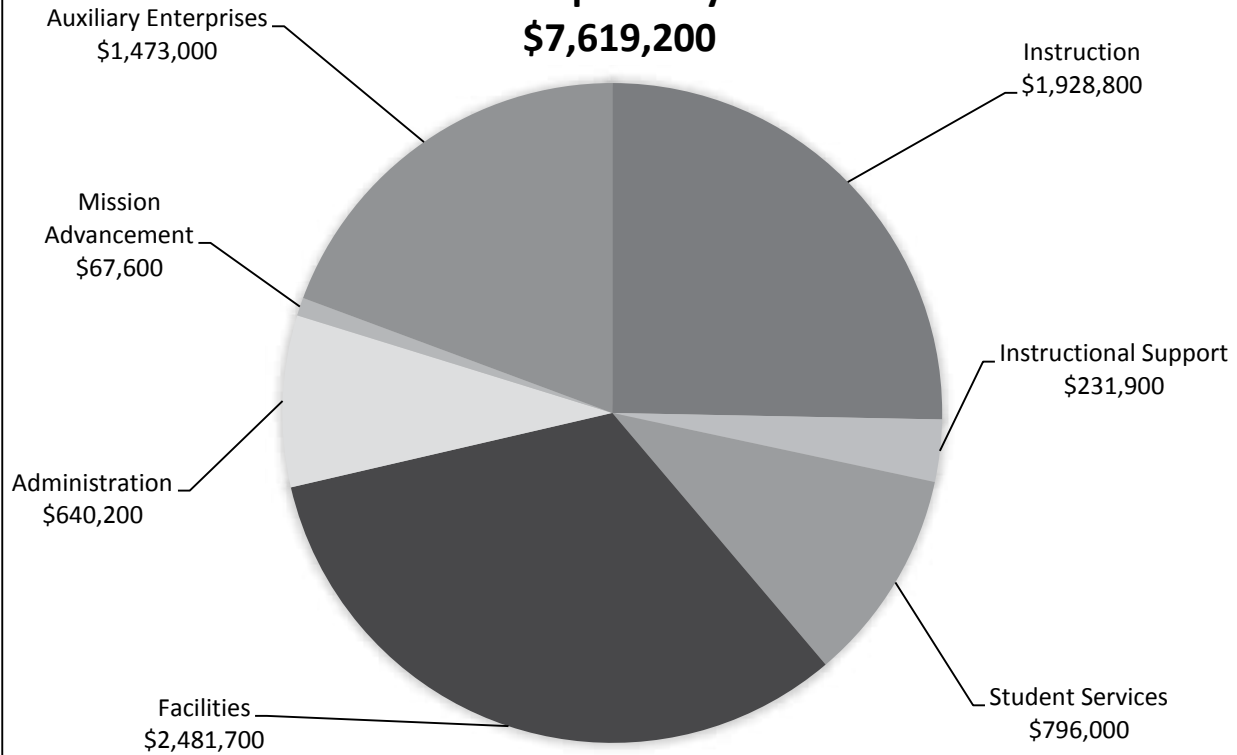
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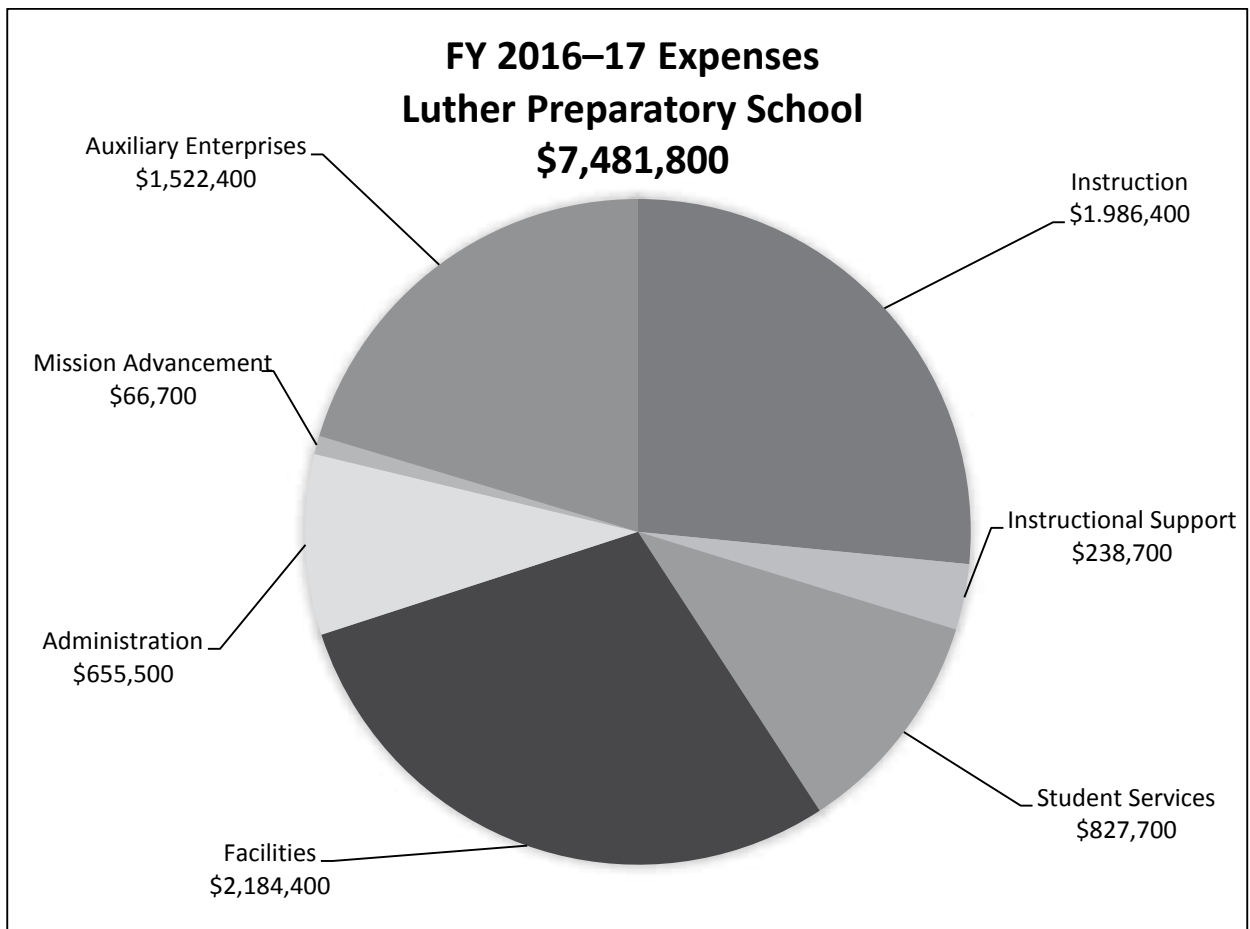
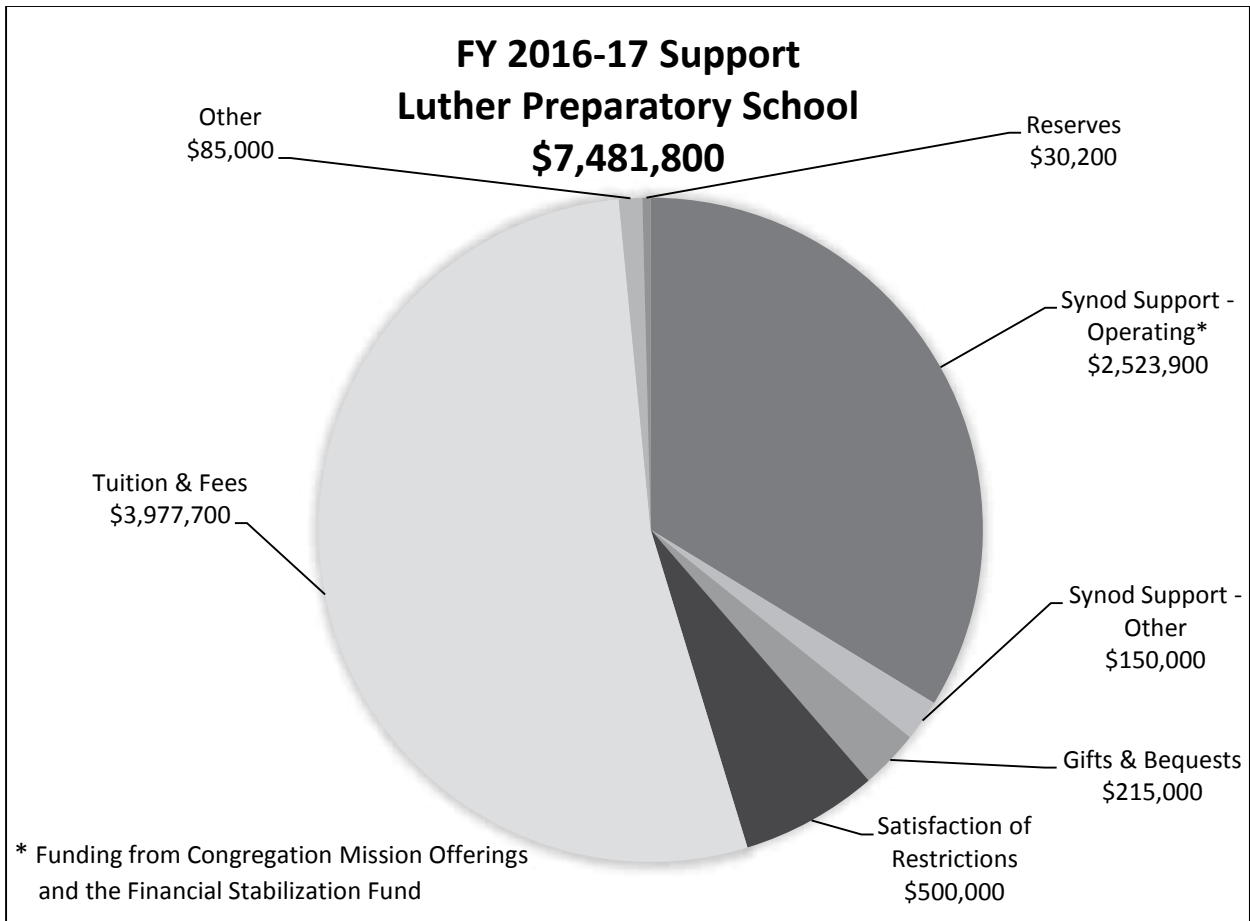
Pres. Matthew Crass, Luther Preparatory School
Rev. Philip Hirsch, chairman of WELS Board for Ministerial Education
Rev. Herbert Prah, president of the Western Wisconsin District
Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of WELS Board for Ministerial Education
Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president

**FY 2015-16 Support
Luther Preparatory School
\$7,619,200**



**FY 2015-16 Expenses
Luther Preparatory School
\$7,619,200**





Michigan Lutheran Seminary

Floor Committee #13

Our calling

Michigan Lutheran Seminary (MLS), Saginaw, Mich., serves WELS as part of its three-tier, four-school ministerial education system. MLS serves as one of two schools at the high school level forming the first tier of training future ministers of the gospel. As students are trained, MLS encourages them to continue their preparation upon graduation at Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn.

MLS also enrolls international students as a partner with the Board for World Missions. In this role, MLS offers training to young international boys and girls who are recommended as students for further training in the Lutheran faith. The goal is that they might serve as possible future gospel ministers in the public preaching or teaching ministry or as dedicated lay members of growing foreign mission fields.

God's blessing on our mission is seen in the fact that on average 43 percent of our students have continued their training for the public ministry at MLC over the last 8 years. We also have 18 international students currently enrolled.

Our current situation

Enrollment

MLS began the 2014–15 school year with an enrollment of 233. This was the first year that the enrollment did not see an increase since the low of 181 in the 2009–10 school year. At the time of this writing, MLS has received 46 applications for the 2015–16 school year. Our recruitment department anticipates about 30 more applications, which would suggest a possible freshmen class size for next year between 50 and 60. With our current large senior class (65) graduating in May, it is likely we will see a slight decline in enrollment again next year. Low enrollments in many of the grade schools from which we draw students may be part of the cause of this slight plateau for a few years. We are studying enrollments in the lower grades to determine what to expect in future years. We have also stepped up our recruitment in the lower grades as well as in outlying districts with the hopes of enrolling more students from both the Michigan District as well as elsewhere in WELS. To do this we have added an additional part-time recruiter who also serves as a part-time tutor in our dormitory. Below is a breakdown of our 2014–15 opening enrollment.

<i>Grade level</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
9	35	21	56
10	24	31	55
11	24	28	52
12	38	32	70
TOTAL	121	112	233

Dorm students: 152 (65%)

Commuting students: 81 (35%)

International students: 18

Districts represented: 6 of 12

States represented: 11

From Michigan: 196 (84%)

Faculty: 27

Staff: 32

The 18 international students represent six foreign countries including Canada, Germany (from the ELFK), Mexico, South Korea (from Canaan Lutheran Academy), China (connected with Friends of China and China Partners), and Hong Kong (SALEM). The MLS Governing Board has encouraged our international recruiter, Prof. Norval Kock, to continue to actively seek out students in many foreign countries who meet our criteria for WELS affiliation and who would benefit from our program.

Preparing for our mission

Encouragement and preparation for the public ministry occurs on campus, in local congregations, and through field experiences.

All of our students learn God's Great Exchange and how to share their faith with others. All of our students take piano lessons and some go on to organ playing, which is a recognized need in our synod. Seniors are visited regularly by the admissions counselors from Martin Luther College. Sophomores enjoy a special banquet called "Sophomore Night" at which representatives of both Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary talk to them about the next levels of training for public ministry and what to expect. Juniors go on "college tour" for a week to see the other three ministerial education schools of our synod. Freshmen attend Ministry Day at which local pastors and teachers share their stories, joys, and challenges of the ministry to get them thinking about whether they too might serve Jesus in this special way. The entire student body participates in an annual Mission Seminar that highlights some area of our synod's gospel outreach at home and abroad.

Taste of Ministry is an opportunity for our girls and boys to spend time with an experienced teacher or pastor in the area. Getting into the classroom or seeing what goes on in a pastor's life beyond the pulpit often has a profound effect on our student's ministry decisions.

Project Titus is the name given to MLS's program of early field experience that takes place during the summer months. Each year students have the opportunity to sign up for one or more experiences. This might include canvassing, helping with a vacation Bible school or soccer Bible camp, or helping with a summer program at one of our Lutheran elementary schools. In the recent past students have participated in Project Titus trips to North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Virginia, Maryland, and Wisconsin. In addition there were foreign trips to Colombia, China, and Germany. These trips provide not only ministry experiences but also a sensitivity and understanding of other cultures.

Most recently we have added Project Titus-Saginaw to our ministry experiences for our students. This program connects students all year round with ministry opportunities right here in Saginaw. Students have assisted at a pregnancy counseling center, participated in a special needs children's program, visited at a nursing home, and helped with local outreach events done by the Saginaw WELS churches. We hope that this new program will continue to evolve and expand over the coming years.

All of these enable MLS students to make informed, mature, and Spirit-led decisions about full-time service in the public ministry.

Faculty and staff

Mr. Chris Kestner was added to our staff as business manager in the summer of 2013. Mr. Robert DeVore began service as our food service manager in the summer of 2014 after our previous food service manager, Renae Bunker, retired. Dr. William Zeiger and his wife, Carolyn, who served as librarian, both retired at the end of the 2013-14 school year. They served MLS for a combined 76 years. Dr. Zeiger also served about six years as acting president during that time. Prof. Terry Vasold will be retiring at the end of the 2014-15 school year. He has served as history professor at MLS for 34 of his 47 years of ministry.

Instructor Seth LaBair accepted the call to replace retiring Prof. Vasold as professor of history. Vasold accepted a part-time, one-year call to teach government and economics. Teacher M. Brian Kopp of Ft. Myers, Fla., accepted the call to be professor of English and curriculum coordinator to replace Dr. Zeiger. Teacher Erin Scharenbroch accepted the call to teach Spanish and serve as a tutor for one year.

MLS thanks the Lord for the faithful service of those who are retiring as well as Professors Weihrauch and Wooster who celebrated 40th anniversaries in the ministry in the last biennium. We are also grateful for the service of Tutor Joel Voss, Tutors Joe and Jackie Gawel, and Tutor Michelle Hintz who completed their service on our campus during the biennium.

Facilities

The Lord has provided MLS with excellent facilities through WELS. Most recently we were also blessed through the support of the MLS Foundation, which works in partnership with WELS and MLS to provide support to our school. Thanks to the generous gifts of donors, MLS was able to refurbish all six of the floors in our dormitories used for student housing. The refurbishment included new paint, carpeting, window treatments, door locks, heaters, and

furniture. The total cost of the project was approximately \$650,000. The students at MLS have been thrilled with this renovation.

Another change on our campus was the decommissioning of two computer labs. This was possible due to the installation of campuswide WiFi and the implementation of a 1:1 computer plan. Together with smartboards, short-throw projectors, and e-texts, these changes are helping us to prepare our students for service in a technology rich world.

Finances

Thanks to some additional support from WELS through the Board for Ministerial Education and also some bequests and large gifts received by MLS, we have made it through the last biennium in the black. However, our reserves are still minimal and we will be working to restore them to a level that will help us to weather any unexpected capital needs as well as enrollment fluctuations.

Special thanks

MLS gives thanks to the Lord for the faithful service of Mr. Peter Naumann of the Pacific Northwest District who resigned from the governing board due to the press of personal responsibilities. The governing board welcomes Mr. Keith Kriewall, also from the Pacific Northwest District, as his replacement.

