

# *Proclaim the Wonders God has Done!*



500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation  
100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod





## A Message from the Anniversary Offering Committee

Population movement to suburban areas has been unprecedented. Many people in fast-growing areas are often unchurched or struggling to find a church. Some of them are our family members and friends.

Our purpose on earth is to be God's instruments to reach the lost, comfort the sick, and assure the dying that through faith in Christ their salvation is sure. One way we do that is through our offerings to the Lord.

In thankfulness and in honor of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our synod we seek to *Proclaim the Wonders God has Done!*

To do this, our synod in convention has asked our Board for Home Outreach and our Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary to work together to identify prospective mission fields and to send missionaries or candidates to serve in these harvest fields.

To accomplish this purpose our synod and the Board for Home Outreach propose to use the proceeds of this special anniversary offering

- to fund new missions,
- to fund the Vicar in Mission program, and
- to support and encourage opportunities for cross-cultural mission projects.

Speaking to his followers, our Lord gives this command: *"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest"* (Luke 10:2; ESV).

With this offering, we seek to fulfill our Lord's command to

- go and make disciples of all the nations (Matthew 28:18-20),
- prepare under-shepherds to care for Christ's people (Acts 20:28b),
- reach the lost and dying for Christ (Luke 19:10), and
- comfort and strengthen the saints (1 Thessalonians 4:18).



# Reasons for Support

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. (Matthew 28:19-20)*

## Potential New Mission Site: Clermont, Florida

Clermont's population has grown by 212% since the 2000 census. Additional growth projections put the five-year projection at a 20% increase in population. Since 2010, the community has experienced sustained growth as infrastructure projects continue to raise the profile of the community. Major medical services are increasing. Disney World continues to expand nearby. Clermont is a primary growth area in which our synod can work. With your help we stand poised to establish a new mission in a growing community.

### Background

Recent blessings in home mission work have come about through highly visible churches, located in population growth areas, with practical and yet suitable worship facilities that can serve a congregation for 10-20 years. After land is purchased and a building is constructed, we roll the cost of property and buildings into a loan. We then help our missions with

- operational subsidies that help cover the costs of supporting a missionary and the work of the mission, and
- loan support that allows the stewardship of each congregation to grow.

### It costs our synod about \$1,500,000 to establish such a mission.

- The costs of land and building construction continue to rise nationwide.
- Desirable locations in fast-growing areas tend to cost more.

In time and by God's grace, these churches become self-supporting and are then able to support the mission work we do together as a synod.



*Citrus Tower\**



*\*Citrus Tower, a Clermont, Florida landmark. At one time, it was said that you could see more than a million orange trees from this tower. Since then, many of those groves have turned into housing developments. Imagine if Citrus Tower were turned into a "soul tower." It could serve as a symbol of the harvest of souls that awaits the laborers our Lord will send into this harvest field.*



*How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?  
And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?  
And how are they to hear without someone preaching? (Romans 10:14)*

## **Vicar in Mission Program**

- We need trained missionaries to carry out our home mission efforts in the near future.
- Vicars in mission congregations being supported by the Board for Home Outreach receive additional help and training in outreach and evangelism.
- Each of our congregations is encouraged to consider themselves a “mission congregation,” which speaks to the need that our pastors learn to work and plan like missionaries.

**The average cost of a vicarage is \$30,000 per year.**

### **Overview of the Vicar in Mission Program**

When we combine increased mission work with a missionary-in-training gaining valuable experience in mission settings it is a win-win situation! The mission congregation is blessed because they have another worker to make valuable contacts. The vicar is blessed by a rich experience in mission work as he prepares for a permanent call as a pastor.

Besides opportunities to preach, the vicar in mission gains vital experience as he, for example, makes calls on evangelism prospects, instructs new members, assists with Bible camps/VBS, conducts Bible classes, assists with door-to-door canvassing efforts, and uses technology in outreach. All these experiences help the vicar prepare to assume the full duties and responsibilities as a pastor when he graduates from seminary. The vicar is also introduced to the day-to-day work of a mission congregation under the tutelage of an experienced missionary.



