

Together

NEWS. RESOURCES. ENCOURAGEMENT.



New long-range strategic plan in place

The delegates to the convention in July adopted a new long-range strategic plan entitled “Christ through us.” This plan outlines the priorities of what we as a synod and as congregations have adopted for the next ten years. This plan was adopted not as a “top down” directive of what the synod will do and how we will conduct our ministry. Rather, it is an outline of the prayerful priorities and goals we have as we work together to carry out the mission that God has entrusted to us.

The title of the plan, “Christ through us,” emphasizes the focus and center of this plan, which is completely on Christ and on what he has done for us and for a world of sinners. But it also emphasizes the truth that God in his grace has chosen to work through us, his people and his ambassadors. The plan, which you will hear more about in the coming months, has four basic components: culture, congregations, commission, and calling.

- When addressing **culture**, the plan stresses the importance of developing a culture in our congregations in which all our members recognize that they are Christ’s ambassadors, each with the personal privilege and responsibility of communicating the message of Christ to the people they know. It will guide us as we work to make our congregations places where people are welcomed and participate in the life and work of the congregation.
- When addressing **congregations**, we will work to engage all members in the mission and ministry of the church. We will provide support and resources for ministry enhancement efforts in congregations. We will work to expand the synod’s gospel outreach through strategic church planting. We will elevate the home as the first mission field and provide sound Lutheran resources in discipleship, worship, outreach, and planning.
- When addressing **commission**, we will foster international ministry partnerships to expand the gospel’s reach. We will equip a global missionary force, not only by sending WELS missionaries but also by training pastors and evangelists from global sister churches and establishing confessional Lutheran seminaries in key global locations. We will foster robust mission collaboration with church bodies in full doctrinal fellowship with WELS. We will expand multi-language mission efforts and explore mission work in high-risk and unreached areas.
- When addressing **calling**, we will address the shortage of called workers by carefully expanding pathways into gospel ministry. We will establish innovative recruitment efforts for future called workers. We will maintain

Together

NEWS. RESOURCES. ENCOURAGEMENT.



New long-range strategic plan in place


The delegates to the convention in July adopted a new long-range strategic plan entitled “Christ through us.” This plan outlines the priorities of what we as a synod and as congregations have adopted for the next ten years. This plan was adopted not as a “top down” directive of what the synod will do and how we will conduct our ministry. Rather, it is an outline of the prayerful priorities and goals we have as we work together to carry out the mission that God has entrusted to us.

The title of the plan, “Christ through us,” emphasizes the focus and center of this plan, which is completely on Christ and on what he has done for us and for a world of sinners. But it also emphasizes the truth that God in his grace has chosen to work through us, his people and his ambassadors. The plan, which you will hear more about in the coming months, has four basic components: culture, congregations, commission, and calling.

- When addressing **culture**, the plan stresses the importance of developing a culture in our congregations in which all our members recognize that they are Christ’s ambassadors, each with the personal privilege and responsibility of communicating the message of Christ to the people they know. It will guide us as we work to make our congregations places where people are welcomed and participate in the life and work of the congregation.
- When addressing **congregations**, we will work to engage all members in the mission and ministry of the church. We will provide support and resources for ministry enhancement efforts in congregations. We will work to expand the synod’s gospel outreach through strategic church planting. We will elevate the home as the first mission field and provide sound Lutheran resources in discipleship, worship, outreach, and planning.
- When addressing **commission**, we will foster international ministry partnerships to expand the gospel’s reach. We will equip a global missionary force, not only by sending WELS missionaries but also by training pastors and evangelists from global sister churches and establishing confessional Lutheran seminaries in key global locations. We will foster robust mission collaboration with church bodies in full doctrinal fellowship with WELS. We will expand multi-language mission efforts and explore mission work in high-risk and unreached areas.
- When addressing **calling**, we will address the shortage of called workers by carefully expanding pathways into gospel ministry. We will establish innovative recruitment efforts for future called workers. We will maintain

the long-term stability of our ministerial education schools. We will adopt a strategy for the professional development of called workers and will support their spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being.