The future of our mission

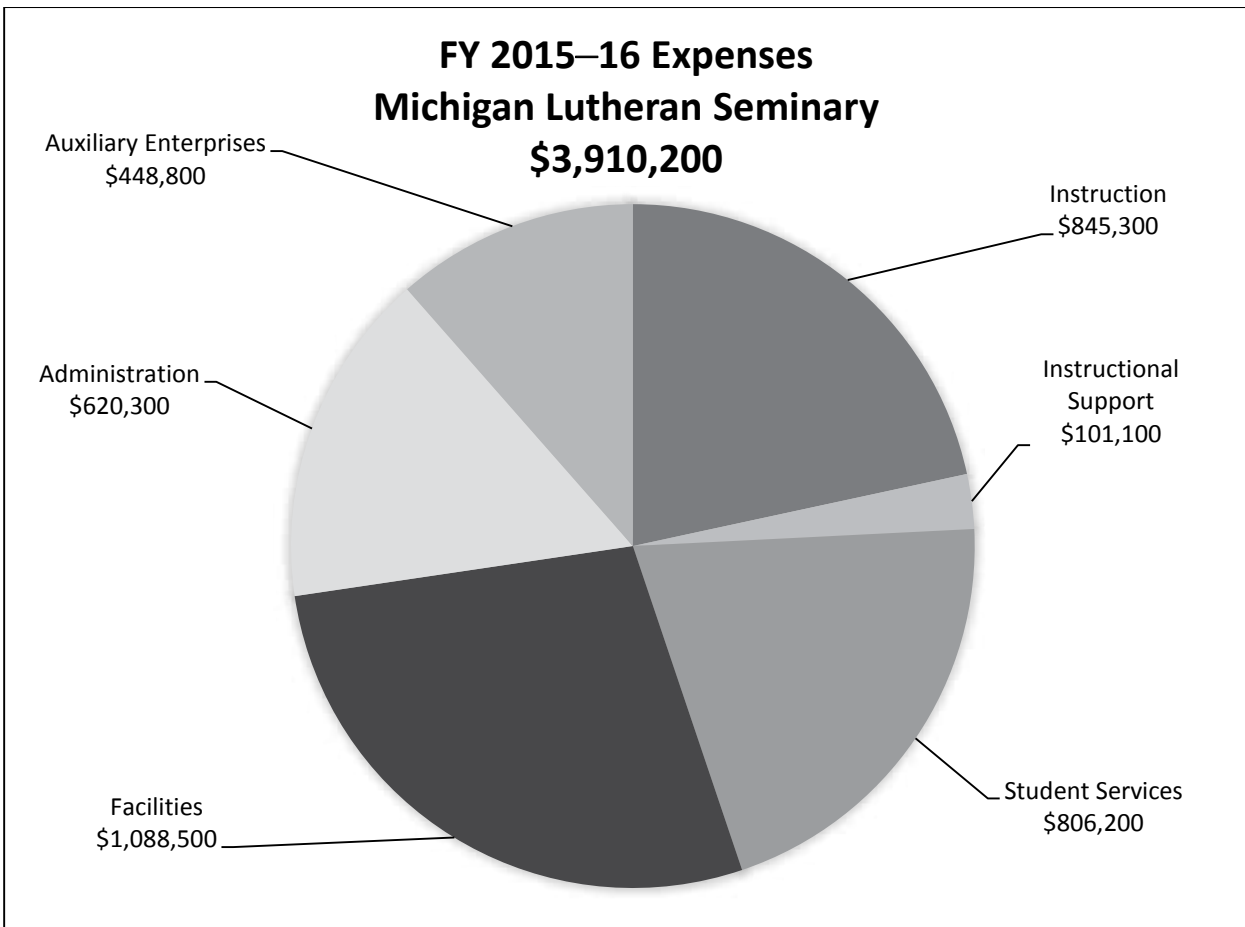
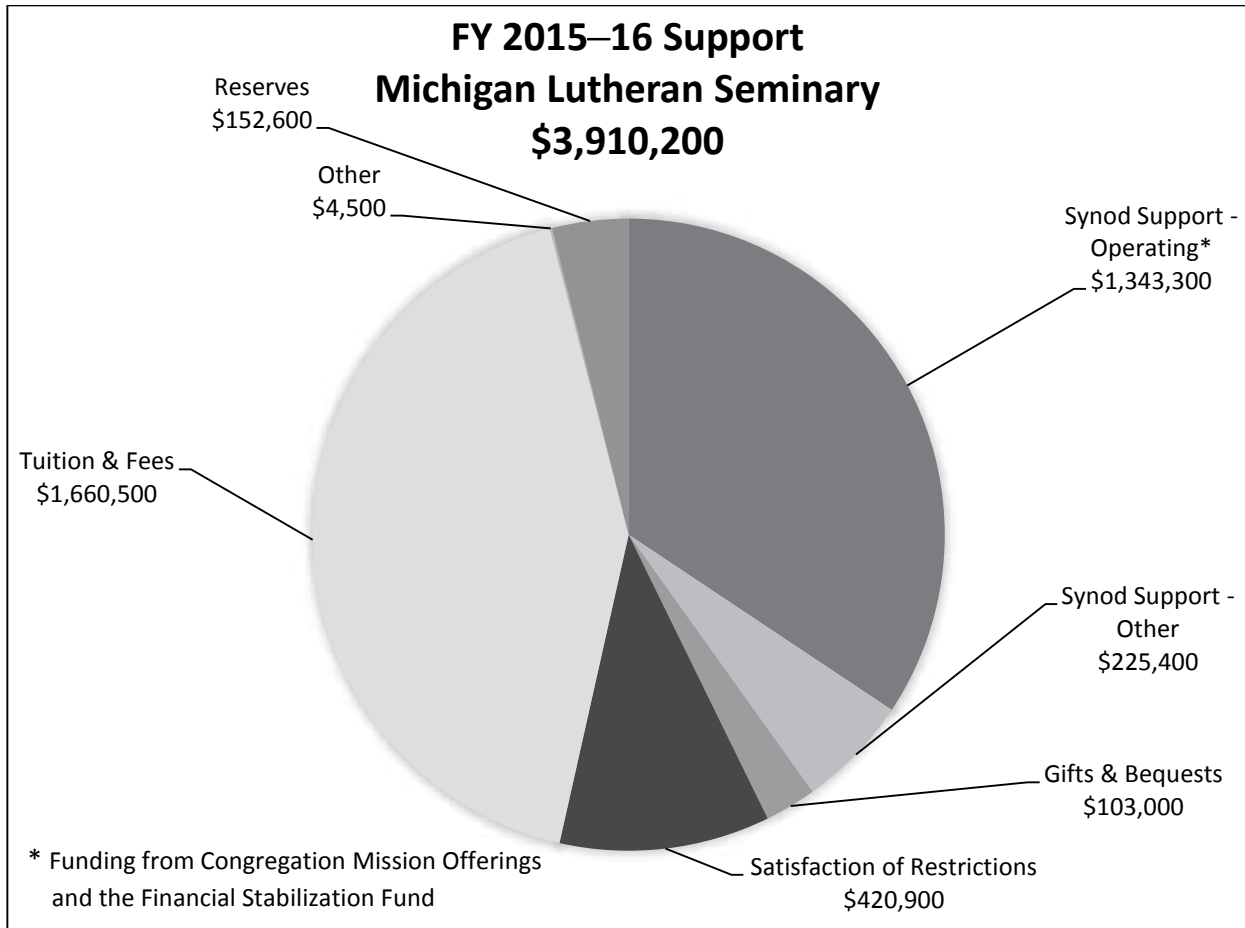
MLS is very optimistic about the future. Increased recruitment efforts in the outlying districts of our synod are bearing fruit for future called workers. The lower grades of many grade schools in our immediate district are exhibiting larger numbers than are currently in the upper grades. New opportunities are presenting themselves in the city of Saginaw that could bear fruit for future called workers. Though the percentages that go on to MLC and enter the public ministry of the gospel go up and down from year to year, we know that the Lord will bless that which we do in his name and pray in his name. MLS will continue to send a significant share of each graduating class to MLC and also entrust to our synod other students who will serve faithfully as spiritually mature and well-trained laymen and women in our synod's congregations. To him be the glory!

Pres. Joel Petermann, reporter

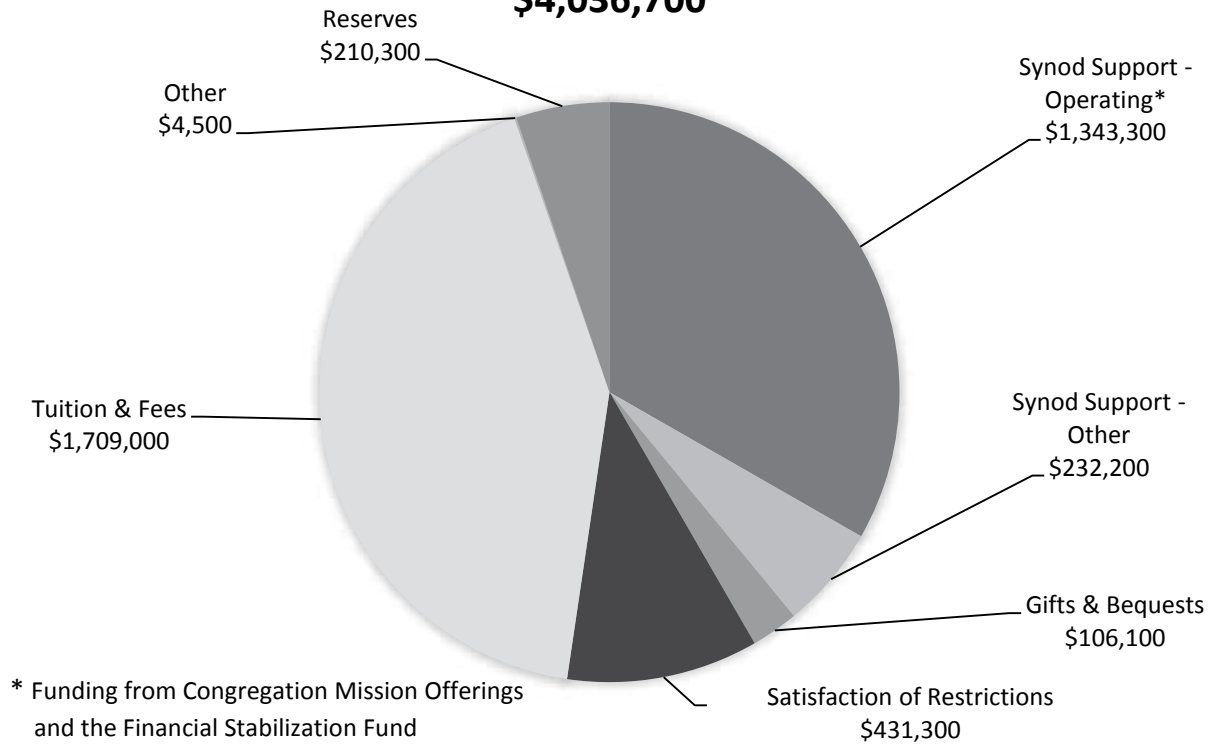
Rev. Greg Gibbons, chairman, Michigan District
Rev. Philip Paustian, vice-chairman, Northern Wisconsin District
Teacher Steven Carlovsky, secretary, Southeastern Wisconsin District
Prof. David Bauer, Minnesota District
Mr. Mark Eubank, Michigan District
Mr. Keith Kriewall, Pacific Northwest District
Mr. Loren Mathison, Western Wisconsin District
Rev. Marc VonDeylen, South Central District

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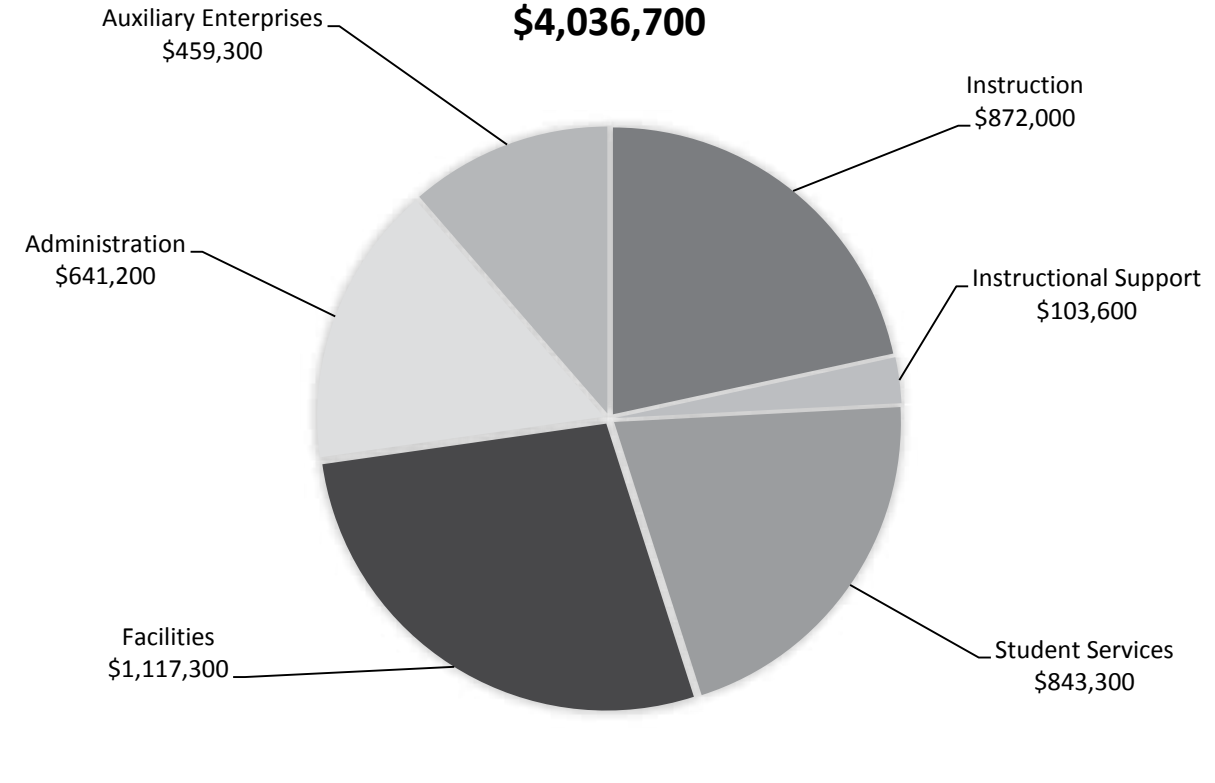
Pres. Joel Petermann, Michigan Lutheran Seminary
Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of WELS Board for Ministerial Education
Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president
Rev. John Seifert, president of the Michigan District



**FY 2016–17 Support
Michigan Lutheran Seminary
\$4,036,700**



**FY 2016–17 Expenses
Michigan Lutheran Seminary
\$4,036,700**



Subsidiaries and affiliate

A number of subsidiary groups and one affiliate serve the synod. These entities do not receive support from the synod's operating budget. Each is governed by a board that is accountable to the synod via the Synodical Council.

Northwestern Publishing House Floor Committee #17

Our calling

The constitution of WELS indicates, "The object and purpose of the synod shall be to extend and conserve the true doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church." As outlined in the constitution, Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) fulfills this object and purpose "by printing, publishing, purchasing, selling, and disseminating literature that maintains Lutheran doctrine and practice" and "by furnishing appropriate literature for parish schools, Sunday schools, missions, institutions, and churches."

The mission of Northwestern Publishing House is to deliver biblically sound, Christ-centered resources within the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and beyond. For more than 120 years NPH has prepared materials that are consistent with this mission and aligned with Lutheran doctrine and practice. NPH does this without receiving funds from the WELS operating budget. The WELS constitution dictates that the proceeds NPH receives from sales of materials to individuals, congregations, and schools shall be used to develop and publish new materials. Our calling, then, is to continue to proclaim God's love in Christ through the careful use of the resources God grants to us.

Our current situation

Business and ministry

As a self-funding ministry, Northwestern Publishing House is subject to business trends and dynamics and must daily apply solid business principles to be successful as a ministry. Several factors in recent years have shaped the current business situation at NPH.

- NPH's primary customer base—WELS members—is declining in number.
- Competition has increased and there seems to be a growing acceptance of alternative sources of Christian products among WELS pastors and members.
- Core church supply materials such as periodicals, bulletins, and offering envelopes have declined in sales.

Although NPH is challenged by these factors, an increased investment in marketing and expanded distribution in the past 18 months have resulted in encouraging gains that have slowed the downward sales trend.

- Whether by e-mail, direct mail, in-store events, or promotions, customers are increasingly responding to our efforts to reach them.
- We continue to see success with our Facebook presence in establishing an ongoing conversation with our customers. All measures of engagement continue to grow.
- More customers are purchasing from the NPH website. Promotions and improved website search capability are making a difference.
- Distribution through Amazon continues to increase with sales to date of more than 7,000 print and eBooks. Most importantly, this represents a significant number of people that we may not have reached with God's Word if we were not on Amazon.
- Digital content is showing promising performance with nearly 30,000 downloads (more than 1,000 annual subscriptions) of the *Meditations* daily devotional app in 153 countries.

- Book fairs, relaunched this past year, continue to grow with more than 150 events hosted, providing an opportunity to directly reach our church members.

Publishing program

NPH continues to focus on developing products that we pray will provide a benefit to those we serve. During the last biennium, NPH published four books for pastoral growth, fourteen books for layperson growth, two personal devotionals, seven Bible studies, seven worship resources, five vacation Bible school courses, Christ-Light Lutheran elementary school and Sunday school curriculum, and twenty-one music titles. In addition, NPH published *Meditations*, *Forward in Christ*, *Parents Crosslink*, and *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*.

Collaborative projects

NPH is currently engaged in a number of exciting collaborative projects with WELS commissions, committees, and parasynodical agencies. The list of projects includes: new *Forward in Christ* content, hymnology curriculum, Bible studies, worship education materials, *Everyday* video series, catechism, Reformation 500, broader reach publishing, and of course, the Hymnal Project. NPH also participated in the development of the new outreach video *My Son, My Savior* and has commissioned authors to create complementary materials tied to the video.

Close collaboration continues between NPH and Multi-Language Publications (MLP) with NPH providing content translated by MLP for use throughout the world. This content includes a number of books and other materials along with Christmas and Easter for Kids. NPH further supports MLP's efforts by providing warehousing, e-commerce, distribution, and customer service facilities and expertise. NPH is currently assisting MLP in testing sales through Amazon for future distribution growth.

Christ-Light curriculum

NPH completed a revision of Christ-Light, including a Sunday school version of the curriculum. NPH recently conducted extensive research with pastors, school principals, and teachers and has started exploration on the next curriculum and how technology will impact the classroom in both Sunday schools and elementary schools.

