The Conference of Presidents (COP) met for its winter meeting on Jan. 6-9. The COP meeting addressed many topics, including:

- The COP approved proposals to amend the synod’s bylaws dealing with disciplinary procedures carried out by the districts. These proposed changes are intended to clarify the terms, timing, and process to be followed when discipline becomes necessary. The proposed amendments will be reviewed by the synod’s Constitution Committee and will ultimately be presented to the 2021 synod convention.

- Asia Lutheran Seminary has enrolled several American students who will soon graduate. To prepare these students for serving in stateside ministry, the COP approved Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary’s plan to provide these graduates with a year of stateside vicar experience and with two semesters of additional instruction at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis.

- The COP issued a divine call to Prof. John Hartwig to serve as a civilian chaplain in Europe and to Mr. James Sievert to serve as a part-time assistant consultant for the Commission on Lutheran Schools.

- The COP has asked for a review of the Ministry of Christian Giving’s major gifts program to ensure that the Ministry of Christian Giving is best positioned and structured to carry out its work.

- The COP received with thanks the news that Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) for 2019 were $330,000 higher than what congregations had committed. CMO subscriptions for 2020 are now being gathered, with the prayer that congregations will be able to increase their subscriptions to provide additional support for WELS missions and ministry. Looking ahead to 2021, the COP will prepare an encouragement video highlighting the blessings that Congregation Mission Offerings have made possible.

- The COP approved a proposal that congregations will be encouraged to designate one Sunday in 2021 as a “WELS Mission and Ministry Sunday” as a way of highlighting the work we do together. Informational and worship materials will be provided.

- Each of the 12 districts will be asked to consider the proposed change to the WELS Pension Plan at this summer’s district conventions. Informational materials will be provided well in advance, and each district will be given a detailed overview of the proposed changes. Districts will be asked whether or not they approve of the changes. Depending on the results of those votes, the Synodical Council will determine how and when to proceed with the process.
Easter outreach program available

Victorious!

It’s a message that the world needs to hear today.

“Many people in our country feel defeated by life. Many are being defeated by disease. All will eventually be defeated by death,” says Rev. Eric Roecker, director of the Commission on Evangelism. That’s why the theme “Victorious” is so fitting for a new outreach program to invite unchurched souls to worship at WELS congregations this Easter. “Easter changes all of that. Because Jesus was victorious over death when he rose from the grave, those who follow him are already victorious knowing that their sin has been forgiven,” continues Roecker. “What’s more, even though they may die one day, Jesus promises to raise them from the grave and give them eternal life. His victory is our victory.”

WELS Congregational Services is providing resources for this synodwide program called Easter 20, or E20. “Outreach programs like E20 provide ready-made materials for congregations to use so that they do not need to create their own from scratch. This can save both time and money,” says Roecker. “Additionally, having a themed approach ties everything together—from postcards to door hangers to business card invites to social media ads.” Provided worship plans, service folder designs, and sermon thoughts then help tie that theme into an Easter festival service.

According to Roecker, studies show that Easter services are one of three worship services that unchurched people are most likely to attend. That’s why it’s so important for congregations—and individual members—to extend the invitation to worship. “People are especially likely to attend if invited by an acquaintance,” he says.

Most of the E20 materials are offered as free online downloads, with minimal costs for ordering postcards, business cards, and door hangers. Helpful “how-tos” provide direction for implementing this outreach program successfully. Learn more at welscongregationalservices.net/e20.