The “Christ through us” plan depends on all of us. We encourage you to read more about the plan at christthroughus.net.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

Open enrollment for WELS VEBA

The WELS VEBA Commission is offering open enrollment this fall to all eligible workers at WELS and ELS organizations for health coverage effective January 1, 2026. The enrollment period opens November 3 and runs through December 1.


Workers and organizations are encouraged to consider this opportunity to enroll as the commission does not hold an open enrollment every year. This is the first full open enrollment in three years. Approximately 80 percent of WELS organizations already participate in WELS VEBA to provide medical care for their workers.



The 2026 rates are posted at welsbpo.net. While health care rates continue to rise across the country, the VEBA plan's rate of increase is about one percent lower than the national average.

Rates will increase by 8.5 percent for all plan options due primarily to

continued inflation for health care services and prescription drugs. In addition, 2026 will be the second year in the commission's three-year effort to update the geographic rate regions and regional rating factors for all areas so that rates better reflect current health care costs across the country. This means that the total 2026 health care rate change for each sponsoring organization will be a combination of the 8.5 percent trend increase and the organization's new regional rating factor.

Director of WELS Benefit Plans Mr. Joshua Peterman says, “During this recent period of high health care cost inflation, the commission has provided stability by maintaining comprehensive benefits and nationwide access to network providers, and by not increasing member deductible and maximum out-of-pocket amounts—except to comply with IRS regulations for plan option three to remain qualified for use with health savings accounts.”

Learn more about the WELS VEBA health plan at welsbpo.net. 


Stay connected to WELS mission and ministry:  [WELSlutherans](#)  [WELSlutherans](#)
WELS offers a variety of devotions and newsletters that can be directly delivered to your inbox. Visit wels.net/subscribe.



To sign up for the e-mail version, visit wels.net/together.

the long-term stability of our ministerial education schools. We will adopt a strategy for the professional development of called workers and will support their spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being.

The “Christ through us” plan depends on all of us. We encourage you to read more about the plan at christthroughus.net.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

Open enrollment for WELS VEBA

The WELS VEBA Commission is offering open enrollment this fall to all eligible workers at WELS and ELS organizations for health coverage effective January 1, 2026. The enrollment period opens November 3 and runs through December 1.


Workers and organizations are encouraged to consider this opportunity to enroll as the commission does not hold an open enrollment every year. This is the first full open enrollment in three years. Approximately 80 percent of WELS organizations already participate in WELS VEBA to provide medical care for their workers.



The 2026 rates are posted at welsbpo.net. While health care rates continue to rise across the country, the VEBA plan's rate of increase is about one percent lower than the national average.

Rates will increase by 8.5 percent for all plan options due primarily to

continued inflation for health care services and prescription drugs. In addition, 2026 will be the second year in the commission's three-year effort to update the geographic rate regions and regional rating factors for all areas so that rates better reflect current health care costs across the country. This means that the total 2026 health care rate change for each sponsoring organization will be a combination of the 8.5 percent trend increase and the organization's new regional rating factor.

Director of WELS Benefit Plans Mr. Joshua Peterman says, “During this recent period of high health care cost inflation, the commission has provided stability by maintaining comprehensive benefits and nationwide access to network providers, and by not increasing member deductible and maximum out-of-pocket amounts—except to comply with IRS regulations for plan option three to remain qualified for use with health savings accounts.”

Learn more about the WELS VEBA health plan at welsbpo.net. 

Stay connected to WELS mission and ministry:  [WELSlutherans](#)  [WELSlutherans](#)
WELS offers a variety of devotions and newsletters that can be directly delivered to your inbox. Visit wels.net/subscribe.



To sign up for the e-mail version, visit wels.net/together.