Digital publishing

NPH has taken steps to deliver content in ways that are relevant today with more than 120 books in e-Book format, distribution of more than 100 titles through Logos, more than 400 downloadable products, digital *Forward in Christ*, and launch of the *Meditations* daily devotional app. While digital publishing is an important strategy for NPH, distribution of digital products represents a relatively small portion of a publisher's sales, and therefore print versions will remain critical to NPH's success as a ministry.

Broader reach

Aligned with NPH's mission, the NPH Board of Directors adopted a proposal to call an additional editor to concentrate on developing materials for broader reach. Pastor Christopher Doerr accepted the board's call and began his work this year to develop materials that share our witness to the gospel with Christians beyond WELS, "fringe" Christians, and non-Christians.

Technology and infrastructure

NPH is proactively managing its technology infrastructure to enhance customer experience and facilitate increased work efficiency. NPH recently installed a new enterprise-wide business system that replaces an outdated platform and provides better reporting and integration of efforts across all business functions. An upgrade to design and printing systems was also implemented to provide greater efficiency in the book and marketing design areas. In addition, an upgrade of our e-commerce website is currently underway to provide a better customer shopping experience and more opportunities to provide effective marketing.

Marketing programs

In addition to ongoing product marketing, the NPH Marketing Department has adopted an omni-channel marketing campaign approach to reach customers with a consistent and compelling message regardless of the NPH channel they visit. These comprehensive quarterly campaigns include e-mail, targeted direct mail, church bulletin materials, Facebook, store signage, bag stuffers, package inserts, price promotions, and in-store events. To increase top-of-mind awareness among WELS members, an awareness campaign was launched going into this past holiday season. We appreciate the many pastors who showed the video to their members and regularly support the informational materials NPH distributes to their churches. A pastor's advocacy for NPH is critical to our ability to reach his church members with the books and other materials we develop for them.

A look ahead

As we look ahead, we thank and praise God for the blessings he has provided. Certainly the future is not for us to know and rests securely in the Lord's hands. Nevertheless, we look ahead with a desire to be good stewards of the resources God has graciously given, a positive—even hopeful—attitude, and a willingness to work while we have the opportunity.

Hymnal Project

With the WELS Hymnal Project, led by Pastor Michael Schultz, now in its third year, seven subcommittees and one executive committee are fully engaged in their work. Review of existing hymns, psalms, and rites is nearing completion. New hymns, psalms, and rites will be identified in the near future. Approaches and guidelines for future content, as well as first drafts of various tables of content, are being reviewed by the executive committee.

Many changes have taken place in the way churches use hymnals and related materials. When the current hymnal was released 22 years ago, the approach by nearly all churches was “one book used in one way.” Today (and no doubt increasingly in the future) churches utilize a variety of resources and present the materials in many different ways. The Hymnal Committee has focused significant effort on understanding the best approaches to address these changes. Four national user surveys (pastors, teachers and Sunday school teachers, musicians, and laypeople) and two content feedback surveys (125 congregations) have provided insights. Field testing will be one of the next major initiatives, slated for most of 2017.

For more information on the Hymnal Project, see p. 39.

Hymnology curriculum

Mr. Carl Nolte, the sacred music and worship editor at NPH, is working with a subcommittee of the WELS Commission on Worship that is preparing a hymnology curriculum for Lutheran elementary schools. The projected release date for this three-year curriculum is spring 2017.

Worship education material

Pastor Dan Schroeder, Bible studies editor at NPH, and representatives of the WELS Commission on Worship (Pastor Jon Zabell, Pastor Aaron Christie) are developing the next generation of worship education material. The last product, *Come Worship Christ*, is in need of updating. With the introduction of the new hymnal, we believe there will be renewed interest in the area of understanding our Lutheran worship. This project is in its early stages of development.

Forward in Christ

Beginning with the January 2015 issue, *Forward in Christ* now includes a parenting column titled *Heart to heart: Parent conversations*. In collaboration with the WELS communications director, content for the column is being leveraged and expanded upon in blogs, the WELS website, the WELS and NPH Facebook pages, and *Parents Crosslink* magazine. Research will be pursued to better understand readership of *Forward in Christ* and continuously ensure content is relevant and best serves WELS members.

Bible studies

Based on extensive research, NPH is reformatting Bible studies to provide greater relevance and to better address the ways adults learn today. Pastor Dan Schroeder, Bible studies editor, and representatives of the WELS Commission on Adult Discipleship (Pastor Randy Hunter) and the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary education department (Prof. Tom Kock) have begun work on a plan to offer assistance to our current and future pastors in leading Bible studies. The plan includes a monthly “Teach the Word” e-newsletter that will provide practical advice and information to help pastors better understand adult learning. The three representatives are also working on a seminar that will assist pastors in teaching adults. This will be a follow up to the “Training the Trainer” seminars that WELS Adult Discipleship conducted in recent years around the synod.

Catechism

Pastor John Braun, vice president of editorial services at NPH, and Pastor Ray Schumacher, curriculum editor at NPH, are working with two members of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's Education Department, Prof. Joel Otto and Prof. Stephen Geiger, on a new exposition of the catechism. A preliminary field test of the section on the Lord's Supper has been completed with feedback incorporated. The goal is to have a rough draft completed by the end of the year with another field test done before project completion. Release date of the exposition and curricular material is to be determined.

Bible translations

NPH continues to pursue an “eclectic approach,” as directed by synod resolution, utilizing the best translation for the context of any given work. In recent months NPH has faced challenges and opportunities in fulfilling this direction.

Zondervan has asked NPH to discontinue use of NIV84 going forward. All works currently in development or already in print with NIV84 may contain the translation. However, no future works can include NIV84. NPH will utilize NIV11 in the future as one translation option. NPH will also utilize the English Standard Version (ESV) and the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) as translation options. We anticipate revisions to the HCSB as a result of the recommendations submitted by the WELS Translation Liaison Committee.

Selected from among other potential publishers, an agreement was reached between the Wartburg Project and NPH to print and distribute the Wartburg Project Bible translation. As translation work continues by the Wartburg Project, it is anticipated that a New Testament and Psalms edition will be ready for release in fall 2017. A complete Bible will be introduced at a future date yet to be determined.

NPH has not and will not participate in the translation or editing work involved in the Wartburg Project translation. Although NPH will publish the Wartburg Project translation, it will not be the official NPH translation or sole Bible translation offered by NPH or utilized in NPH materials. NPH will continue to pursue an “eclectic approach,” as directed by synod resolution, utilizing the best translation for the context of any given work. The Wartburg Project translation may be one potential translation option among others. Likewise, publishing of the Wartburg Project translation does not indicate that this is the official Bible translation of WELS. Once the Wartburg Project translation is published, NPH will welcome reviews of the translation before the text is used in other publications.

Reformation 500

Only two years from now, we will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. NPH is supporting synodwide efforts to observe this important event with resources for districts, congregations, schools, and individuals. NPH plans to release new titles and several books from past Luther offerings with an updated look. The objective of the mix of materials is to deepen the understanding of Martin Luther among our pastors, called workers, and Christians at all levels of maturity. NPH has also initiated a discussion with WELS Communication Services and WELS Commission on Evangelism to explore the creation and coordination of outreach materials to be used by local congregations for the anniversary. NPH encourages the 2015 convention of the synod to authorize the planning committee for the next synod convention to coordinate their efforts with the Reformation 500 Committee.

For more information on Reformation 500, see p. 58.

Business and ministry

NPH is a ministry, and its employees are grateful to God for the opportunity to serve his kingdom. NPH is also a business and must be effective as a business if it is to succeed as a ministry. As a publisher, retailer, marketer, distributor, and e-commerce channel, NPH is very different from the Center for Mission and Ministry and other WELS entities. The manufacturing, inventory, business, and point of sales systems, along with the accounting, hiring, and employee base required to operate NPH are much different as well. NPH is blessed with talented employees and leaders that are expert in their areas of business responsibility.

Unlike many synod ministries, NPH does not receive support from the synod’s operating budget. NPH functions as a self-supporting, self-funded operation. As such, NPH uses its income to sustain its operation, develop new products, and assist in funding joint publishing projects with the synod’s boards and commissions.

NPH is governed by a board of directors representing a cross section of pastors, teachers, and businessmen. Per synod and NPH bylaws, the NPH Board of Directors is responsible for the successful operations, financial management, and financial stability of NPH. This structure best supports the unique needs of NPH as both a business and ministry, provides for wise decision making, and facilitates timely business decisions and appropriate deployment of human and financial resources.

To be effective as both a business and ministry, NPH must have the tools, in-house expertise, and financial resources to rapidly make decisions and respond to market opportunities and customer needs. This is especially critical as NPH faces challenging business factors, establishes a firm foundation for future growth, and delivers major initiatives like the new hymnal, catechism, and Christ-Light. It is imperative, therefore, that NPH continue to fulfill its role in supporting the synod’s object and purpose by maintaining its internal reporting structure and financial resources.

Our thanks

Finally, we pause to give thanks for the service of Mr. Tom Siegel, who retired as vice president of finance and accounting, and Pastor Robert Koester who accepted a call back into the parish ministry. We are grateful for their long service to Northwestern Publishing House and pray the Lord will continue to bless them. We also are grateful for the service of Pastor John Stellick and Mr. William Strutz, whose terms on the NPH Board of Directors came to an end.

Mr. Bill Ziche, reporter

Prof. John Hartwig, chairman
Rev. Joel Schroeder, vice chairman
Mr. Edward Wolf, treasurer
Mr. Christopher Snyder, secretary
Mr. Michael McCormick
Mr. David Neujahr
Mr. Matthew Plocher
Rev. Luke Werre
Prof. Keith Wessel

Advisory:

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer

Administrative officers:

Mr. Bill Ziche, president
Rev. John Braun, vice president, editorial
Mr. Eric Krueger, vice president, finance and accounting
Mr. Todd Rebillot, vice president, human resources and operations

Publication Coordinating Commission Floor Committee #17

Our calling

The Publication Coordinating Commission (PCC) has the task of coordinating and prioritizing the publishing and media production of the synod's boards and commissions and Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) in order to avoid duplication of effort. In the past we have solicited publishing proposals for material that would not recover the cost of production and yet are deemed by the boards and commissions of the synod to be important. We have also evaluated publishing proposals of NPH that were deemed valuable but could not recover the cost of production. We reviewed and evaluated those proposals and awarded funds from the Publication Fund to those we considered vital.

Our current situation

A major portion of the Publication Fund of the commission helped establish the Financial Stabilization Fund. All projects that received funding from the Publication Fund before the transfer of the fund's resources were not affected, but no new projects have been initiated. A number of initiatives that received funding from the Publication Fund in the past are now being funded from other sources. One such initiative, Multi-Language Publications, is now funded through the budget of World Missions, and funding for video projects like *Come Follow Me* and *My Son, My Savior* has come through Evangelism, World Missions, and private donations. In addition, the Hymnal Project has been funded by Northwestern Publishing House.

The synod in convention resolved "that the synod make an effort to keep the PCC in its financial plans." Unfortunately, other fiscal responsibilities and challenges have made it impossible to add funds for the PCC. At the present time the Publication Fund has just over \$115,000 available. This balance is insufficient to fund any major projects but will likely be used to help produce some of the materials being prepared for Reformation 500 and other projects. In the past the PCC dedicated a portion of its funds to help offset the costs associated with theological works for our pastors that are not financially viable given the small market. Funding is still needed for several new professional books to be written by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary professors for pastoral training and professional growth.

A look ahead

Although the commission lacks sufficient funds for publication of projects, we still believe that publishing plans of the boards and committees of the synod should be channeled through the PCC in order to maintain some coordination and consistency. The future may not be clear at this point, but we simply rely on the Lord's blessing so that we can continue to proclaim his gospel with quality materials that reflect our scriptural and confessional standards.

Rev. John Braun, reporter

Rev. John Braun, chairman and vice president of Northwestern Publishing House

Rev. Curtis Jahn, Northwestern Publishing House

Rev. Bryan Gerlach, Congregation and Ministry Support Group

Rev. Paul Hartman, WELS Multi-Language Publications

Mr. Lee Hitter, WELS director of communications

Rev. Brian Keller

Rev. Harlyn Kuschel

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer

WELS Historical Institute

Floor Committee #8

Our calling

Our calling as WELS Historical Institute is to “preserve and present the story of God’s grace to WELS.” Our calling brings to mind the stone monument God directed Joshua to build when the nation of Israel had crossed the dry riverbed after God had cut off the flow of the Jordan River. Forever after when children asked, “What do these stones mean?” they would hear the account of this special manifestation of God’s grace.

Our current situation

The members of WELS Historical Institute work to provide a lasting witness of how God has worked among WELS with his blessing as we have proclaimed the message of his grace in Christ. To that end, our work over the last year focused on several projects, including:

- Publication of two *WELS Historical Institute Journals* each year (30 to 40 pages each). Each journal contains articles that focus on leaders, institutions, or events used by God to shape the course of Lutheranism and the history and work of WELS.
- Publication of two issues of the newsletter for members each year, which offer information about the work of the Historical Institute.
- Wisconsin Lutheran College and the WELS Historical Institute co-hosted the 2014 biennial Lutheran Historical Conference on Oct. 10–12, 2014. Lutheran archivists, historians, and librarians from around the country attended. Along with paper presentations, participants took a bus tour that included stops at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry, Luther Preparatory School, and the Norwegian-Lutheran settlement at Koshkonong, Wis., one of the sites of the 1880s Election Controversy. At the conference, a National Registry of Lutheran Historic Places was inaugurated. Two WELS sites were included as charter members—the Salem Landmark Church and the Watertown campus of Luther Preparatory School.
- A newly refurbished late 1800s reed organ—donated from St. John, Ridgely, Minn.—was dedicated in May.
- Presentation of *The War to End All Germans: Wisconsin Synod Lutherans and the First World War*, by Stephen Gurgel on Aug. 30.
- Presentation of *The Watertown Institution: A Look at the Establishment of the Training System*, by Prof. James Korthals on Sept. 27.

- Presentation of *The History of The Northwestern Lutheran—Celebrating 100 Years*, by Pastor John Braun on Oct. 19.
- Past presentations offered through the WELS Historical Institute are available on our website for a nominal donation. Go to www.welshistory.org.
- Continued restoration of the Landmark Church Museum back to its original 1863 condition.

A look ahead

The year 2015 will be another exciting one for WELS Historical Institute as a number of events and activities are planned. Presentations include the following:

- May 16, 10 a.m., Salem Landmark Church Museum, Milwaukee, Wis.—*Hymns Old and New* by Pastor Michael Schultz, the WELS Hymnal Project director, and Mr. Carl Nolte, the NPH sacred music and worship editor.
- June 13, 9:30 a.m., across the street from the Salem Landmark Church Museum, Milwaukee, Wis.—West Granville Cemetery Tour led by James Moeller.
- Aug. 6, 8 p.m., live online streaming event, www.wels.net/events—*The War to End All Germans: Wisconsin Synod Lutherans and the First World War* by Stephen Gurgel.
- Oct. 24, 10 a.m., Salem Landmark Church Museum, Milwaukee, Wis.—*Genealogy Study of Martin Luther* by Gerald Vanselow.
- Oct. 31, 10 a.m., St. Paul, Muskego, Wis.—*The Life of Martin Luther* portrayed by historian David Wiedenkiller.

In addition to these presentations, on Sept. 19 and 20 the Salem Landmark Church Museum will be one of the historic sites listed on the Doors Open Milwaukee event. People can tour the building and learn more about our synod's history.

Additional events and tours are being planned for 2015. Please visit www.welshistory.org for updates.

The development of the Little School in the Woods program and curriculum continues to be a goal. Funding goals were not met in 2014, but efforts are underway to raise the necessary funds to continue the project. When the program has been completed, grade school students will have the opportunity to visit the classroom as part of a museum tour and get a taste of an 1880s classroom experience. An online curriculum will also be developed and available for fourth grade classrooms in WELS. The curriculum will include information on our synod's history as well as early German immigration to America.

WELS Historical Institute continues to offer tours of the grounds and building of Salem Lutheran Landmark Church and Museum, the site of the constituting convention of the Wisconsin Synod in May 1850. Tours can take up to an hour and are normally conducted between March and November. Special arrangements can be made for out-of-town visitors any time of the year. Individuals, families, congregations, schools and organizations can arrange a tour by contacting the tour coordinator, Dr. Joel Pless, at 414-443-8930 (office), 262-677-2109 (home), or joel.pless@wlc.edu. With the retirement of three of Salem's tour guides, the institute is actively recruiting new tour guides for the Landmark Church. Individuals giving tours of Salem need to live within convenient driving distance of the church, which is located on 107th Street and Fond du Lac Avenue on Milwaukee's northwest side—and need to be readily available for tours during the spring, summer, and fall. Information and training will be provided. If interested and available, contact Pless.

This important work is done entirely by volunteers who wish to help us fulfill our calling to "preserve and present the story of God's grace to WELS." WELS Historical Institute is not included in the synod's budget. You have the opportunity to join us and help with event planning, writing, research, restoration, and gathering of gifts or donations. Consider becoming a member of WELS Historical Institute.

Prof. Robert Bock, reporter

Prof. Robert Bock, president
 Mr. Daniel Nommensen, vice president
 Mrs. Naomi Plocher, secretary
 Mr. Ryan Haines, treasurer
 Mr. Ken Artlip
 Rev. David Dolan
 Prof. James Korthals
 Mr. Duane Kuehl
 Rev. Joel Leyrer

Mr. Steve Miller
Mr. Carl Nolte
Dr. Aaron Palmer
Dr. Joel Pless

Advisory:

Prof. John Brenner
Prof. John Hartwig
Ms. Charlotte Sampe

WELS Church Extension Fund, Inc. Floor Committee #18

Our calling

WELS Church Extension Fund, Inc. (CEF), is a self-supporting, not-for-profit corporation, and subsidiary of WELS. Its primary purpose is to provide financing for mission congregation projects under the direction of the Board for Home Missions. WELS CEF provides loans and grants to qualified mission and mission-minded self-supporting congregations so that they can acquire parsonages, land, and facilities to serve as tools for gospel outreach.

