



WELS NEWS April 2020

Synodical Council 2020 February Meeting Summary

The Synodical Council (SC) held its winter meeting last week.

- Financial results from 2019 were encouraging. Congregation Mission Offering receipts were more than \$330,000 above what congregations had committed and \$130,000 more than what was received in 2018. Expenses for the current fiscal year have been less than planned, improving the balance in the Financial Stabilization Fund. All our synodical schools are in a stronger financial situation due to cost controls and higher-than-expected gifts. Financial situations at all synodical subsidiaries have improved significantly.
- The SC adopted planning assumptions for the 2021-2023 biennium. Development of that plan begins in the coming months. The SC is assuming a 2.5% increase in called worker wages, an increase in health insurance rates of 6.5%, and a retirement program increase of 5%. These planning assumptions can change in the months ahead if circumstances warrant.
- The SC increased the WELS mileage reimbursement rate from 48 cents to 51 cents per mile.
- A search has begun for a replacement for Mr. Todd Poppe, the synod's chief financial officer, who will retire at the end of June.
- The SC approved a request from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to construct a new faculty home on its campus.
- The SC made no changes to the "Unfunded Priority List." These are items that are not included in the ministry financial plan adopted by the synod but can be approved if funding becomes available. The list, in priority order, is:
 1. Board for Home Missions—mission expansion (\$125,000)
 2. Board for World Missions—mission support/expansion (\$125,000)
 3. Board for Ministerial Education—student financial assistance at MLC (\$125,000)
 4. Board for World Missions—mission support/expansion (\$100,000)
 5. Board for Home Missions—mission expansion (\$100,000)
 6. Board for Ministerial Education—top capital improvement priorities (\$150,000)
 7. Special Ministries—WELS Military Services Committee (\$50,000)
 8. Special Ministries—WELS Prison Ministry Committee (\$50,000)
 9. Ministry of Christian Giving—additional counselor (\$120,000)

Easter is Reason to Celebrate!

This year in our monthly articles we are considering favorite verses from the Bible.

This month's favorite Bible verse is: **John 14:19**

"Because I live, you also will live."

"Happy Holidays!" Does this sound out of place in April? It doesn't have to. This month marks, arguably, the most important holiday of the year—Easter. Why? Because at Easter we celebrate that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. This miraculous event is certainly a reason for celebration. It proves that Jesus has power over even death.

And, what's more, he promises that he has power over *your* death. You may not be thinking about death at Eastertime. You may not like to think about death at all. (Who does?) Still, we are all facing that reality. Sooner or later, our lives will end.

Then what? Plenty of people have plenty of ideas about what happens after we die. But there is one person who can tell us with certainty what will happen because he has already been there and done that. Jesus experienced death...*and came back to life!* Now, listen to what he promises all of his followers, "Because I live, you also will live."

Could there be any better news? Could there be anything more worth celebrating? Through Jesus, you do not need to be afraid to die. You can be sure that one day he will raise your body back to life. And you will never die again.

What a reason to celebrate!

- Mr. Denny Walters, Mr. Ronald Schmitz, and Mr. Max Wenck were reappointed to serve on the Board of Directors of WELS Investment Funds.
- Mr. Mark Maurice was reappointed and Mr. Ken Zehm was appointed to serve on the Board of Directors of the WELS Foundation.
- The SC reviewed the plans to communicate information regarding the proposed change to the WELS retirement plan. The proposal will be discussed at this summer's district conventions.
- Teacher James Moeller and Mr. Tim Snyder have completed their time of service on the SC. We thank them for their faithful service.

Serving with you in Christ,

WELS President Mark Schroeder

Upcoming 2020 WELS Events

The time is here to explore all the opportunities for learning and fellowship through WELS events coming up this spring and summer. Consider the opportunities below.

WELS Women Writers Conference - April 24-25 Waukesha, Wis.

The conference is intended to encourage beginning and experienced women writers in the vocation of writing and provide practical help and resources for writing improvement. Plus, the editorial staff of *Forward in Christ* magazine will be doing a presentation. [Learn more and register](#)

WELS International Youth Rally - June 23-26 Knoxville, Tenn.

Registration is now open for the 2020 WELS International Youth Rally! The 2020 International Youth Rally will be held June 23-26 at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The theme for the rally is "Vision 2020: Seeing Christ Clearly. Serving Christ Boldly." It's an opportunity for WELS teens from around the country to come together to learn about and grow in their faith, enjoy fellowship, and participate in fun excursions. Contact youth leaders need to preregister members of their group. Once the group is preregistered, then individual rally goers will receive personalized links to finish registration. [Learn more and register.](#)

57th annual Lutheran Women's Missionary Society Convention

June 25-28 Athens, Ga.

The 57th annual LWMS Convention will be held June 25-28, 2020, in Athens, Ga. The weekend will include worship, workshops, speakers, displays, fellowship, and fun. Attend to hear from WELS missionaries and learn about WELS mission work around the world. [Learn more and register](#)

Taste of Missions - July 11 Mequon, Wis.

Registration is now open for the second annual Taste of Missions! It will be held on Saturday, July 11, 2020, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. Plan to attend for an afternoon of

family fun, ethnic cuisine, fellowship with home and world missionaries, and more! [Learn more and register.](#)

WELS Night at Miller Park - July 24 Milwaukee, Wis.

Tickets are now on sale for the seventh annual WELS Night at Miller Park. Organize your group and plan to join thousands of WELS members for the Milwaukee Brewers' game against the Pittsburgh Pirates on Fri., July 24, 2020. Game time is 7:10 p.m. [Learn more and read more in this issue of Together.](#)

Go and TELL

WELS Multi-Language Publications has officially changed its name to WELS Multi-Language Productions (MLP). This change reflects how the work of MLP has evolved with technology and has expanded beyond printed books to websites, social media, videos, and worship music—all to share the gospel message with people all over the world.

One of the new productions from MLP is TELL (Think, Evaluate, Learn, Lead), an English-language online Bible-based training platform developed to bring the gospel to English-speakers around the world. Modeled after the Spanish-language *Academia Cristo* model, TELL comprises a [Facebook page](#) with more than 1.2 million followers, self-led Bible study courses, and deeper studies with a live online instructor.

TELL targets English speakers outside the U.S. "We looked at the top spoken languages in the world. Spanish is in the top four; English also is in the top four. If you include second-language learners, English is by far the most spoken language in the world," explains Rev. Nathan Seiltz, MLP director.

Rev. Dan Laitinen was called as a full-time TELL missionary and began serving MLP in November 2019. He's currently producing content and cultivating relationships on the Facebook page. Additional Facebook content is provided by Lutheran pastors from around the world with whom WELS shares fellowship. This helps contribute to the intended global feel and reach of TELL.

In addition to the web-based platforms, MLP recently launched apps for both TELL and *Academia Cristo*. The apps are android based, with plans for iOS compatible apps in the future. TELL had over 3,000 downloads in the first week, and *Academia Cristo* has had more than 5,000 downloads. The TELL app has three Bible courses on it; each course has eight to nine video-based lessons accompanied by a quiz. After a user completes the self-led courses, they are invited to participate in a live online class.

Seiltz says that in the next six months he hopes at least a couple hundred people have signed up for TELL online courses, and, God-willing, within two years, people who have taken the courses are implementing what they learned to bring God's Word to their communities.

[Learn more about WELS Multi-Language Productions at wels.net/mlp.](#)