

President's Newsletter



Office of the President

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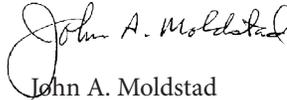
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September 2019

Dear Members and Friends of the ELS:

How is your happiness meter? Busy schedules, new obligations, dealing with extra challenges—these things weigh heavy and can quickly overtake the joy we should have. I am reminded of a man who owned a small estate but wasn't so satisfied with it. So, he decided to sell. He sent for a realtor and asked the agent to write up an ad telling details of the property. The agent did so; then took it to the seller and read it to him. "Read that again," said the owner. The agent read the description of the estate once more. "I don't think I'll sell, after all," said the man. "I've been looking for an estate like that all my life, and I didn't realize I already owned it!" May you and I take time to think of what we already possess in our Savior Jesus Christ. In him, we have solid forgiveness of every sin (including our ingratitude); and when we have that forgiveness—as we do in Word and sacrament—we have life right now, and an eternity of bliss and glory with him that is awaiting us! Our names, by faith in the Savior, are already on the title to this magnificent estate! Check your baptism daily. What joy it brings, like the sun bursting through a gloomy cloud bank! "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts... And be thankful" (Colossians 3:13).

May God truly bless your day,


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175 Years Under the Oaks

The first Norwegian pastor (J.W.C. Dietrichson) immigrated to the United States in 1844 and preached his famous sermon under the oaks of Koshkonong that September. His sermon was based

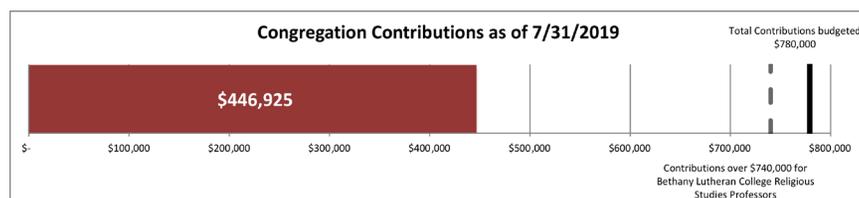


on Psalm 78:19, asking "Can God Furnish a Table in the Wilderness?" The immigrants later organized the Norwegian Synod in 1853, which reorganized in 1918, and today is our Evangelical Lutheran Synod. This month marks the 175th anniversary of that first sermon.

- Received an update that the projected budget deficit for 2019–20 stands at approximately \$1,000,000. Several factors that could improve this projection, such as the amount of donor support and mineral rights income, are unknown at this time.
- Approved for 2020–21 a \$300 increase in tuition (1.1%). Room, board, and fees were kept the same as the current year. This proposal supports an overall plan to keep the "sticker price" relatively flat, while focusing on increasing the net revenue received per student.
- Requested administration proceed with a review of the desired criteria and duties for a second full-time religious studies professor and to compile a new list of names of clergy who could fill the position.
- Received an update on the development of a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling. This year the college will need to receive approval from the Higher Learning Commission in order to offer classes beginning in fall 2020.
- Thanked God for blessing Bethany with gifts to the Bethany Fund of \$615,507 this past academic year, the highest amount of annual support in the history of the college!

Upcoming Events

- September 5 – Committee for Archives and History
- September 8 – 150th Anniversary of Holton (Holton, MI)
- September 8 – 25th Anniversary of Faith (Clara City, MN)
- September 10 – Doctrine Committee
- September 11 – Doctrine Committee and WELS Conference of Presidents
- September 12–13 – Circuit Visitors' Conference
- September 15 – 75th Anniversary of Trinity (Calmar, IA)
- September 22 – 50th Anniversary of St. Luke (Mt. Vernon, WA)
- October 4 – Synod Review Committee
- October 7–8 – Board for Lutheran Schools
- October 8 – Board for Youth Outreach
- October 8 – Committee on Worship
- October 9–11 – General Pastoral Conference
- October 13 – 50th Anniversary of Holy Scripture (Midland, MI)
- October 20 – Synod president preaching at East Grand Forks and Crookston, MN
- October 25 – Missions Advancement Project, Inc. Board of Directors
- October 27 – 160th Anniversary of St. Martin (Shawano, WI)
- October 27 – 90th Anniversary of Faith (Carthage, MO)
- October 31–November 1 – Bjarne Wollan Teigen Reformation Lectures



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ERC Holds First Meeting

The Explanation Review Committee (ERC) gathered at Holy Cross, Madison, Wisconsin on August 5, 2019. The committee has been tasked with reviewing and updating our 2001 *Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism*.