Our current situation

The funding to carry out our mission comes primarily from investments and gifts. Individual members, congregations, and affiliates of WELS may invest in CEF certificates. More than 3,727 investors have entrusted WELS CEF with \$78 million as of December 2014. These member investments provide funds for the Loan Program. Gifts and bequests made directly to WELS CEF are earmarked for the Grant Program.

Loan Program

WELS CEF's loan portfolio remains strong at more than \$137.7 million consisting of loans to 204 individual WELS congregations. Currently 11 congregations have either an approved or active construction loan with WELS CEF. The CEF's base loan rate remains at 3.75 percent for eligible mission congregations looking to obtain initial land and facilities.

Grant Program

WELS CEF provides matching grants to eligible mission congregations after they have provided a minimum 10 percent down payment for land purchase, existing facility purchase, or new facility construction project. A congregation's down payment combined with a CEF matching grant allows the mission congregation to move forward with a more manageable loan payment. \$800,000 has been approved for matching grants through the first half of fiscal year 2014–15. We anticipate up to \$1.5 million of additional grant approvals to 8 congregations by the end of the fiscal year. Since 1993, more than 26.5 million in CEF matching grants have been disbursed to mission congregations across North America and the West Indies.

Special grant to Home Missions

WELS CEF provided WELS Board for Home Missions a special grant in the amount of \$1.3 million in fiscal year 2013–14 to support the development of new mission congregations. Six congregations were selected to receive portions of the grant to assist with land and facility projects. A summary of the progress of these projects follows:

- The Springs, Sparks, Nev.: Purchased land and is planning for a facility project soon
- Living Promise, Morristown, Tenn.: Purchased land and is planning for a facility project soon
- Grace Hmong, Kansas City, Kans.: Purchased an existing facility and is working on renovations
- Holy Word, Pflugerville, Texas: Planning for a facility project soon
- Shepherd of the Hills, Las Vegas, Nev.: Working towards initial land purchase
- Trinity, St. Lucia, West Indies: Working towards a facility expansion project

A look ahead

We pray that by God's grace WELS CEF will continue to benefit from positive operational results and be able to provide additional special grants over and above our matching grant programs to assist more mission congregations and Home Missions. WELS CEF has taken steps to continue providing special grants to Home Missions by adopting an Unrestricted Net Assets Policy. This policy will allow WELS CEF to review its unrestricted net assets annually and determine if a special grant may be awarded. We anticipate that our loan portfolio will see significant growth over the next few years if we can keep interest rates competitive and with our renewed emphasis on providing loans to mission-minded self-supporting congregations. WELS CEF anticipates 13 land purchases and 32 construction projects over the next 2 years, resulting in \$54 million of new projected loans and \$6.4 million of new projected grants. We continue to encourage individual WELS members, congregations, and affiliated organizations to invest in CEF loan and savings and retirement/IRA certificates and consider gifts and bequests to WELS CEF to help support our mission and close partnership with Home Missions.

For more information on WELS CEF's loan and investment programs, contact us at 866-511-7793 or cef@wels.net. You may also visit our website at cef.wels.net for more information on our programs, resources, and work with Home Missions.

Mr. Ronald Hillmann, reporter

Mr. Paul Beitlich, chairman

Mr. David Waldek, vice chairman

Mr. Kenneth Zehm, secretary

Mr. Timothy Boerneke

Mr. Rodney Christ

Rev. Timothy Gauger

Mr. Seth Hansen

Mr. John Tappe

Advisory:

Rev. Keith Free, administrator of WELS Board for Home Missions

Mr. Sean Young, director of WELS Mission Operations

Officers:

Mr. Ronald Hillmann, president

Mr. Todd Feltner, vice president

Mr. Jared Justman, vice president

Mr. Scott Page, vice president

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer and treasurer

WELS Foundation, Inc.

Floor Committee #19

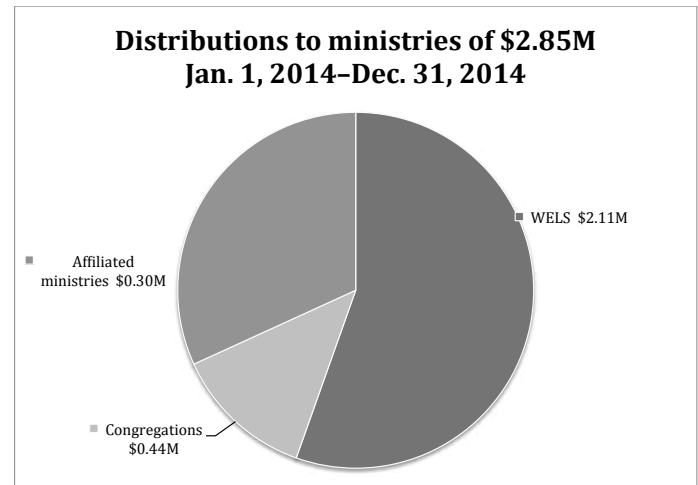
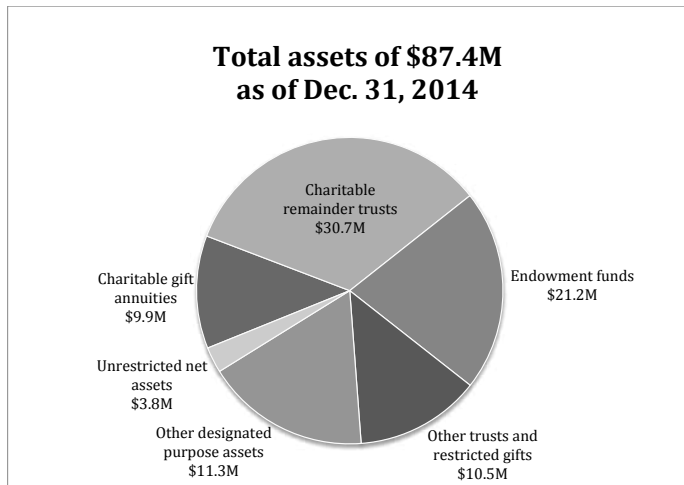
Our calling

WELS Foundation exists to help God's people support gospel ministry through WELS. It provides planned giving services and administrative support for gifts benefiting WELS congregations and ministries.

Established in 1965, WELS Foundation, Inc., is one of seven Support Services entities of WELS. As a WELS subsidiary corporation, WELS Foundation serves God's kingdom by providing gift administration for complex gifts that ultimately benefit WELS congregations and ministries. WELS Foundation does not receive financial support from the synod's operating budget but instead relies primarily on unrestricted gifts and administrative fees to cover its operating costs.

WELS Foundation is the foundation of choice for members, entities, and affiliates of WELS. It is the only foundation whose purpose is to facilitate donors' desires to support WELS ministries. During the calendar year 2014, WELS Foundation had the privilege to administer and distribute \$2.85 million in donor directed gifts.

Our current situation



WELS Foundation provides various giving opportunities including charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, donor advised funds, and endowment funds. It currently administers more than 900 charitable gifts on behalf of WELS members. As of Dec. 31, 2014, the total assets were \$87.4 million with net assets of \$52.9 million. The net assets held by WELS Foundation are managed for the benefit of the WELS ministries as designated by the donor. These ministries include WELS synodical ministries (i.e. missions and ministerial education schools), congregations, and numerous affiliated ministries such as area Lutheran high schools.

Charitable gift annuities

A charitable gift annuity is a contract between a WELS member and WELS Foundation by which the member makes a gift of cash or securities in exchange for fixed quarterly annuity payments for life. After the Lord calls the member home, the remainder of the gift annuity will be distributed to the congregation or ministry as designated. Income payments from a charitable gift annuity may begin immediately, may be deferred until a specific date in the future, or may be deferred until an unspecified date in the future. As of Dec. 31, 2014, WELS Foundation administered 631 charitable gift annuities with a total market value of \$9.9 million.

Charitable remainder trusts

A charitable remainder trust is created when a donor transfers cash, securities, or real estate into a charitable trust but keeps a specified income interest—usually for life. When the trust ends per the donor's designation, the assets in the trust pass to the designated beneficiaries such as the church and/or synod. As of Dec. 31, 2014, WELS Foundation serves as trustee for 164 charitable remainder trusts with a combined market value of \$30.7 million.

Donor advised funds

A donor advised fund is a charitable giving vehicle wherein an individual, family, or corporation makes an irrevocable, tax-deductible contribution of cash, securities, or other property to WELS Foundation and at any time thereafter can recommend grant distributions to qualified WELS ministries. The fund can be established with current gifts, deferred gifts (i.e. charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts), and testamentary gifts (i.e. wills, living trusts, beneficiary designations of life insurance policies, or retirement accounts).

The WELS Foundation donor advised fund program provides an alternative to a private family foundation. WELS members can accomplish many of the same goals but with far less administrative work and expense. As of Dec. 31, 2014, WELS Foundation administered 49 donor advised funds with a total market value of \$2.3 million.

Endowment funds

Endowment funds are permanently restricted funds established to receive and administer all gifts that are designated by the donor(s) for an endowment from sources such as cash, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, bequests, life insurance, charitable gift annuities, insurance policies, trusts, real estate, personal property, or any other gift, current or deferred.

Lord willing, expenditures from endowments further the work of the church by providing ongoing financial support for ministry until the Lord returns.

WELS Foundation administers synodical endowment funds for WELS Ministerial Education and WELS Missions. In addition, donor designated endowments have been established for the benefit of WELS congregations or ministries. As of Dec. 31, 2014, WELS Foundation administered 35 endowment funds with a total market value of \$20.4 million.

Other gift administration services

WELS Foundation also provides gift administration for letters of instruction, endowment administration, gifts of securities, IRA charitable rollovers, real estate gifts, life insurance contracts, agricultural crops, and other donor designated gifts.

Educational webinars

In 2014, WELS Foundation hosted a series of 12 educational webinars. The monthly webinars were timely presentations on various planned giving topics and made available by WELS Foundation at no cost to WELS Christian giving counselors, advancement officers, and congregational planned giving committee leaders. Contact WELS Foundation for recordings of past webinars or to participate in future sessions.

Unrestricted net assets

The purpose of WELS Foundation's unrestricted net assets asset policy is to establish a minimum level of unrestricted net assets and to establish protocols for the designation of its unrestricted net assets in a manner that prudently and sufficiently reflects the planning for possible obligations, potential contingencies, and donor recommendations. Excess undesignated unrestricted net assets may be considered for transfer to WELS in support of its ministries.

In fiscal year 2015 the WELS Foundation Board of Directors approved two transfers totaling \$460,000 from its unrestricted undesignated net assets to WELS.

A look ahead

On the occasion of its 50th anniversary of service to WELS, WELS Foundation conducted leadership surveys within the synod and reviewed the organizational structure and operations of its peers in other church bodies. The conclusion of its self-study was that combining the operations of WELS Foundation with the operations of WELS Investment Funds will best serve WELS and its members and ministries. To that end, WELS Foundation initiated discussions with WELS Investment Funds in fall 2014.

The two boards have met and submitted reports and statements of intent to the Synodical Council. The Synodical Council has asked the WELS Foundation Board and the WELS Investment Funds Board to continue their joint discussions, to study and consider savings from joint administration and sharing costs, and to report their findings to the Synodical Council by Oct. 15, 2015.

Mr. James Holm, reporter

Mr. James Brenn, chairman
Mr. Donald Schuppe, vice chairman
Mr. Mark Schulz, secretary
Mr. Paul Beitlich
Mr. Nathan Birkholz
Mr. Tim Boerneke
Rev. Kurt Lueneburg
Mr. Tim McDonald
Rev. Paul Prange

Officers:

Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, president and director of WELS Ministry of Christian Giving
Mr. James Holm, vice president and executive director
Mr. Jeffery Grant, vice president
Mr. Richard Wichinski, vice president
Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer and treasurer

WELS Investment Funds, Inc.

Floor Committee #19

Our calling

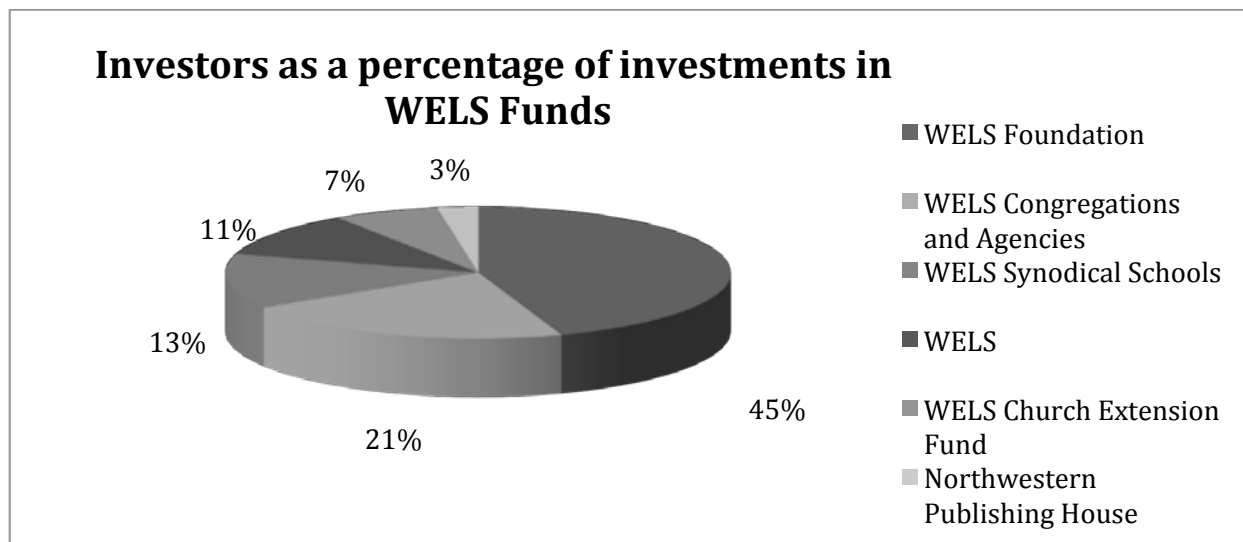
The mission of WELS Investment Funds, Inc. (WIF), is to strengthen and enhance the congregations of WELS and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and their affiliated organizations by providing professionally managed investment portfolios. WIF serves as the administrator of two investment portfolios: WELS Equity Fund and WELS Income Fund.

The WELS Equity Fund seeks long-term capital growth by investing in a portfolio of equity securities that is well diversified by industry and company size. The WELS Equity Fund may be appropriate for participating organizations who have a long investment horizon and are prepared to accept volatility associated with equity securities.

The WELS Income Fund seeks to provide current income by investing primarily in investment quality debt securities. The Income Fund may be appropriate for participating organizations having a desire for current income.

The WELS Balanced Allocation is not a WELS Fund but allows participating organizations to have their accounts automatically allocated, at the beginning of each calendar quarter, between the WELS Equity Fund (60 percent) and the WELS Income Fund (40 percent). As of June 30, 2014, approximately 90 percent of the total assets of the WELS Funds were allocated pursuant to the WELS Balanced Allocation.

Our current situation

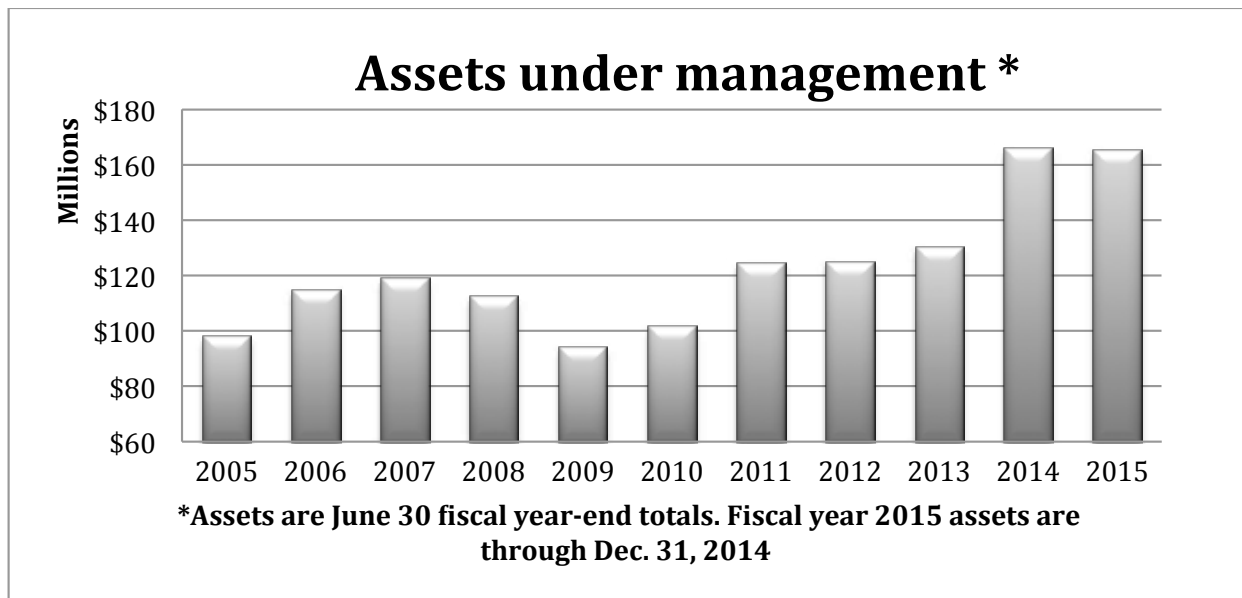


More than 190 WELS organizations invest in the WELS Funds. WIF has welcomed six new participant members during the first six months of fiscal year 2015.

WELS ministries invested approximately \$4.8 million in WIF within the first six months of fiscal year 2015. \$1.5 million of the investments received came from congregations, \$0.5 million came from synodical schools, and \$2.8 million came from WELS Foundation, Inc.

Through Dec. 31, 2014, participants withdrew \$4.9 million.

As of Dec. 31, 2014, WIF's assets under management totaled \$165.4 million. The largest investor is WELS Foundation, Inc. WELS Foundation's \$74.0 million in charitable remainder trusts, charitable gift annuities, endowments, and donor advised funds represents approximately 45 percent of the total investment in the WELS Funds.



