

Loving Life at Divine Mercy Lutheran

Our home mission congregation in Weatherford, Texas, has taken on a project. The members of Divine Mercy, pastored by the Rev. James Kassera, explain their new initiative: “We want to share the mercy of Christ with our neighbors through the gifts of clothing, food, friendship, as well as the forgiving Word of God. How does it work? Many people donate their lightly used or new items that would really help parents and young children. Then, about once a month, we hold a ‘shopping day’ where those in need can come and take a few items home to help their family. What is the cost? There is no cost. Just as Jesus gave us salvation as a free gift, we joyfully offer our help for free as well.” If you would like to assist their efforts, we direct you to this link: <https://divinemercytx.com/loving-life-ministries/>



Tornado in Port Orchard

Please keep the members of Bethany Lutheran Church in Port Orchard, Washington, and the families of their school in your prayers. A rare tornado touched down about a mile from the church on December 18. Pastor Tony Pittenger reports: “It appears that there were no serious injuries, by God’s grace the tornado hit when most people were in school or at work.”

Note from our Treasurer

On January 10 the financial books will close for submittal from our congregations toward our 2018 Congregational Contribution Budget. Currently we need \$112,000 from our offerings in order to meet our \$770,000 budget. So, congregation treasurers, please remit your own church’s gifts for our synod work by the January 10 deadline. Thank you!

Mt. Olive at Bethany

Upper grade students from Mt. Olive Lutheran School in Mankato, Minnesota, graced the Bethany Lutheran College chapel with their voices on Friday, December 14, 2018. You can listen to live and archived chapel services at <https://www.blc.edu/chapelcast>.



Informal Discussions

Once again on November 27–28, about twenty leaders from the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS), the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), and the ELS met in Jacksonville, Florida as part of informal discussions which began in 2012. This seventh meeting spent time discussing the doctrine of creation and its relation to science and also what it would take for formal doctrinal discussions ever to be pursued should the opportunity arise. Given the issues that separate us, it was decided that such a move would be premature at this time. Another meeting is set for December 2019. The group decided that it will discuss the doctrine of justification and also articulate and commit to writing specific points of controversy between the LCMS and WELS/ELS. The Rev. Glenn Obenberger, the Rev. Thomas Rank, and Pres. Moldstad attended on behalf of the ELS.

Formal Discussions

Another meeting of ELS/WELS with the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) is being scheduled for this new year. The plan is to meet on August 9, 2019, in Waukesha, Wisconsin. These discussions center on the “Joint Statement Regarding the Termination of Fellowship.” In the years of 2016 and 2017, both the ELS and WELS adopted the statement at their respective conventions; the CLC is still studying the statement and will consider it once again at their 2020 convention.

Health Update

Roger Holtz, a retired pastor of our ELS, was diagnosed with stage 4 liver disease (cirrhosis) last summer. He was placed on the liver transplant list in early December and is currently in Madison, Wisconsin, awaiting a match. The Board for Christian Service has recently given him a grant to assist with expenses. If you would like to assist Pastor Holtz and others with future needs, you can donate to the Christian Service fund for “Medical Aid” (6 Browns Ct, Mankato MN 56001; you may also offer your support for disaster relief through the “World Needs” fund).

Strategic Planning Meeting

The ELS Planning and Coordinating Committee, the largest board in our synod, is scheduling its 2019 two-day session for February 19–20. A major portion of the meeting is being set aside for the continuation of strategic planning for our church body. The Rev. Larry Wentzlaff, our Evangelism–Missions Counselor, will be facilitating the meeting. The committee also has the duty of proposing the 2020 budget for convention approval and adoption.