

Prayers Needed for Health

We encourage all of our members and churches to pray for health safety around our world in light of the spread of the *coronavirus*. May God be with all who are ill, spare their lives, and enable the medical personnel to make strides in curbing the effects of this mysterious disease.

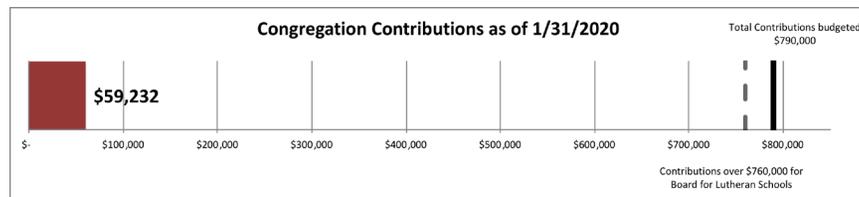
From the Giving Counselor

Stewardship of Gifts: Our ELS mission and ministry plans for 2020 call for expenditures of nearly \$3,058,000 for all our work together as a synod. That marks a nearly \$60,000 reduction from our 2019 expenditures. Over \$40,000 less will be spent for home missions and some \$20,000 less for Lutheran schools and their grant programs. Yet both of these ministries are in our prayers this year as we note the importance of supporting schools and home missions.

Opportunity: Our budgetary goal of \$790,000 has a base budget of \$760,000 and any and all funds above that level of giving from congregations is earmarked for Christian schools. May our giving reflect the opportunities and the gifts our Lord has given us to further his kingdom among us.

Upcoming Events

- March 2 – Iowa Pastors Winkel
- March 5–6 – Board for Home Outreach
- March 12 – Committee for Communication
- March 16–17 – Doctrine Committee
- March 20 – Synod Review Committee
- March 22–April 1 – Mission trip to Kenya
- April 21–22 – Great Lakes Pastoral Conference in Green Bay, WI
- April 23–24 – West Coast Pastoral Conference in Port Orchard, WA
- April 29–30 – Board for World Outreach



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President's Newsletter



Evangelical
Lutheran
Synod

Office of the President

John A. Moldstad

6 Browns Court Mankato, Minnesota 56001

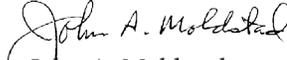
507-344-7356 jamjr@blc.edu

March 2020

Dear Members and Friends of the ELS:

Among things we prayerfully appreciate in this church season are the Lenten hymns. These hymns are packed with prayerful meditation on the love of our Savior as he treads the road to Calvary for our salvation. Do we also realize that our Lord himself—together with his disciples—*sang* as he moved toward that crucial moment? We wonder exactly what hymn he sang, as we hear Matthew tell us: “When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives” (Matthew 26:30). No doubt this included the customary Hallel Psalms (113–118). But what is most interesting is this: Not only was Jesus in a ponderous singing mode as he in mercy for us sinners moved cross-ward, he was even the Author singing his own Psalms! The prophecies about him were all coming to fulfillment in this tremendous act of atoning for the sins of all people. “Blessed is *he* who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Psalm 118:26). As we do our Lenten singing, may God have us recall how our voices, by faith, are combined with the singing Messiah himself as he enters his period of great Passion full of his astounding love for you and me and all!

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a tribute far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all. (ELH 308:4)


John A. Moldstad

2020 Winter Youth Retreat in Circuit 8

This year's winter youth gathering for our northern Minnesota churches was held at Lutheran Island Camp on February 16–17. Pastors of the circuit presented a video series Bible study called, “Unlocking the Mysteries of Genesis.” Twenty-two youth attended, four pastors, and three adult counselors.



LMSI Congregation in Need

A sister congregation in Lutheran Mission of Salvation–India (LMSI) has a unique, yet blessed, concern. St. Paul's Lutheran in Kathipudi of the Rajahmundry district is running out of space for their worship services. The small house of worship location has over 125 members. Now, another real challenge faces them. Due to the government's eminent domain rules, half of the building needs to come down in order to widen a road. So, the church desires to demolish a small parsonage nearby and on a vacant lot rebuild, provided that funding can be secured. If anyone would like to contribute to this project (estimated finishing cost of \$30,000), we urge you to mark your gift for the St. Paul's Project and send to: ELS Board for World Outreach, 6 Browns Ct, Mankato MN 56001.

New Plan Proposed by the P&CC

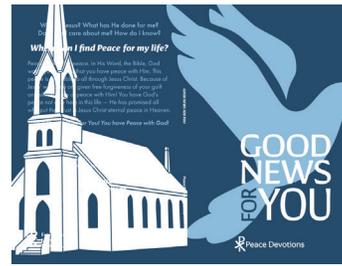
On February 18 members of our synod's largest board, the Planning and Coordinating Committee, composed a strategic plan proposal to bring to the synod for adoption in June. The new five-year plan (*Tell of Jesus and His Love*) covers three main goals with numerous objectives, assignments, and completion dates. The three overarching goals are listed as: 1) Every congregation, in Christian love, enhance its focus on reaching the lost. 2) Equip the next generation through Christ-centered education. 3) Develop and disseminate evangelism resources for home and world outreach.

The P&CC also is recommending a **2021** congregational contribution budget of \$820,000; any contributions above \$800,000 will be allocated to Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary (in honor of the seminary's seventy-fifth anniversary).



Weatherford, Texas

For its annual February meeting, the synod's Board of Trustees made a trip to survey the 18 acres of land which the synod purchased over a year ago near Weatherford, Texas. The location along the north side of Interstate 20 is the future site of a church building for Divine Mercy Lutheran. It is in the long-range plan of the trustees to sell off a sizable portion of the property once more development occurs around this fast-growing area. Pastor James Kassera (pictured center, with members of the board) has been serving the congregation since 2017. Currently members of Divine Mercy meet for Sunday worship in a strip mall on the east side of Hudson Oaks. On Sunday, February 9, 2020, Pres. Moldstad had opportunity to preach and also present on the work of our synod.



Devotional Published by BHO

Our synod's Board for Home Outreach has produced a new devotion booklet to be used for evangelism purposes by our synod's members. The booklet should be available for distribution soon (via our Bethany College Bookstore). It is based on the Peace video devotions (PeaceDevotions.com) and was compiled by Pastor Luke Ulrich, a member of the board.

LYA Convention

The 2020 Lutheran Youth Association (LYA) Convention will be held July 23–26 at Dixie State University, St. George, Utah just outside of Zion National Park. The focus this year is about the heavenly nature of Christ's church.

Highlights:

- Exploring Zion National Park
- Swimming in the desert at Quail Creek Reservoir
- Sectionals on a variety of biblical topics

Details at els.org/lya20



Churches Combining in Florida

Our Savior Lutheran in Lakeland, Florida, and Resurrection Lutheran in Winter Haven, Florida, recently announced they are forming a dual parish arrangement. Currently there is a vacancy at both congregations and a pastoral call has now been issued.

Explanation Review Committee

The committee continues to make good progress in its task of reviewing and editing the 2001 edition of our ELS *Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism*. If you have suggestions for consideration by the committee, please submit these to Rev. Mark Bartels (mbartels@holycrossmadison.org).

Kenya Trip in March

President Moldstad, Rev. Thomas Heyn, and Rev. Joseph Abrahamson are scheduled to meet with pastors in the Nyamira area of Kenya at the end of this month. Also, a meeting with a pastor from Uganda is being planned. Please pray for these upcoming discussions and for the travels.

2020 Convention

All items for the *Book of Reports and Memorials* for the 2020 synod convention need to be in the hands of the synod secretary by April 1.