Performance summary

AVERAGE ANNUAL TOTAL RETURN for the period ending Dec. 31, 2014					
	6 Months	1 Year	3 Years	5 Years	10 Years
WELS Balanced Allocation*	-0.1%	5.3%	11.6%	9.3%	6.0%
WELS Equity Fund	-0.3%	5.9%	16.8%	11.5%	6.5%
WELS Income Fund	0.1%	4.2%	4.0%	5.3%	4.8%

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Investment return and principal value will fluctuate so that fund units, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost.
 *Hypothetical returns that would have been received on an investment of 60% WELS Equity Fund and 40% in the WELS Income Fund for the period indicated.

A look ahead

WELS Investment Funds along with WELS Foundation is exploring ways on how to best serve WELS, its members, and its ministries. WELS Foundation conducted a self-study and reviewed the organizational structures and operations of its peers within other church bodies. The conclusion of its self-study was that combining the operations of WELS Investment Funds with WELS Foundation will best serve WELS and its members and ministries. To that end, WELS Foundation initiated discussions with WELS Investment Funds in fall 2014. Key items of the joint discussions are lower costs, new funding options, and streamlined communications.

The two boards have met and submitted reports and statements of intent to the Synodical Council. The Synodical Council has asked the WELS Investment Fund Board and the WELS Foundation Board to continue their joint discussions, to study and consider savings from joint administration and sharing costs, and to report their findings to the Synodical Council by Oct. 15, 2015.

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. The performance data is current as of Dec. 31, 2014, and is subject to change at any time based on market and other conditions. Participating in a WELS Fund or the WELS Balanced Allocation is subject to investment risks, including possible loss of the principal amount invested. Withdrawals are payable by WELS Investment Funds exclusively from the net assets of the WELS Fund in which you participate. Accounts are not protected or insured by the FDIC or SIPC and are not guaranteed by WELS; WELS Foundation, Inc.; or any other person or entity. This is not an offer to sell or request to buy securities. The offering is made solely by the Offering Circular. At this time, the WELS Funds are NOT available to WELS-affiliated organizations located in Connecticut, Maryland, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Vermont, or Virginia.

Mr. Mark Arnold, reporter

Directors:

Mr. Jon Bruss, chairman

Mr. James Abitz, vice chairman
Mr. Charles Cairns
Mr. Joel Luehmann
Mr. Dennis Walters
Dr. Ronald White

Advisory:

Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, director of WELS Ministry of Christian Giving
Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer and treasurer

Officers:

Mr. Mark E. Arnold, president
Mr. Jeffery Grant, vice president
Mrs. Monica Peavy, secretary

WELS Benefit Plans Floor Committee #20

Our calling

The WELS Benefit Plans Office serves synodical workers and organizations through the administration of the WELS Voluntary Employee Benefits Association (VEBA) and the WELS Pension Plan. Oversight of each plan is the responsibility of separate commissions appointed by the Synodical Council. Each commission is composed of four laymen, a pastor, and a male teacher from the active worker roster. Contributions toward the cost of plan benefits and operations are held in separate trusts, each invested in diversified accounts with outside money managers overseen by an independent investment advisory firm. Both plans employ outside professionals providing benefit design, actuarial, consulting, banking, legal, and auditing services.

Our current situation

Over the past two years, Benefit Plans has focused on positioning the VEBA and Pension Plans for long-term stability and making the Plans more accessible to the individuals and calling bodies we serve.

Benefit Plans has continued to monitor significant developments in implementation of the health care reform law (the "Affordable Care Act" or "ACA"). Americans are now able to purchase individual health insurance plans through public exchanges operated by federal and state government agencies. Even with these new options WELS VEBA has maintained its strong membership levels, as more workers are currently enrolled in WELS VEBA than were enrolled before the exchange plans became available. More than 80 percent of all eligible workers and WELS calling bodies currently participate in the VEBA Plan.

New regulations have provided certain religious employers with an exemption from the ACA mandate to cover contraceptives under their health plans. Because WELS objects to certain contraceptives for religious reasons, WELS VEBA is exempt from the contraceptive mandate. As required by the new regulations, WELS VEBA members will have access to ACA-mandated contraceptives through separate programs administered and paid for by external pharmacy and medical claims administrators. Rest assured that neither WELS VEBA nor the synod will be providing or paying for coverage for contraceptive services that are contrary to God's Word. In this way, WELS VEBA is able to remain compliant with the law and in accord with God's Word.

Plan changes have been made to WELS VEBA as necessary to comply with all applicable provisions of the ACA since the law's inception. These changes provide enhanced benefits to members but also result in additional plan costs. To

date, ACA-mandated benefits have added approximately 2.5 percent to ongoing WELS VEBA premium rates. The ACA also established two new federal programs to be funded by private employers and their health plans. WELS VEBA, on behalf of its sponsoring organizations, will pay the applicable fees for these programs. The federal program fees added 2 percent to WELS VEBA premium rates for 2014 and 2015. Therefore, in total, approximately 4.5 percent of the premiums being charged by WELS VEBA in 2014 and 2015 are directly related to ACA requirements.

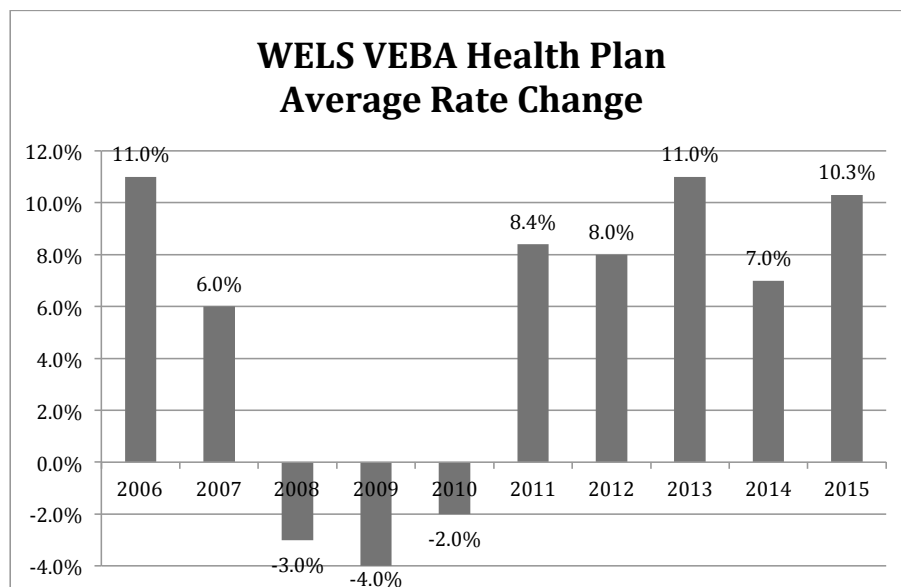
The Pension Plan, while currently funded to more than meet its benefit obligations to in-benefit participants, faces long-term funding challenges primarily caused by longer life expectancies, aging participant demographics, a reduced number of active participants, and volatile financial markets. These factors have caused the plan’s funding status (which compares the Plan’s assets with the benefit payments earned by participants) to remain in the mid- to upper-70 percent range since the economic downturn of 2008–09.

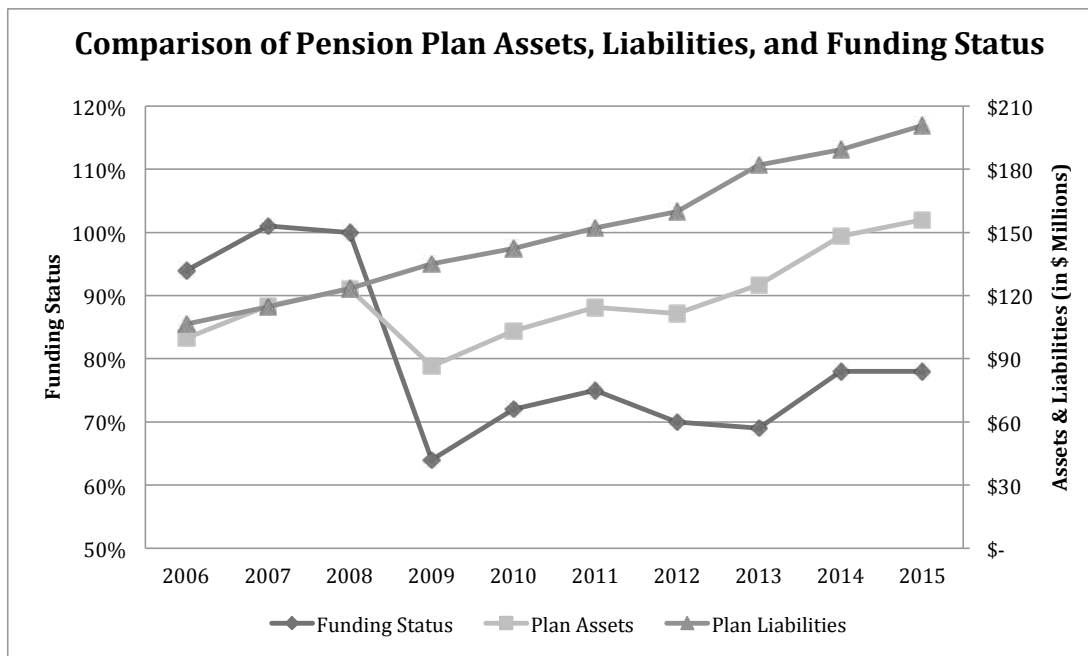
In light of these challenges, the Pension Commission recently completed a comprehensive strategic review of the Pension Plan and implemented two significant changes to the plan after receiving approval from the Synodical Council. First, the plan’s normal retirement age for future benefit accruals was increased to more closely align with Social Security. Second, newly-hired lay workers at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry and the four synodical schools beginning in 2015 are excluded from participation in the Pension Plan and instead will be provided retirement benefits through employer contributions to the WELS Shepherd Plan, which is the 403(b)(9) defined contribution retirement income account plan sponsored by WELS. These changes were made in order to preserve the security of benefits for current and future retirees while minimizing the financial impact on workers and calling bodies.

The Pension Commission has taken additional actions over the past two years to improve the plan’s funding status:

- Contributions charged to sponsoring organizations have increased by 12.2 percent and 9.9 percent for 2015 and 2014, respectively. The 2016 contribution rate will increase by 11.4 percent.
- Contributions paid after the due date are subject to a late payment penalty that will recoup lost investment earnings to the Pension trust.
- To slow the long-term growth rate of benefit liabilities, the benefit basis for new retirees has not increased since 2012.
- The overall volatility of investments in the Plan trust portfolio was reduced to protect against future market downturns.

Both the VEBA and Pension trusts realized investment performance gains in excess of 10 percent in 2013, while 2014 yielded returns in the 4 to 5 percent range for each trust. Final audited results from the 2013 plan year shows net assets available for benefits in the VEBA and Pension trusts as \$23.6 million and \$148.1 million, respectively. In comparison, unaudited results from the 2014 plan year show net assets available for benefits in the VEBA and Pension trusts as \$24.1 million and \$155.7 million, respectively. Both commissions continue to evaluate investment funds that are expected to achieve target returns with reduced risk.





A look ahead

Benefit Plans will continue its dual-emphasis on maintaining long-term stability for the VEBA and Pension plans while improving accessibility to the plans for individuals and calling bodies.

To that end, one significant initiative is the joint administration of the Pension Plan and the WELS Shepherd Plan, to be known jointly as the “WELS Retirement Program.” This change will enable Benefit Plans to more effectively communicate with our participants the retirement benefits available through WELS as well as financial preparedness for retirement. To formalize this joint administration, the Synodical Council and Pension Commission recommend revisions to the WELS bylaws for approval at the 2015 WELS convention. If approved by the convention, the proposed bylaw revisions would enact the following:

- Administration of the WELS Shepherd Plan would be placed under the responsibilities of the Pension Commission.
- The Pension Commission would be renamed the “WELS Retirement Program Commission.”
- Highlight that the basis for Pension Plan benefits is developed by the Pension Commission, subject to approval by the Synodical Council, and reviewed periodically by both entities.
- The VEBA Plan trust investment policy would be subject to approval by the Synodical Council.

Here are the complete bylaw revisions requested for approval by the 2015 WELS convention:

Section 7.40

WELS Pension Retirement Program Commission

(a) There shall be a WELS ~~Pension Retirement Program~~ Commission that shall serve the Synodical Council by administering the synod’s retirement program, including the synod’s pension plan and the synod’s 403(b)(9) retirement income account plan (the “Plans”), in keeping with the pPlan document(s) approved by the Synodical Council.

(b) The Commission shall consist of one pastor, one teacher and four laymen appointed by the Synodical Council. Appointments shall be for a term of three years. The terms of two members shall expire each year. Members may succeed themselves three times. The president’s designee, if one is appointed per 7.40(d), shall be an advisory member of the board of directors.

(c) The Commission shall develop its own investment objectives and guidelines subject to the approval of the Synodical Council. The investment objectives and guidelines shall be reviewed periodically by the Commission and the Synodical Council. The Commission shall develop the pension plan’s benefit basis subject to the approval of the Synodical Council. The pension plan’s benefit basis shall be reviewed periodically by the Commission and the Synodical Council. The Commission shall also adopt such other policies it may deem necessary and advisable for the operation of the pPlans.

(d) For oversight purposes the Commission shall report to the Synodical Council through the

synod president or his designee. The synod president may select a designee to provide operational oversight to the synod employees assigned to the Commission.

Section 7.50 WELS VEBA Commission

(a) There shall be a WELS Voluntary Employees' Beneficiary Association (VEBA) Commission that shall serve the Synodical Council by operating and administering the group medical plan(s) approved by the Synodical Council for the benefit of the synod's workers and such other workers within the synod who may qualify under the plan(s).

(b) The Commission shall consist of one pastor, one teacher, and four laymen appointed by the Synodical Council. Appointments shall be for a term of three years. The terms of two members shall expire each year. Members may succeed themselves three times. The president's designee, if one is appointed per 7.50(d), shall be an advisory member of the board of directors.

(c) The Commission shall study and implement new procedures or make improvements in the plans, in accordance with proper procedure and sound fiscal management. The plans shall be reviewed periodically by the Commission and the Synodical Council. The Commission shall develop its own investment objectives and guidelines subject to the approval of the Synodical Council. The investment objectives and guidelines shall be reviewed periodically by the Commission and the Synodical Council. The Commission shall also adopt such other policies it may deem necessary and advisable for the operation of the plan.

(d) For oversight purposes the Commission shall report to the Synodical Council through the synod president or his designee. The synod president may select a designee to provide operational oversight to the synod employees assigned to the Commission.

Another significant initiative is the redesign of the Benefit Plans website. The new site will be available by the 2015 synod convention. This website will provide enhanced functionality for mobile and media content as well as more robust resources for health care reform and retirement benefits.

Although VEBA Plan membership levels were largely unaffected by the initial rollout of the public exchange plans, the VEBA Commission and its advisors will carefully consider the long-term effects that public exchanges may have on WELS VEBA. Providing an affordable health plan with consistent nationwide benefits is essential to supporting synodwide mission and ministry activities.

Maintaining compliance with often-changing federal regulations and mitigating the impact of new costs imposed on the VEBA Plan will be necessary for the plan's continued operation. Compliance with new reporting regulations for the VEBA Plan and large calling bodies will be required in early-2016. In addition, Benefit Plans and the VEBA Commission will closely monitor developments with the Cadillac Tax provision of the ACA, which is scheduled to be effective in 2018.

Benefit Plans as well as the VEBA and Pension Commissions are acutely aware of the need to keep benefit plan costs as low as possible to allow calling bodies to preserve valuable assets to fund ministry efforts. The primary goal for each plan going forward is to strike the best balance between acceptable costs to calling bodies and meaningful benefits to participants.

Mr. Joshua Peterman, reporter

WELS VEBA Commission:

Mr. Richard Hudock, chairman

Mr. Charles Adrian, vice chairman

Mr. Jeff Timm, secretary

Rev. Richard Agenten

Mr. Robert Bullens

Teacher Chris Fischer

Advisory:

Ms. Christine Hitter, membership manager

Mr. Joshua Peterman, director of Benefit Plans

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer

Ms. Lori Schrank, claims manager

WELS Pension Commission:

Mr. Gene Szaj, chairman

Rev. David Kolander, vice chairman

Mr. David McCulloch, secretary

Teacher Robert Fischer

Mr. Scott Heins

Mr. Thomas Medema

Advisory:

Mr. Joshua Peterman, director of Benefit Plans

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer

Ad Hoc Commission 2

Floor Committee #21

Our calling

The 2013 synod in convention approved Resolution #3 of Floor Committee 3, which stated that “our synod in convention establish a new ad hoc committee (sic) to look at all areas of the synod structure and programs especially in the areas not addressed by the previous commission and that the president of the synod appoint the members to such a committee (sic), and that the committee (sic) bring its suggestions and recommendations to the 2015 synod convention for consideration and action.”

President Mark Schroeder appointed the following to the Ad Hoc Commission 2 (AHC2):

- Teacher Daniel Brands
- Rev. Jon Buchholz (Conference of Presidents representative)
- Mr. Harvey Dunn
- Mr. Warren Ehlke (Synodical Council representative)
- Teacher Michael Hein
- Rev. Duane Rodewald
- Rev. Thomas Unke
- Rev. Joel Voss, chairman

Synod President Mark Schroeder and Synod First Vice President James Huebner served as advisory members of the commission. Teacher Daniel Brands resigned from the commission in the summer of 2014. The commission ultimately organized itself into two committees: Synod Servants and Synod Structure.

Defining the task

From the very beginning, it was clear to the members of the commission that their work would be vastly different from the work done by the Ad Hoc Commission of 2007 (AHC), which reported to the 2009 synod in convention. That original commission was created to assist President Schroeder during his first years of service in making appropriate and necessary changes in the operation of the synod as it faced challenges on several fronts. The synodical landscape stretching before the AHC2 did not share the depth and breadth of those challenges.

At its first meeting the AHC2 developed the following goals for its work:

- Assist synod leadership in carrying out the mission of the synod effectively, in keeping with adopted priorities and the strategic plan.
- Endorse specific areas of ministry to encourage, expand, or enhance efforts and programs.
- Identify areas of concern and direct those concerns to appropriate groups for attention and action.
- Identify programs to reduce or eliminate.
- Identify specific efforts and programs that might be combined (or where cooperation would be desirable) so as to improve their efficiency or effectiveness.
- Encourage divisions of the synod to be innovative so that the synod is prepared for future opportunities for gospel ministry.