**With your support, we can continue training future pastors in mission settings during their vicar year.**



*And many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people. (Zechariah 2:11)*

## Cross-Cultural Ministry

Ministering to all cultures across the United States is of vital importance to the ELS. This is not unlike starting outreach activities in a foreign mission field. In this case, the foreign mission field has relocated to the United States.

### Proposed site: Bell Gardens, California



- Ethnic makeup of population - 96% Hispanic
- Population of Bell Gardens area - 882,000
- Primary language of population - 83% Spanish
- Christ the King Lutheran is located in the heart of Bell Gardens. The congregation has no debt and is in need of a pastor.

**This mission project will need \$100,000 per year.**

Our goal is to support a Spanish-speaking pastor to serve Christ the King and reach out to the Hispanic community in particular.

This concept of cross-cultural ministry can be used in other areas of our synod. Some congregations—perhaps even your own—are already close to large multicultural populations. Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary is helping to prepare men for this work through cross-cultural training. Your support is vital to expand these efforts within our synod.





*“And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)*

## Testimonials from Fellow ELS Members

*When asked, “What compels you to support ELS Missions?” this is what some of your fellow ELS members have said:*

For me, supporting missions is very simple, Matthew 28:19. The simple command to make disciples....it is a matter of loving obedience. That and the fact that you can't out give God, you just can't. Try it. See what happens.

I know this sounds like I'm just banging on the same old drum but it really is that simple. We were designed by God to take care of others! It isn't surprising that giving and taking care of others would make you happy. We don't realize how lucky we are to grow up knowing God. There are a lot of people in this world who don't have a direct knowledge of Him (Christ).

Our role on earth is to make sure they can get that knowledge which has been entrusted to us. God asked us to. That's why supporting missions is so important.

I am a new member and am so grateful for all the faithful servants in the ELS and for God's grace and mercy so lavishly bestowed upon this little synod. Thank you for all you are doing.



For as long as I'm able, I'm pleased to share God's blessings to me with the ELS. The message of sin, forgiveness, and eternal life are so essential . . . really the only reason for a congregation or church body to exist.

God has blessed the ELS and those with which we are in fellowship as some of the few still holding firmly to that message. **How can I fail to support those efforts?**



*We love Him because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19)*

## My Gift

*My giving to the Lord is a response to his love.*

### What the Lord would have us to do:

- Our Lord has given us the gracious command to preach the gospel to every creature.
- He has given us the gifts and abilities to carry out this work.
- He wants us to worship and honor him with our gifts.

### How can I give?

#### Gifts of Cash

You can give a one-time gift of cash to the offering. You can set up a gift promise to be paid monthly, quarterly, or annually.

#### Gifts of Securities

You can donate gifts of stocks, mutual funds, bonds, or even closely held stock. The beauty of this gifting method is that you can gift it directly (without cashing it in) and you have no income gain, but a full deduction of the value of your gift on the day it was given. You can also set up deferred gifts, funding them with securities in order to receive an income while you live and then provide a wonderful gift when you no longer need the income.

#### Gifts of Real Estate or Other Property

Gifts of real estate to the ELS may provide a great way to support gospel ministry. Gold, silver, collectables, or other property of value can also be given. It can be an outright gift or a deferred gift. Among the more common deferred instruments are charitable gift annuities, charitable trusts, or life estates. Receive a deduction now and retain a life income if you would like. While such gifts are more complex, it is well worth the effort to support ministry during, as well as after, our lifetimes.

#### Estate Gifts or Other Planned Gifts

You can also make the anniversary offering or ELS missions your beneficiary of a qualified account, or set up a bequest through your will or living trust. It can be a dollar amount or a percentage of your residual estate. This is the best way to avoid estate taxes in states like Minnesota, Iowa, Washington, and Oregon. Call for more details.





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 Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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