

Note to the Board Chairs

The Planning and Coordinating Committee is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, January 17, 2017, at 9:00 a.m. The standing committee recommends to the convention the 2018 budget; it also strategizes concerning long-range planning for the synod. The expectation is that the chairman of each board will be in attendance. Please make sure to have your 2018 budget requests to Keith by the end of the first week in January.

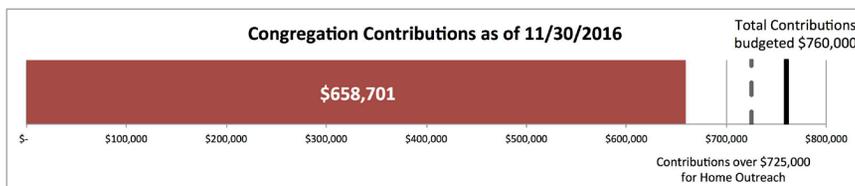
Anniversary Offering

God, in His grace and mercy, has brought us to the beginning of a new year. How important it is to reflect upon his blessings in the past year, and to look for opportunities to serve in the new year. One way we can honor and serve our Lord is to encourage our missionaries through the Anniversary Offering that supports new missions, enables us to do cross-cultural projects, and helps us train seminary students through the vicar-in-mission program where vicars work hand-in-hand with our missionaries in the field.



Upcoming Events:

- January 11 – Synod Review Committee
- January 17 – Planning & Coordinating Committee
- January 18-19 – Board for Youth Outreach
- January 20-24 – Home Outreach Seminar
- February 1 – Colloquy Committee
- February 10 – Centennial Committee
- February 13-14 – Board of Regents
- February 14 – Board of Trustees
- February 15 – Committee on Nominations
- February 15 – Board for Christian Service
- February 16 – Synod Review Committee



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President's Newsletter



Office of the President

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January 2017

Dear Fellow Workers in Christ's Kingdom:

This year begins the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. One of the best ways for each of us to observe and appreciate the gems of Luther's influence in his efforts to restore the Gospel to its rightful centerpiece in the church is to turn to his *Small Catechism*. Has it been some time since we worked our way through the booklet? It is a masterpiece, clearly setting forth Law and Gospel and highlighting the important nature of the Sacraments for our everyday lives. Can we encourage all of our synod members to take a moment daily or weekly to reflect on these biblical truths set forth in clear terms for our mutual edification?

You may access a newly arranged layout of Martin Luther's *Small Catechism* via the Anniversaries page on our website <els.org/anniversaries>.

Blessings in Christ,

John A. Moldstad

Centennial

As we enter the special anniversary years of 2017–18, consider using the synod's anniversary logo in your publications. The logo emphasizes both the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and the 100th anniversary of the reorganization of the synod. The logo is available for download on the synod website: from the home page click on the logo or go to <<http://els.org/anniversaries>>. We hope congregations, boards, and committees will use the special logo.



Worshippers from LMSI

Pictured here are members from our sister church, the Lutheran Mission of Salvation—India. Please pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who gather each week to worship our Lord in the locations of Hyderabad, Rajahmundry, and Jabalpur.



Bringing the Message of Hope

On December 10 members of our mission, Hope Lutheran in Leander, Texas, were invited to carol at Harmony Point Memory Care located in Cedar Park. The Sunday school children were able to recite the Luke 2:1–20 focused on the birth of Jesus. They followed up with singing *Mary's Boy Child*. Members of Hope also participated in singing Christmas carols after the children's recitation for those at Harmony Point. "What a great joy it is to share the Gospel through God's word and song!" said Pastor Brad Kerkow. Groundbreaking at Hope is set for January 8, 2017.

Seminary Call Accepted

Dr. Timothy Schmeling has accepted the call to serve as Professor of Old Testament, Symbolics, and Church History at our synod's Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. We pray that God blesses him in this new role as he prepares for teaching seminary classes next fall. We also ask God to grant Bethany Lutheran College success in finding qualified faculty for various positions.



Bethany Lutheran College

The Bethany Lutheran College Choir graced Trinity Chapel in Mankato, Minnesota, for several days of concerts in bringing praise to our God during the Advent/Christmas season.

In November approval was granted for three new majors at the college: bachelor of arts in engineering sciences, bachelor of arts in graphic design, and bachelor of arts in biochemistry. The college and the engineering program were stunned lately by the sudden death of Prof. Peter Kjeer. Our prayers go with Peter's family, especially wife Julie and daughters Katherine and Emily, and we also ask God to provide avenues for Bethany to continue the engineering program which Peter so ably helped pioneer.



Use of Reformation Hymns

To help commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, our ELS Committee on Worship has listed a number of hymns that can be used in our worship services and in our homes. The hymns are selected in keeping with the Church Year. You may access the list of hymns by way of our ELS webpage <http://els.org/download/worship_committee/17-Reformation-Anniversary-Reformation-Era-hymns-2.pdf>.

LCMS, WELS, and ELS Meet for Informal Discussions

Representatives of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod met November 29 through December 1 in Jacksonville, Florida. The meeting was the fifth in a series of annual informal discussions intended to improve mutual understanding of the respective doctrinal positions of the three synods, to clarify matters of doctrine and practice, and to establish and maintain lines of communication.

This year's meetings focused on the efforts of each of the synods to help and encourage Lutheran church groups around the world to move toward stronger confessional Lutheran doctrine and practice. Another major topic of discussion was the role of men and women in the church. Participants reviewed written statements of the three synods and discussed the doctrinal positions of each synod in the areas of women teaching men in the church, the proper exercise of authority, and the biblical prohibition of the ordination of women. While many areas of agreement were identified, it was also clear that significant differences remain.

The informal meetings have proven to be a blessing in many ways. Another meeting has been planned at the end of 2017. The discussions remain informal, however, since all parties involved realize that formal doctrinal discussions with the aim of re-establishing fellowship are not possible at this time.

Colloquy Result

On December 15, 2016, the Colloquy Committee met for Part 2 with the Rev. Robert Lawson, Sr., of Christ Lutheran, Princeton, Minnesota. The decision was made to recommend Pastor Lawson for clergy membership at our June convention. The independent congregation served by Pastor Lawson has submitted its constitution and bylaws to the convention's Membership Committee. A status of "independent but in fellowship" is recommended and desired, with the understanding that the congregation has declared itself to be in agreement with the doctrine and practice of the ELS. Those serving as members of the Colloquy Committee (for both Part 1 and Part 2) were: Pres. Moldstad, Vice-Pres. G. Obenberger, the Rev. G. Schmeling, the Rev. E. Ekhoft, the Rev. E. Teigen, the Rev. T. Hartwig, and Mr. Greg Costello.

Part 2 Colloquy Scheduled

The second portion of the colloquy for the Rev. Robert Lawson, Jr., who serves St. Paul Lutheran, Escondido, California, has been set for February 1, 2017. Any pertinent correspondence should be sent to our synod president at 6 Browns Court, Mankato, MN 56001.