In order to get as much grassroots input as possible, the commission provided a link to each called worker via President Schroeder’s “En Cristo” newsletter in December 2013 for the purpose of obtaining thoughts, suggestions, etc. regarding areas where the commission should focus its work. In response, the AHC2 received more than 200 suggestions and comments, all of which were studied and categorized.

During that same time period, the commission interviewed the heads of every synodical department, the leadership of Northwestern Publishing House, the four presidents of our worker training schools, and various workers in the field. It also received substantive input from representatives of the Accounting Oversight Committee.

After assembling all suggestions and receiving reports by commission members relating to those suggestions, the commission selected the topics and issues that would best benefit from its attention.

Join us in rejoicing

At the outset, the AHC2 noted the 88 resolutions submitted by the AHC and how the Lord was still blessing the decisions made by the 2009 synod in convention relating to those resolutions. In fact, as the AHC2 made its initial investigations, it identified far more reasons to rejoice than to be concerned. Thus, it determined to begin its report by praising the Lord for those blessings.

In listing such blessings, there is always the danger of unintentional omission, but the AHC2 nevertheless felt compelled to bring the following blessings before God's people.

- That, first and foremost, our synod continues to be blessed with unity in doctrine and practice. That unity is always the result of the Spirit working through the Word, an endeavor the AHC encouraged through synodwide studies on a variety of topics. May the Lord continue to bless our dear synod with such unity!
- That the Lord of the harvest has also enabled our synod to open new missions in North America even during difficult economic times.
- That, in keeping with the AHC's encouragement for continuing education among called workers, Martin Luther College (MLC) has enhanced its course offerings and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) launched its Grow in Grace Institute in 2010. The AHC2 rejoices that the number of called workers who are making use of these materials for their personal and professional growth has been increasing each year.
- That the Pastoral Studies Institute at WLS continues to prepare non-traditional students for entrance into the pastoral ministry often among new demographics for our synod (Hispanic, Korean, Sudanese, etc.) and that the Lord is using those servants here in North America to reach out to their respective cultural contacts across the globe.
- That the Commission on Congregational Counseling (CCC) is creating materials for use in assisting congregations to make appropriate changes in their ministry approach as environments both inside and around those congregations change. The AHC2 rejoices that 30 counselors received training in November 2014 and are ready to begin work in 2015.
- That synodical communications have continued to improve in content and methods of delivery. The AHC2 rejoices that, in addition to enhancing our use of printed materials and videos, our synod is now utilizing various types of social media to spread the gospel and to keep WELS members informed of the work we do together.
- That, as the AHC2 conducted its interviews with the various synodical department leaders, it consistently noticed a spirit of cooperation and unanimity regarding the ministry that we do together as a synod. "How can we be of service to the other areas of ministry" was an oft-asked question.
- That the presidents of our four worker training schools clearly see each of the schools as part of a system that is dependent on the other institutions and that they cooperate to maintain and enhance one of the finest called worker training systems in the world.
- That our synod is blessed with a transparent and comprehensive budgeting process that incorporates the planned use of all available funds from both Congregation Mission Offerings and from all other sources (special funds, grants, bequests, etc.).
- That the Financial Stabilization Fund has provided flexibility in times of financial challenges.
- That a high level of trust exists between the synodical leadership groups (SC and COP) and the synod's constituency.
- That our synod's worker training schools are blessed with a healthy financial condition, especially at MLC and WLS, and that there has been a strengthened commitment by the synod to support our ministerial education system.
- That the Lord has richly blessed our progress in retiring the synod's capital debt, which stood at \$22.4 million in 2007 and which is currently projected to have been reduced to about \$4.7 million by the time of the 2015 synod convention.
- That the process to produce a new hymnal has begun, underlining our synod's commitment to the value of liturgical worship.

Consider our endorsements and recommendations

As noted above, in order to facilitate its work, the AHC2 divided itself into two committees. **The following portion of this report is from the Synod Servants Committee.**

Topic one: WELS compensation issues

Background

The Compensation Guidelines, adopted by the synod in 2003, were mentioned in the questionnaire as a major contributing factor in several issues that our called workers and congregations presently face. Since it has been over a decade since these guidelines have been looked at in earnest, the AHC2 decided to make this issue part of its study.

Research and analysis

The present Compensation Guidelines were developed following several years of work by members of the Synodical Council. The great majority of the congregations in WELS use these guidelines to determine called workers' compensation packages. The chairman of the Compensation Review Committee of the Synodical Council stated that his committee reviews the guidelines annually but other than addressing the salary figures on the matrix, it has made few changes in the guidelines since it was adopted. In the AHC2's study of the guidelines, several of the issues mentioned in the questionnaire's responses seem to have a direct link to weaknesses in our present system. Some of the issues that the present guidelines seem to influence strongly are: increases in salary that are largely tenure-based and do not reflect sufficiently the called workers' duties or responsibilities, the lack of calls to older pastors and teachers, the difficulty the synod is having in filling principal vacancies, the lack of any mention of early childhood education directors in the present guidelines, and more. Since most of these issues seem like they would be difficult to resolve by simply "tweaking" our present guidelines, perhaps it is time to consider more substantive changes. The AHC2 realizes that making any major changes in the Compensation Guidelines would be a significant undertaking, but the commission believes that the issues mentioned above are real and, as a result, need to be studied and addressed.

Recommendation

The AHC2 thanks the members of the 2003 Synodical Council for their hard work in developing our present Compensation Guidelines that have served our synod for over a decade. In its brief review of the guidelines and the related issues, the AHC2 has seen what a tremendously complex issue this is. Since the Synodical Council already has a Compensation Review Committee as a standing sub-group, the AHC2 believes that the Compensation Review Committee is a logical place for the initiation of a study to determine how the guidelines might be changed so as to alleviate the referenced issues. If the sub-committee feels that this issue is too large for it to handle, it could request the formation of a separate commission to study the development of an updated or completely new set of compensation guidelines. The AHC2 recommends that a report on possible changes to the compensation guidelines be presented to the districts in convention in 2016.

Status

The Compensation Review Committee of the Synodical Council has expressed its agreement with this recommendation and plans to develop a draft proposal to be shared with the 2016 district conventions, with a final recommendation presented to the 2017 synod in convention.

Topic two: WELS convention delegate preparation

Background

The 12 districts of synod presently have no uniform way of preparing delegates for their important roles at the WELS convention. Since the convention determines the work of our church body for the next two years and beyond, is there a way for the delegates to be educated better in the workings of synod and its convention, so that they might be as productive as possible during those four days of decision making?

Research and analysis

The AHC2 contacted all the district presidents asking for a brief description of how their respective district goes about trying to prepare its convention delegates for their important responsibilities. From the districts that responded, it was obvious that each district's preparation is unique. Some districts have very formal preparation procedures ("mini-conventions" in their district in June before the synod convention). Others are much less formal (delegates read the *Book of Reports and Memorials* and have an hour teleconference before synod convention). The difference in the district's geographic size, numerical size, and even philosophical views on how to prepare their delegates makes it difficult to come up with a single "process" to prepare all delegates for upcoming WELS conventions. Since changing the process by which district delegates to the WELS convention are prepared seems almost impossible, the AHC2 looked for another way to increase delegates' knowledge of synodical affairs and effectiveness in the work they are asked to do. The AHC2 believes that having the delegates serve for two consecutive conventions would have several advantages such as:

- This scenario would be easy to implement. Six districts (approximately half the delegates) would elect/select delegates to represent them at the 2017 and 2019 conventions. The other six districts would elect/select delegates to represent them at the 2017 convention only but would then elect/select delegates before the 2019 convention who would serve at both the 2019 and 2021 conventions. The rotation of the election/selection of delegates would then be ongoing.
- Approximately half the delegates at every convention would know the process that is involved in this important

meeting of our synod since they've been through it two years before. They would be familiar with the major issues that were discussed in the last convention but might not have been completely resolved (such as the Bible Translation study, finances, etc.).

- A delegate would serve on the same committee as he did in his first convention, which would make him better informed and more productive as he serves.
- The delegates who are attending their first convention would bring new insights and ideas to the convention to complement the experience of those who are attending their second convention.
- First-time delegates would leave the convention knowing that in two years they would serve again and could even do some study and research for the committee on which they serve in preparation for their second convention.
- The advantages stated above would apply to delegates from all the districts no matter how much (or little) preparation the district elects to provide.
- It would increase the effectiveness of our WELS convention delegates without additional cost or making any drastic changes to the way districts presently prepare delegates.

Recommendation

1. The AHC2 thanks all the pastors, teachers, and lay members who have been willing to give of their time and talents in order to serve as delegates to our synod conventions.
2. The AHC2 encourages the 2015 synod convention delegates to consider the benefits of having delegates who are elected/selected to serve in two consecutive conventions and to vote to change the WELS Constitution and Bylaws to reflect this for all future WELS convention delegate elections/selections.

Topic three: Term limits for district presidents

Background

District presidents currently serve in their position for two-year renewable terms and are elected into the office by delegates at the biennial district convention in each district of WELS. There are no term limits; a district president may serve as long as he wishes and is elected. The idea was shared with the AHC2 that there could be benefits from having term limits for the office of district president.

Research and analysis

The idea of term limits was discussed with various individuals and groups, including the Conference of Presidents, for reaction and input. The general feeling was that while term limits could have some benefits, such as a district president knowing that there is a definite timeframe commitment to the service, most felt the advantages of experience, consistency, and knowledge of the district congregations and called workers were more beneficial. Some also expressed concern about practical issues for the local congregation of a district president and for the district president who has served a specific timeframe (say, 12 years), then returns to full-time congregational ministry. Comments were also made that there already are term limits in place to a certain degree because every two years an election is held, which may even be a blessing of affirmation for an incumbent who is re-elected as district president and continuing his service.

Recommendation

The AHC2 does not recommend any changes relative to the terms of service for district presidents. It expresses gratitude to the district presidents for their faithful and dedicated service to the Lord, his people, and his called workers, and encourages our district presidents to be mindful of the responsibilities of the position and their own human limitations, and to be receptive to the counsel of their brothers in ministry in regard to the length of their service in the office of district president.

Topic four: Nomination for election to the praesidium of a district

Background

The current method of nominating a man to serve as a district president or a member of the praesidium for that district is to take nominations from the floor of the district convention and proceed with those nominees serving as the list of candidates. The AHC2 is uncertain as to when this procedure first came into practice. This method has, at times, resulted in some strange situations. Informal discussions with pastors and lay delegates also revealed the existence of some questions regarding the propriety of this procedure. The question was raised as to whether or not the current nomination process is the best method to use for such critical positions in the work of our districts and synod.

Research and analysis

In evaluating our current method for nomination, the AHC2 concluded that there are in fact weaknesses in it. If a

man is nominated to an office such as district president, he ideally should have the same opportunity to consider that position as he has for any other divine call. However, in our current system, the reality is that he has only a very short time within a convention to consider whether or not he is willing to change his focus of ministry and to serve in this new calling. Recent practice at some conventions did not even give nominees the opportunity to decline nomination. If a man is nominated to an office such as district president, an office in which he will spend countless hours of service, it certainly will impact the ministry and the future plans of the congregation at which he currently serves. Currently that congregation will have very little input into this dramatic and impactful change. It has also been our practice to assign a graduate candidate from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) as an assistant to the office of the district president, even before a man is elected. This makes for the strange scenario that the congregation who consequentially receives this WLS graduate has not actually called him to be their pastor. Although in most cases God's people have joyfully received the new pastor, it does not seem wise to leave them out of this privileged process.

The commission also heard many comments about the perception of candidates campaigning for election to the praesidium. Although no method of nomination and election can eliminate such realities or perceptions, the current method lends itself to many "unofficial" discussions that seem out of character for such an important office.

Finally, our current system gives delegates little time to become acquainted with the candidates who would serve them and their congregations as their district officers. Because of the nature of how our conventions operate, the voting assembly often has less information to evaluate candidates than in a regular call meeting for a congregation's pastor.

Recommendation

The AHC2 recognizes that the office of district president, along with those who support him in the praesidium of a district, is an office of high responsibility for the church. Our recommendation seeks to provide more time for the nominee to consider prayerfully this calling and the opportunity for more people throughout the district to provide input as to which men are most qualified to serve the district in this office. The AHC2 therefore recommends to the WELS synod in convention that the 12 districts of our synod would use their district nominating committee for the offices of the praesidium in the same way that they do for any other office that is elected in convention. The AHC2 also recommends that the nominees who are not elected to one office would be considered as candidates for the next lower office (such as that of first or second vice president.) Candidates to serve as the district secretary would be nominated separately through the same process.

The commission believes that using the district nominating committee, already in place for other offices, would give all the people of the district the opportunity to consider candidates and to nominate men who have the gifts for such an office of high trust. The nominating committee would then receive those nominations and send out the list of nominees according to their current procedures. This would give church councils, circuits, and conferences the opportunity to discuss the office and the candidates, sharing their input with those delegates who will represent them at the convention.

This recommendation will provide the nominees with the opportunity to consider the potential impact on their current ministry in a way similar to any other divine call. It will also give the affected man's congregation the opportunity to discuss its ministry plans in the event of the election of its pastor, while also allowing the members of the congregation to share their input with him before he decides whether or not to accept nomination.

Topic five: Nomination for election of WELS president and the synod praesidium

Background

The current method of nominating a man to serve as our synod president or a member of the synod praesidium is to take nominations from the floor of the synod convention and to proceed with those nominees serving as the list of candidates. The AHC2 is uncertain when this procedure came into practice. This method has, at times, resulted in some strange situations. Informal discussions with pastors and lay delegates also revealed the existence of some questions regarding the propriety of this procedure. The question was raised as to whether or not the current nomination process is the best method to use for calling a man to serve as the leader of our synod, along with those who will serve alongside him as first and second vice president.

Research and analysis

In evaluating our current method for nomination, we concluded that there are weaknesses in it.

If a man is nominated and potentially elected to an office such as synod president, he really should have the privilege to consider it just as he has for any other divine call. In our current system, he has only a short time within a

convention to consider whether or not he is willing to accept nomination and serve in this new calling. Although other members of the praesidium serve only part time, they should be allowed proper time for deliberation also.

If a man is nominated to serve as synod president, it would be the equivalent of accepting a call away from the congregation or ministry in which he has been serving. Currently his congregation or ministry board has very little input into this dramatic and impactful change.

The commission also heard many comments about the perception of candidates campaigning for election to the praesidium. Although no method of nomination and election can eliminate such realities or perceptions, the current method lends itself to many “unofficial” discussions that seem out of character for such an important office.

Finally, our current system also gives convention delegates precious little time to become acquainted with the candidates who would serve them, their congregations, and our entire synod as their leaders. Because of the nature of how our conventions operate, the voting assembly often has less information to evaluate candidates than in a regular call meeting.

Recommendation

The AHC2 recognizes that the office of WELS president is an office of high responsibility for the church, as are the positions of first and second vice president. Our recommendation seeks to give more people time to consider prayerfully this calling and to give more people throughout WELS input as to which men are most qualified to serve in this office. We therefore make the recommendation to the WELS synod in convention that we use our Synod Nominating Committee for the offices of the praesidium in the same way that we do for any other office that is elected by the synod in convention. We include the recommendation that the nominees who are not elected to one office would be considered as candidates for the next lower office (such as that of first or second vice president.) Candidates to serve as the synod secretary would be nominated separately through the same process.

The AHC2 believes that using the Synod Nominating Committee, already in place for other offices, would give more people in WELS the opportunity to consider candidates and nominate men who have the gifts for such an office of high trust. The Nominating Committee would then receive those nominations and send out the list of nominees according to its current procedure. This would give church councils, circuits, conferences, and districts the opportunity to discuss the office and the candidates, sharing their input with those delegates who will represent them at the convention.

This recommendation will give the nominees the opportunity to consider the change in ministry in a way similar to any other divine call. It will also give that man’s congregation or current ministry leaders the opportunity to discuss their ministry plans in the event of the pastor’s election, while also allowing them to share their input with him before he decides whether or not to accept nomination.

Topic six: Funding merit scholarships and need-based grants at Martin Luther College

Background

The suggestion was made that Martin Luther College (MLC) should offer scholarships based on merit. Most would connect merit scholarships with the area of academics, but some also suggested merit scholarships in regard to student achievement in music and the like.

Research and analysis

Martin Luther College currently has a process for determining need-based grants to students. The resulting grants are largely based on funds available and the number of student financial aid applications that are submitted. The research further revealed that MLC is limited in funds available for scholarships, and that MLC is already offering awards to individuals based on academic achievement and that these awards continue in subsequent years for the student who maintains a certain academic standard. The current reality is that there is simply no funding available to expand any other kind of merit scholarship or even to enhance the current merit scholarships being offered.

Recommendation

The AHC2 thanks Martin Luther College for its efforts to offer need-based financial assistance to students, and to offer merit scholarships to students based on academic achievement. The AHC2 also thanks MLC for its desire to increase the money available for financial assistance and to expand the amount available for academic merit based scholarships. The AHC2 encourages MLC to pursue the idea of adding other merit based scholarships that are in keeping with the mission and vision of MLC.

Topic seven: Early childhood leadership training

Background

The first graduates of Martin Luther College with a degree in early childhood entered public ministry in 1998 and the rapid pace in which early childhood programs have expanded and evolved both in society and in our churches has challenged our church body in its efforts to keep up or to catch up, particularly in the area of leadership and the position of early childhood ministry (ECM) director. The commission was asked to take a close look at how WELS is addressing the growing need in our church body for strong, well prepared, and highly capable leaders for early childhood ministry, specifically the issue of how we prepare early childhood directors for their work.

Research and analysis

Leaders in early childhood ministry from MLC and the Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS) were consulted. Personal interviews with ECM teachers, directors, and synod administration as well as a review of papers written on the topic were also helpful in researching this issue.

MLC and CLS clearly have this topic as a high priority and are working hard to address it. They have researched and studied the issue and have developed a strategy to address the need for ECM leadership training. They are also stressing that this area of leadership is arguably as important and critical in our WELS school ministry as the role of principal. There also appears to be a need for WELS congregations to have a well-defined ECM mission and purpose that is a part of the overall mission of the church and that the congregation, its leaders, and the ECM staff understand that purpose and support it. MLC and CLS are striving for excellence in WELS ECM programs; their goal is to have teachers and directors who are well trained and well prepared for their roles.