The committee is also looking at electronically communicating the catechism and also at the production of a workbook(s). Please contact the chairman, Rev. Mark Bartels, with any suggestions you may have for a new edition of the explanation.

Installation in The Dalles, Oregon

On Sunday, August 11, 2019, the Rev. Robert Lawson, Jr., was installed as pastor of the joint parish consisting of Concordia, Hood River, Oregon, and Bethany, The Dalles, Oregon. The parish also installed on the same day Erica Jacobsen as teacher at the Columbia Lutheran School.



Rural Lawler, Iowa, Summer Worship

A number of our synod's pastors and congregations held outdoor services this summer. Pictured is a gathering in August from the Saude-Jerico parish, led by Pastor Peter Faugstad.



Resignation and Appointment

Alex Ring has resigned as Secretary for Schools and Shu Ting Lai has been appointed by the Board for Lutheran Schools to the position. We thank Alex for his faithful service over the years.

Reformation Lectures

The Bjarne Wollan Teigen Reformation Lectures will be held October 31–November 1, 2019. This year the theme will be **Lutheran Preaching Through the Centuries**. The lectures will be: Preaching in the Reformation—Dr. Paul Robinson; Preaching in the Nineteenth Century—Dr. Thomas Kuster; Preaching Today—Pres. Paul Wendland. For more information: blc.edu/reformation-lectures.

Book Fair

As part of this year's Fall Festival at Bethany Lutheran College, a book festival is being organized for ELS and WELS authors to sell books and network with readers and with one another. The event will take place on Saturday, September 21, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on the college campus. For more information or a registration form, email BethanyBookFest@gmail.com.

Bethany Seminary Begins a New Academic Year 2019–2020

Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary began the new academic year on August 19, 2019 with the opening service at Good Shepherd Chapel. Prof. Nick Proksch preached the sermon on Ezekiel 47:1–9, which is Ezekiel's vision of a supernatural temple with waters flowing out of it. Prof. Proksch explained how figuratively these waters flow into the Dead Sea and are able to transform even the saltiest and deadest of waters into fresh water with an abundance of life. Likewise, God recreates us, his fallen creatures. He takes us out of our salt waters of sin and death by connecting us to the fresh waters of life, flowing from God himself as depicted by the temple. It is no wonder that Jesus spoke of himself as the true temple and offered "living water" in his ministry (John 2:19, 4:10, 7:37–39). Pastors have the joy and privilege to offer what truly quenches and satisfies in the means of grace. Studying for this ministry is the task at our seminary.

The teaching staff for the seminary this semester is as follows: Brian Klebig, Nicholas Proksch, Timothy Schmeling, Andrew Schmidt, and Gaylin Schmeling. The seminary enrollment this year numbers seventeen. There are four vicars, five seniors, five middlers, and three juniors.



Pictured from left to right: (back) Paul Agenten, Max Kerr, Abraham Faugstad, Adam Brasich, Colin Anderson, Peter Bockoven; (front) Nicholas Lilienthal, Sean Scheele, Samuel Johnson, Roger Emmons, Cody Anderson, Caleb Helmen; (not pictured) David Choi; Vicars not pictured: Patrick Ernst, Jacob Kempfert, Ethan Urtel, Karim Yaghleji

Bethany Lutheran College News

The synod's Board of Regents held its most recent quarterly meeting on August 12–13, 2019. At the two-day session the following actions were taken in regards to the college:

- Received a report that the 2018–19 academic year ended with a deficit of approximately \$50,000. This was very encouraging news. Factors that helped to greatly reduce this past year's deficit included increased tuition revenue due to increased enrollment; increased donor support from the Bethany Fund, ELS, and the Schwan Foundation; reduced total expenses from the previous year; reduced health insurance claims; and increased in mineral rights royalties.