Endorsement

1. The AHC2 supports the emphasis being placed on this issue at MLC and CLS and is grateful to all who are involved in researching, planning, and proposing ways to assist WELS to have well-trained directors in our early childhood ministry programs.
2. The AHC2 endorses the efforts that are currently being implemented or developed such as director apprentice mentoring, new teacher induction, a leadership training program, and a newly developed master's degree program (Master of Science in Educational Administration) at MLC as well as the increased and expanding opportunities for continuing education.
3. The AHC2 endorses the efforts of the Ministry Committee of the Synodical Council as it continues to address the area of leadership training for our WELS school ministry.

Recommendation

1. The AHC2 encourages congregations of WELS that have an early childhood ministry to review their ECM mission and purpose and to provide adequate support to carry them out, especially regarding the director position.
2. The AHC2 encourages congregations of WELS that wish to add an early childhood ministry program to have a clearly defined ECM mission and purpose that flows from and supports the mission of the church and that members, church leaders, and ECM staff understand them and support them.

The following portion of this report is from the Synod Structure Committee.

Topic eight: Board for Home Missions—urban outreach

Background

WELS lacks presence in major North American urban centers with the exception of New York City. The result is that millions of people are not near a congregation that proclaims the gospel in its truth and purity. However, WELS is gaining experience with Global Cities, a term that is used for very large cities with extreme ethnic diversity.

Research and analysis

In fall 2014, the Board for Home Missions (BHM) sponsored a conference on Mission Ministry in Global Cities. That conference noted that people who formerly had moved to the suburbs are now moving back into the cities and noted that this demographic may have more of a connection with a local WELS congregation than those who have lived all their lives in the city. Further, the conference noted that a WELS presence in such Global Cities would provide first generation immigrants who relocate to Global Cities from abroad with more exposure to WELS. The conference also noted that having a presence in Global Cities would allow WELS to deal with localities that take on the identity of a new or different culture (e.g. Vancouver has 600,000 Chinese in its overall population of 2.5 million). Lastly, the conference noted that, in many Global Cities, a number of cultures live in close proximity.

Recommendation

The AHC2 encourages the BHM to continue investigating new methodologies and opportunities to bring the gospel to urban centers, embracing the diversity and overcoming the challenges of cost and the non-traditional approaches that are required to do mission work in such locations. The AHC2 does not encourage a shift of BHM focus/priority to urban ministry.

The AHC2 thanks the BHM for being good stewards of the gospel resources that God provides through his people. The mission of the BHM is clear. It seeks to reach the lost with the gospel by planting new missions.

Topic nine: Board for World Missions' procedures for opening new mission fields and withdrawing manpower from existing mission fields

Background and rationale

Questions were raised and concerns were expressed about the methods used by the Board for World Missions (BWM) in determining when to begin working in a new mission field and when to withdraw support and/or expatriate manpower from existing mission fields.

Analysis of issues related to mission expansion

As part of a long-term strategic mission expansion plan, the BWM keeps a watchful eye on expansion opportunities. These expansion opportunities often develop as a natural and organic extension of existing mission work. Missionaries in a given country may develop contacts for gospel outreach in a neighboring country, and the opportunity to work in a new mission field may develop. When funding and/or manpower are available, WELS begins formal work in a new country.

Before mission work in a new country begins, the BWM follows a process of planning and prioritization. A potential field is thoroughly assessed on the basis of its political and economic climate, the extent to which gospel outreach is currently taking place in the country, and a number of other factors. If the expansion plan includes deploying expatriate (e.g. American) missionaries to the country, the assessment includes an evaluation of living conditions, educational opportunities for a missionary family, safety concerns, and the like.

Occasionally, an extraordinary opportunity arises unexpectedly, and the BWM must react quickly to determine how best to seize that opportunity. Just as Paul responded to his "Macedonian call" (Acts 16:6-10), the BWM may see a narrow window and respond quickly to reach out into a new mission field. Even in such situations, however, the BWM undertakes an accelerated, yet thorough, evaluation process of the potential field.

In recent years the BWM has made use of numerous alternate strategies for gospel outreach. In the past, opening a new mission field usually meant entering a country with expatriate manpower and then supporting missionaries and their families in that country for a lengthy period of time. New methods include the use of remote video (e.g. Skype) and materials from Multi-Language Publications (MLP) to train national contacts for ministry without any permanent American presence in the country at all. New methodology, such as that deployed in Latin America under the "One Latin America" theme, brings theological training to national candidates locally. Missionaries no longer need to reside permanently in a foreign country; instead they can choose the country that is located most strategically to reach all of the fields they serve. These alternate strategies have redefined what it means to be working in a foreign mission field.

Analysis of issues related to withdrawal of expatriate manpower or monetary support from foreign fields

As mission fields mature, the BWM also looks for opportunities for strategic reduction in support and expatriate manpower. Ideally these strategic reductions take place in a planned, methodical way, in response to changing needs on a growing and maturing field.

Sometimes, however, other factors enter into decisions to withdraw money and manpower from existing fields. Sudden changes in the political climate may put expatriate missionaries and their families at risk. Concerns about personal safety and security may prompt a rapid withdrawal from a country, such as happened in Colombia and Albania in the late 1990s.

Budget pressures, too, may result in unplanned reductions in money and manpower. Through its budget process the synod may direct resources away from world missions, thus resulting in an unplanned and premature withdrawal of missionaries from world fields.

When WELS begins mission work in any country, it always does so with an exit strategy in mind. Our world mission philosophy is built on the understanding that WELS missionaries will not be a permanent fixture in a given foreign

country but will spread the gospel, plant churches, train national pastors, help to develop the national church, and then withdraw to do their work elsewhere. The timetable for such strategic withdrawal, however, will vary dramatically from field to field. Some fields have shown rapid expansion and quick development. In other fields the labor will continue for decades sometimes with very little in the way of numerical results. We should not be impatient when expecting results, and we should not limit our expatriate involvement to short timeframes in situations where a long-term, multi-generational approach is necessary.

When planning for withdrawal, we should always be mindful of the relationships we have developed with our brothers and sisters in the national churches we serve. Precipitous withdrawals of manpower, especially those driven by budgetary pressure, can undermine trust, damage WELS' credibility as a reliable mission supporter and partner, and result in severe damage to our gospel outreach efforts.

Endorsements

1. The commission endorses the efforts by the BWM to plan for strategic mission expansion, using a careful process of evaluating potential mission fields.
2. The commission endorses efforts by the BWM to remain agile and flexible when seizing new mission expansion opportunities, including using new technologies and alternate strategies for gospel outreach.

Recommendations

1. The commission encourages the BWM to work with each administrative committee to develop written, strategic plans for future mission expansion. The plans might include a strategy for expansion within an existing country or expansion into another country. The plans should include maximum utilization of technology and alternate strategies, where workable.
2. The commission encourages the BWM to work with each administrative committee to develop written, strategic plans for future withdrawal of money and manpower support from existing mission fields. The plans should include stated goals and benchmarks that should be reached prior to a strategic reduction. (For example, a plan might state, "When we have ten national congregations and six fully-trained national pastors, we will plan to withdraw one expatriate missionary.")
3. The commission encourages the BWM to think long term when doing mission work in foreign countries. When planting and developing a national church, it seems prudent to think in terms of multiple generations to develop a national church to the point where complete withdrawal of manpower and outside subsidy is possible.
4. The commission encourages the synod to resist precipitous and unplanned reductions in money and manpower that undercut strategic planning (except where necessitated by political or other circumstances that may impact the safety of the called workers and their families).
5. The commission encourages the synod to renew and reaffirm its commitment to gospel outreach around the world, using any legitimate means possible to reach souls for Christ.

Topic ten: Board for World Missions administrative structure

Background and rationale

The Board for World Missions (BWM) administrative structure was last revised by the 2005 synod in convention. The size of the BWM was reduced to five men. Positions on administrative committees (ACs) went from being elected by the synod in convention to being appointed by the World Missions administrator, with the approval of the BWM.

Analysis of issues related to the BWM administrative structure

The BWM is comprised of five men who are elected by the synod in convention. The BWM is structured to be an independent policy- and decision-making body. The BWM does not have representation from specific ACs or specific mission fields (although BWM members may have a relationship with certain mission fields, due to experiences prior to serving on the BWM). The BWM works closely with the administrator for World Missions.

The ACs are appointed by the administrator for World Missions, with the endorsement of the BWM. AC members are selected for their understanding of world mission-related issues and administrative ability. Appointments are normally to a term of six years, with a maximum service of 12 years. AC members may be asked to step down if the BWM believes that the continued service of the AC member is not in the best interest of the AC and the fields he serves. The role of the AC is to implement and communicate policy and strategic decisions made by the BWM.

A conversation with the current administrator for World Missions indicated that the current structure is functioning well. The administrator and the BWM have the flexibility to work within the current structure to serve the world mission objectives of WELS.

Endorsement

The commission endorses the current administrative structure of the BWM and does not recommend further restructuring at this time.

Topic eleven: Protection/recovery of synodical support provided to congregations that elect to close or to leave the synod

Background

The question was raised as to whether mechanisms (legal, contractual, etc.) exist that might be utilized by the synod (and its related entities) to better protect the financial investment that the synod makes by way of subsidies, grants, loans, etc., from various synodical organization(s) to congregations, including specifically congregations in mission settings, in the event that a congregation that has been the beneficiary of such support closes or elects to leave the synod.

Discussion

On one hand, the number of incidences of a congregation leaving the synod or closing shortly after receiving substantive contributions of synodical funds historically has been relatively low. On the other hand, (i) the magnitude of the losses when such does occur can be substantial (and, given the likelihood of increases in the amount of synodical support for congregations, the magnitude of a given loss is likely to increase) and (ii) it is the AHC2's perception that current practices (as well as practical realities) limit the ability of the synod to protect and to recover at least some portion of its investment in such instances.

In light of the foregoing, the AHC2 believes that it is a matter of prudent stewardship for options to be explored regarding how and to what degree changes can be made to current practices and procedures so as to enhance the ability of and the likelihood that the synod can recover some portion of the support that it provides to congregations, which after receiving such support, then elect either to leave the synod or to close.

Recommendation

The AHC2 recommends that both the Board for Home Missions and the Church Extension Fund should examine their respective practices and procedures, and specifically the terms and conditions under which each organization provides subsidies, grants, loans, and/or other support to congregations to see if changes can be made to such so as to enhance the ability of the synod to recover some portion of the subsidies, grants, loans, and/or other support provided in the event that a congregation that has been the beneficiary of the subsidies, grants, loans, and/or other support elects to leave the synod or closes.

Topic twelve: Online repository

Background

In the days prior to the synod's Connect site, the various entities that comprised the Board for Parish Services (BPS) division of the WELS posted items on the WELS website for general use. The Congregation and Ministry Support Group (CMSG) replaced BPS. While the entities that comprise the CMSG currently post materials on the WELS intranet site, the suggestion was received by the AHC2 that a repository be created where items from pastors, teachers, and staff ministers could be posted and shared as well.

Research and analysis

The AHC2 conducted interviews with several WELS leaders regarding this suggestion. The information gathered revealed an interest in renewing this effort. It was also noted that such repositories are already operated on the circuit level and perhaps at other levels within our synod.

However, the interviews also uncovered a number of challenges to this effort. The users in the field experienced some frustration with Connect. The levels of participation and oversight in the past were uneven; it's likely these issues would continue. But perhaps most challenging is quality control. In other words, who will make sure the items received from the field are "good enough" to share and who establishes the criteria? Who will review the submitted items for doctrine and accuracy prior to posting? The various administrators of each division of the Congregation and Ministry Support Group (CMSG) don't have the time or staff to make this suggestion a reality. It's possible this could become the responsibility of each district's CMSG, but that would likely contribute to the issue of variations in participation and quality.

The AHC2 was informed by the director of the Commission on Congregational Counseling (CCC) that the CCC had previously discussed this idea, that it finds value in this endeavor, and that the CCC believes such a repository would

be beneficial. As the CCC counselors begin working with congregations, it's likely that they will point congregations to materials available from the CMSG. As the need for such materials increases, such a repository will likely develop.

Recommendation

THE AHC2 recommends that the CCC be encouraged to partner with the other commissions of the CMSG in creating and maintaining an online repository as the commissions deem best in cooperation with the WELS Technology Office.

Topic thirteen: The work of the Church Extension Fund and the WELS Foundation

Background

The AHC2 looked into the way in which the Church Extension Fund (CEF) operates and provides financial support to the WELS Board for Home Missions (BHM) in the form of grants. In doing so, a couple questions emerged: Would it be wise for CEF to modify its grant policy in order to make more funds available for gospel ministry? Is there a way for CEF grants to benefit self-supporting congregations?

Research and analysis

The AHC2 conducted several interviews to become more familiar with CEF governance and its guidelines. The AHC2 learned that CEF grant money is already available to assist self-supporting congregations through the BHM in endeavors such as congregational re-starts or support of manpower in an outreach (home mission) effort.

The AHC2 also learned that the WELS Foundation conducts an annual assessment of its financial obligations versus its unrestricted net assets. Recently a meeting was held between representatives of the CEF, Home Missions, and Financial Services. One outcome of that meeting was that these three entities will be collaborating on the development of a new assets policy for the CEF that is similar to the strategy currently utilized by the WELS Foundation, a policy that is enjoying the Lord's blessings.

Endorsements

The AHC2 is pleased to learn that the CEF has begun efforts to conduct an annual assessment of its financial obligations versus its net unrestricted assets and encourages that this process be completed as soon as possible.

Recommendations

The AHC2 encourages the BHM to continue to look for prudent ways in which it can use a portion of its CEF grant money to assist self-supporting congregations in keeping with BHM guidelines and policies.

Status

Prior to the submission of this report for inclusion in BORAM, the CEF reported that it has developed a new net unrestricted assets policy.

Concluding remarks

The AHC2 began each of its meetings imploring the Lord of the Church to bless its efforts to evaluate the kingdom work WELS is currently conducting and to articulate suggestions for ways in which such might be improved. The members of the AHC2 offer our beloved synod the endorsements and recommendations in this report confident that God's people will prayerfully consider them. To that end, the members of the AHC2 express their heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity to serve our Lord Jesus and our synod in this way.

Soli Deo Gloria

Rev. Joel Voss, reporter

Rev. Joel Voss, chairman

Rev. Jon Buchholz, Conference of Presidents representative

Mr. Harvey Dunn

Mr. Warren Ehlke, Synodical Council representative

Teacher Michael Hein

Rev. Duane Rodewald

Rev. Thomas Unke

Advisory:

Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president

Rev. James Huebner, WELS first vice president

Section 2.20
Second Vice President

- (a) The second vice president shall assist the president and first vice president, serve on the Conference of Presidents, and serve as the corporate secretary for the corporation.
- (b) The second vice president shall be a ~~parish~~ pastor elected for a four-year term with no limitation on the number of terms. The second vice president shall carry out such assignments the president or first vice president may assign or are prescribed under these bylaws.

Section 2.80

Election of the President, Vice Presidents, and Recording Secretary

- (a) The election of the president and second vice president or first vice president and recording secretary shall precede all other elections. Any of these offices vacated by election shall be filled by election at that convention for the remainder of the unexpired term.
- (b) The nomination of candidates for the offices of president and second vice president or first vice president and recording secretary shall be conducted ~~by the synod~~ in alternate conventions ~~on~~ written nominating ballots: by the Synod Nominating Committee as described in Section 3.40. For the office of president and second vice president anyone listed on the most current synodical roster of "pastors - active" shall be eligible. For the office of first vice president only parish pastors on the same roster shall be eligible. For the office of recording secretary, all male called workers listed as active in the most current synodical roster shall be eligible.
- (c) ~~The five nominees who shall have received the largest number of votes on the nominating ballot for president shall be the candidates for that office. The nominating ballot shall not be declared an election. The synod shall then proceed to the election. The ballot for President shall consist of no fewer than five names. Nominations from the floor will not be received.~~ If no candidate receives the majority of the votes cast on the first ballot, the name of the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be stricken, and a new ballot shall be taken. The balloting shall continue in this manner until one candidate shall have received the majority of the votes cast.
- (d) ~~The nomination and election of the vice presidents and recording secretary shall follow the same procedure as followed in the nomination and election of the president, except that the three nominees who shall have received the largest number of votes on the nominating ballot for first vice president, second vice president, and recording secretary shall be the candidates for the respective office. The ballot for the 2nd Vice President shall consist of the unelected nominees for President.~~
- (e) The nomination of candidates for the offices of 1st Vice President and recording secretary shall be conducted by the Synod Nominating Committee as described in Section 3.40. The ballot shall consist of no fewer than four names. Nominations from the floor will not be received. If no candidate receives the majority of the votes cast on the first ballot, the name of the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be stricken, and a new ballot shall be taken. The balloting shall continue in this manner until one candidate shall have received the majority of the votes cast.
- (e~~f~~) The term of any newly elected officer shall begin immediately after the close of the regular convention at which the officer is elected.

Section 3.40

Nominating Committee

- (a) There shall be a Nominating Committee that shall serve under the Conference of Presidents to assist them in preparing the nominating ballot for the convention.
- (b) The committee shall consist of the chairmen of the district nominating committees. It shall be convened and chaired by the recording secretary who shall request of each elective board chairman the name, position, and eligibility of board members whose terms are expiring at the next convention. The recording secretary will also provide the names of the synod praesidium members whose terms are expiring.
- (c) The Nominating Committee shall solicit information and suggestions for candidates from the board and the synod praesidium for which it is nominating candidates. It shall request the names of candidates in whatever other manner it deems expedient with a view to maintaining democratic

procedure, including a request for candidates in *Forward in Christ*.

(d) At least 10 months prior to the regular convention of the synod, each district chairman shall consult with his district nominating committee in advance of the meeting of the synodical Nominating Committee to secure names of qualified nominees for the specified synodical offices, at the same time gathering appropriate data on each person recommended.

(e) In January of the convention year, the Nominating Committee shall nominate by ballot three candidates for each position on the following boards as terms expire: the Board for World Missions; the board of directors of Northwestern Publishing House; the Board for Ministerial Education; the chairmen of the following boards: Home Missions, World Missions, and Ministerial Education; the Board of Appeals; and the chairmen of the Governing Boards of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Martin Luther College, Luther Preparatory School and Michigan Lutheran Seminary; all of whom shall be parish pastors. It shall nominate the pastor and teacher at large members of the Synodical Council as their terms expire. It shall nominate by ballot no fewer than five names for synod president and no fewer than four names for 1st vice president and recording secretary.

(f) The list of candidates selected by the Nominating Committee shall be published once on the WELS Web site and via electronic news release at least 60 days prior to the convention to elicit additional data and comments from the synod's constituency and to familiarize the delegates with the names of the candidates prior to the convention.

(g) The election ballot prepared by the Nominating Committee shall be submitted to the convention for approval before the convention proceeds to the election. The convention may add to the slate of candidates, except for the positions of the synod praesidium.

Amendment #2: Election of district praesidia

CONSTITUTION FOR THE DISTRICTS

Article VI

Officers

Section 1. The officers of this district shall be a president, two vice presidents and a secretary. These officers shall be elected for a term of two years at a regular convention of the district with no limitation on the number of terms.

Section 2. The officers of the district shall always be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by ballot. The ballots for each member of the district praesidium shall contain no fewer than six candidates. Nominations from the floor for will not be allowed. A majority of the votes shall be necessary for election. The nominating ballot shall not be declared an election.

Section 3. ~~The nomination and election of the president and of the first and the second vice-presidents shall be held separately.~~ The president shall be elected first and thereafter the vice-presidents. ~~The four nominees who shall have received the largest number of votes on the nominating ballot for president shall be the candidates.~~ If no candidate receives the majority of the votes cast on the first ballot, the name of the nominee receiving the smallest number of votes shall be stricken and a new ballot shall be taken. The balloting shall continue in this manner until one candidate shall have received the majority of the votes cast.

Section 4. Nomination and election for the offices of first vice-president, second vice-president, and secretary shall follow the same procedure as followed in the nomination and election of the president, ~~except that the three nominees who shall have received the largest number of votes on the nominating ballot for the offices shall be candidates for the respective offices.~~

Section 5. For the offices of president and vice president, only pastors active in the parish ministry shall be eligible.

ARTICLE XVIII

Nominating Committee

Section 1. There shall be a nominating committee composed of two members from each of its conferences. Members of the committee shall be elected by ballot by the district from a slate of candidates nominated by the district council. The slate of candidates shall first be ratified by the convention before proceeding to the election. The convention may add to the slate of candidates,

except for the elections of praesidium members. A majority vote shall be necessary for election. The term of office shall be four years with one conference representative elected at each regular convention of the district. Members may succeed themselves twice.

Section 2. There shall be an additional member, elected by the district, for a four-year term who shall serve as chairman of the nominating committee. He may succeed himself twice. The chairman shall also represent the district on the synod's Nominating Committee.

Section 3. The committee shall nominate at least two candidates for each elective office of the district, except as otherwise provided for in this constitution. It shall nominate at least three names for offices of the synod elected by the district.

Section 4. The list of candidates nominated by the committee shall be sent to the delegates at least 30 days prior to the convention. The ballot submitted to the convention by the committee shall first be ratified by the convention before proceeding to the election. The convention may add to the slate of candidates, except for the members of the praesidium.

Section 5. The committee shall supply the voting delegates with pertinent, factual information about the candidates. Pertinent information shall include congregational affiliation, age, occupation or profession and address.

Amendment #3: Synod convention delegates

Section 3.10

Conventions: Delegates

(a) At conventions of the synod, districts shall be represented by three classes of voting delegates: congregation representatives (lay delegates), pastors, and male synodically certified teachers. Only these official delegates shall be entitled to make motions and to vote at the convention of the synod.

(b) The distribution of delegates among the districts shall be arranged as follows:

1. The number of delegates shall not exceed 400 voting delegates.

2. Half of the voting delegates shall be lay delegates.

3. In determining the distribution of male teacher and of pastor voting delegates, teachers shall be represented in the same proportion to their total number as pastors are to their total number.

4. The recording secretary of the synod, with the advice and consent of the Conference of Presidents, shall determine the delegate distribution so that each district is equitably represented. The number of delegates of the Arizona-California, Dakota-Montana, Nebraska, North Atlantic, Pacific Northwest, South Atlantic, and South Central districts shall not be less than their number of delegates to the 1993 convention.

5. Ordained pastors teaching at one of the educational institutions of the synod or within the synod are to be placed on the roster of active pastors. All other male members of the respective faculty are to be placed on the roster of active teachers.

6. Overseas world missionaries shall be selected by the Board for World Missions as synod convention delegates with the same formula used in determining called ministerial delegates.

7. Pastors and teachers, retired or active, are not eligible to serve as lay delegates.

(c) Convention delegates will be elected to serve at two consecutive WELS conventions. The delegates of half of the synod's districts comprising approximately half of the voting delegates to the synod convention will be elected before each convention. Delegates will serve, when applicable, on the same committee at both conventions. If a delegate is unable to serve at the second convention, an alternate delegate will be appointed to serve in his place. Alternate delegates so appointed will serve at only one convention.

(ed) The Conference of Presidents shall designate who shall attend conventions as advisory delegates.

(~~d~~e) The recording secretary of the synod shall publish at least once the list of voting and advisory delegates on the WELS Web site and via electronic news release 60 days prior to the convention.

(ef) The recording secretary of the synod shall notify the voting and advisory delegates in writing and provide their credentials at least 45 days but not more than 90 days prior to the convention.

Committee on Constitutional Matters

Floor Committee #23

Our calling

The Committee on Constitutional Matters (CCM) serves under the Conference of Presidents (COP) to interpret the constitution and bylaws for the synod and its constituency. It is responsible for maintaining and distributing accurate updates of these documents as changes are made by the synod in convention.

The current WELS Constitution and Bylaws and the Constitution for the Districts are available on the WELS website at www.wels.net/about-wels/synod-reports. You may also contact the President's office to request a printed copy.

Our current situation

The delegates to this summer's convention will have seven proposed amendments to consider. None are included in our report, but we will tell you where to find them along with the rationale for each one. Since all of them involve amendments to the synod bylaws or the Constitution for the Districts, each will require a two-thirds majority vote for approval.

First, there is the proposed amendment to the synod bylaws Section 5.00 dealing with the role and responsibilities of the synod's chief technology officer, presented as part of the Synodical Council report (pp. 68 and 69).

The report of the Conference of Presidents, beginning on p. 4, presents two proposed amendments. The first, to the synod bylaws Section 1.00, clarifies the definition of the term "staff minister" as used in the bylaws (p. 6). The second is a proposed amendment to the district constitution Article VII, which deals with the transfer of called workers between districts of the synod (p. 10).

The report of WELS Benefit Plans, which begins on p. 180, presents a proposed amendment to Sections 7.40 and 7.50 of the synod bylaws regarding the synod's Pension and VEBA plans.

Finally, there are three proposed amendments that would implement the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Commission 2 should they be approved. These are located as an addendum to the Ad Hoc Commission 2 report, which begins on p. 185.

Our Committee on Constitutional Matters would like to alert the delegates to some of the ramifications of these last three amendments that may not be readily apparent.

The two amendments dealing with the election of the synod and district praesidia specify that the nominations are to be made by the nominating committees prior to the convention, with no nominations open to the floor at the convention. This would give the properly elected and certified delegates at the convention no voice in determining the ballot for the praesidium. The proposed amendments also give no guidelines to the nominating committees for determining the choice of candidates. The proposed wording would allow them to disregard all of the names submitted to them. The nominating committees cannot properly prioritize candidates by the number of nominations submitted, since there is no way to certify the individual nominations submitted whether by mail, e-mail, or other means.

Our committee believes that the proposed amendment to bylaws Section 3.10 that provides for delegates serving at two consecutive conventions may also lead to some unintended consequences. Under our current system some called workers will have only one opportunity to serve as a synod delegate during their lifetime. Under the proposed system some of these called workers might never have an opportunity to serve. Also under the proposed system it is likely that a sizeable number of delegates will not be able to serve at their second convention because of changes in ministry, retirements, and other factors. That number is further increased by the fact that alternate delegates are

prohibited from serving a second time. If the goal of this amendment is to provide better prepared delegates at synod conventions, our committee believes that preparation is better provided prior to the convention on the district level.

A look ahead

Our committee will meet as soon as possible after the convention to incorporate the amendments approved by the delegates and publish the revised Constitution and Bylaws. Notice will be given when the document is complete. It will be available, as now, at www.wels.net/about-wels/synod-reports or by contacting the President's Office for a printed copy.

Rev. Paul Naumann, reporter

Rev. Paul Naumann, chairman

Rev. Steven Korth

Judge Victor Manian

Memorials

Memorial (2015-01)

Subject: *Restoration of funding for the director of the Commission on Youth and Family Ministry*
Floor Committee #22

- WHEREAS 1) it is always our desire that the youth we train in our congregations remain disciples of Christ throughout their earthly lives, on to eternal life; and
- WHEREAS 2) the loss of our youth during the high school years and beyond continues to be a troubling fact within WELS; and
- WHEREAS 3) Scripture and research both reveal that parents and families are the key factor in keeping youth connected to the church; and
- WHEREAS 4) the 2003 WELS synod convention resolved to study the extent of and reasons for teen and young adult losses in our church body; and
- WHEREAS 5) the report from that study included 11 recommendations, the first of which was that WELS needs to work more with parents to encourage them in the role they play in the spiritual life of their children; and
- WHEREAS 6) in October 2009, the Board for Parish Services was reorganized into the Congregation and Ministry Support Group (CMSG), and due to budget pressures, several positions were defunded; included among them was the position of director of the Commission on Youth and Family Ministry (CYFM), formerly titled administrator of the Commission on Youth Discipleship (CYD); and
- WHEREAS 7) according to statistics on WELS' Connect website, a majority of our children and youth are not served by our WELS schools—66 percent of WELS youth ages birth-4 years do not attend a WELS early childhood ministry, 57 percent of WELS children ages 5-13 do not attend a WELS elementary school, and 70 percent of WELS high school students do not attend a WELS preparatory school or area Lutheran high school; and
- WHEREAS 8) the area of ministry that is tasked with working with parents and serving and encouraging our families, especially those not served by our Lutheran schools, remains unfunded and vacant; and
- WHEREAS 9) according to 1999 statistics compiled by the Board for Parish Services, attendance at a WELS elementary school did not have a significant impact on retention (38 percent retention for Lutheran elementary school students, 32 percent retention for non-Lutheran elementary school students); and
- WHEREAS 10) other areas of ministry, which—while providing valuable ministry service and producing many blessings to our synod—do not have an effect on the retention of our youth, remain fully funded, and have even expanded (e.g., the approval of a second associate director for the Commission on Lutheran Schools, in addition to the current director, associate director, and early childhood ministry national coordinator); and
- WHEREAS 11) the area of ministry serving factors key to retention of our youth—ministry to and by parents and families—remains unfunded and vacant; and
- WHEREAS 12) limited financial resources always mean that difficult decisions need to be made that appear to pit one ministry against another (i.e., saying “yes” to a new missionary in Thailand means saying “no” to a new missionary in Malawi; saying “yes” to a new mission start in Alabama means saying

“no” to a new mission start in Arizona), yet we realize that these difficult decisions do not imply that one ministry is more valuable than another but rather that these are decisions between “good” and “good,” as we seek to practice the best stewardship of our ministry dollars and to find balance among all our areas of ministry; and

WHEREAS 13) the current synodical budget funds these ministry areas at the following staffing levels: Commission on Youth and Family Ministry—0 FTE, Commission on Adult Discipleship—0 FTE, Commission on Evangelism—1.8 FTE, Commission on Worship—2 FTE, Commission on Special Ministries—4.75 FTE, Communication Services—5.5 FTE, Commission on Lutheran Schools—5 FTE (a 6th position—a second associate director—was approved at the 2013 convention, yet remains unfunded), Ministry of Christian Giving—16.8 FTE; and

WHEREAS 14) the continuing absence of a director for the Commission on Youth and Family Ministry provides abundant challenges to those in our synod committed to the retention and growth of our families; therefore be it

Resolved. a) to restore funding for the position of director of the Commission on Youth and Family Ministry; and be it further

Resolved. b) that the funding for this position come, if possible, from an increase in Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO); and be it further

Resolved. c) that the funding for this position come, if necessary, from a reduction of a position in another area or areas of the Congregation and Ministry Support Group, Communication Services, or the Ministry of Christian Giving; and be it finally

Resolved. d) that the Conference of Presidents begin calling to fill the position of director of the Commission on Youth and Family Ministry.

*Northwestern Circuit of the Northern Wisconsin District
Rhineland Circuit of the Northern Wisconsin District*

Memorial (2015-02)

Subject: *Request for WELS to change name to World Evangelical Lutheran Synod*

Floor Committee #22

WHEREAS 1) WELS is represented throughout the world; and

WHEREAS 2) WELS is represented throughout the USA; and

WHEREAS 3) the Wisconsin in WELS is too limited in scope; and

WHEREAS 4) the Wisconsin may give a negative and or limiting connotation to the name of the church body and take away from its truly confessional Lutheran nature; and

WHEREAS 5) the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod can still be referred to as WELS; and

WHEREAS 6) the various church bodies in fellowship with WELS could also use WELS as part of their name as well, for example: WELS/USA, WELS/Canada, WELS/ Puerto Rico, etc.; therefore be it

Resolved. a) that the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod change its name to the World Evangelical Lutheran Synod; and be it further

Resolved. b) that from henceforth WELS in the USA be called WELS/USA; and be it finally

Resolved. c) that any other church body in fellowship with WELS may also become a part of the World Evangelical Lutheran Synod and be named WELS/Canada as an example.

Galen W. Sommer, Minneapolis, Minn.

Memorial (2015-03)

Subject: *Mentoring initiative for new pastors*

Floor Committee #2

- WHEREAS 1) WELS has experienced a significant loss to resignation of men trained for the pastoral ministry (WLS graduates from 1970–2010: 1,856; Pastoral resignations 1970–2010: 544; a resignation rate of 29 percent); and
- WHEREAS 2) the early years of ministry after graduation are critical times for a pastor when patterns of life and ministry are being set that will prove either a benefit or a detriment for future decades of ministry; and
- WHEREAS 3) a well-trained, experienced pastor focused on providing support and encouragement to just one or two new graduates can have a significant impact on a young pastor just setting up strong patterns for his life and ministry, in particular helping that young pastor to establish a strong devotional life and a strong support system with his circuit pastor, other ministry peers, and lay leaders; and
- WHEREAS 4) over the past five years a pilot initiative of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to provide just such trained and experienced pastors/mentors to new graduates for the first three years of ministry has shown promise as it continues to develop and has attracted a higher and higher percentage of WLS graduates who request a mentor (see chart on p. 18); and
- WHEREAS 5) a similar initiative called New Teacher Induction (NTI) has already been approved by the synod and will, as of this year, have expanded to helping new teachers grow in all 12 WELS districts; and
- WHEREAS 6) funding for the mentoring initiative, which has been provided by generous grants from the Antioch II Foundation, was intended only to fund this initiative until it had established itself and then could be supported directly by the congregations whose pastors are benefitting from mentoring; and
- WHEREAS 7) our synod’s Conference of Presidents passed a unanimous resolution in April 2014 supporting the work being carried out by the mentoring initiative; therefore be it
- Resolved. a) that the synod formally approve the three-year mentoring initiative for new pastors that would continue to be administered, strengthened, and developed through Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary; and be it finally
- Resolved. b) that congregations calling new pastors through the synod’s Assignment Committee would cover the cost as an investment in a strong beginning for their new pastor’s gospel ministry. (The current estimated annual cost of the mentoring initiative is \$1,000.)

Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee

Memorial (2015-04)

Subject: *Encouraging calling bodies to provide the resources of time/money to their called workers to pursue ministry-long spiritual and professional growth*

Floor Committee #2

- WHEREAS 1) calling bodies are making a wise investment in strengthening gospel ministry in their midst when they provide time and financial resources to their called workers to continue their spiritual and professional growth; and
- WHEREAS 2) one of the greatest road blocks to that ministry-long spiritual and professional growth of our called workers is when calling bodies fail to provide to their called workers the time and financial resources needed to pursue such growth; and
- WHEREAS 3) the 2013 synod convention did pass a resolution (*Proceedings* 2013, pp. 69-70) encouraging congregations to budget \$1,000 annually per called worker to assist their workers in pursuing growth (this amount is equal to the current costs per year for calling bodies of the New Teacher Induction program and the Pastor Partners mentoring initiative); and
- WHEREAS 4) a recent survey among WELS teachers indicated that only 6.5 percent of their calling bodies actually provide that recommended level of financial support for continuing education; and
- WHEREAS 5) The previously referenced synodical resolution provided no structure for how encouragement to

calling bodies to provide time and financial resources for pursuing growth might be regularly communicated to the lay leaders in our congregations; and

WHEREAS 6) the typical changeover of lay leaders in calling bodies as new leaders are elected and/or appointed makes providing information and encouragement about the importance of continuing education for called workers an ongoing need; and

WHEREAS 7) it can be awkward for called workers to take the lead in advocating for the time and resources they need to pursue spiritual and professional growth since some may view it as self-serving; therefore be it

Resolved. a) that this convention reaffirm the wisdom of calling bodies budgeting \$1,000 per called worker per year for spiritual and professional growth; and be it further

Resolved. b) that our synod-supported ministries (such as our Center for Mission and Ministry, our ministerial education schools, and our missions at home and abroad) take the lead in giving evidence in their budgets that they value ministry-long spiritual and professional growth for their called workers; and be it further

Resolved. c) that district presidents be asked to make funding this line item in budgets a regular point of careful discussion with calling bodies seeking to call a new worker (just as such discussions are held in regard to the synodical salary structure, WELS VEBA insurance, and the synodical pension program); and be it finally

Resolved. d) that the Conference of Presidents partner with our continuing education offices at Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to develop gospel-focused materials and a process by which regular and repeated encouragement about the importance of ministry-long spiritual and professional growth for their called workers can be shared directly with lay leaders in calling bodies.

Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee