

the OWLS presented Military Services with a check for \$52,000 for work in Europe. Two convention offerings and record proceeds from a silent auction were directed for next year's gift to the work of the chaplain in Europe as well.

The OWLS also provide scholarships to Martin Luther College students. This year, Jason Petoskey, Winter Fredrick, Buchanan Potthast, and Max Kerr received scholarships. Max Kerr responded, "I can't tell you my surprise at receiving the scholarship. It feels good to be recognized for what I always strive to do: share the gospel and serve others. Thank you very much for the scholarship. It helps me very much, as I've had to take out many loans in my journey to become a pastor."

Rev. Jim Behringer, director of WELS Special Ministries, says, "This was a convention to remember! The workshops offered something for the artistic, the health conscious, tips for Internet users, and those interested in government or international students at Martin Luther College. It was a treat to renew friendships at the Osthoff Resort on Elkhart Lake when the trees were in color."

The October 2019 OWLS convention for seniors will be held in Galena, Ill. The convention is open to all seniors in WELS and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, regardless of OWLS membership. ☩

2019 synod convention planning underway

Planning has begun for the 65th biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, which will be held at Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn., July 29-Aug. 1, 2019. More than 400 delegates and 50 advisory members will be meeting under the theme "**For the Generations to Come.**"

The primary source of the convention's business is the *Book of Reports and Memorials* (BORAM), which contains various departmental reports as well as formal petitions to the synod convention called "memorials." A memorial outlines a particular item of business for consideration by the delegates. The deadline for submitting memorials to be printed in BORAM is Jan. 15, 2019. Memorials submitted after Jan. 15 will not be printed but will be posted at the discretion of the synod presidium on the convention website if they are received by June 1, 2019. More information about submitting memorials can be found online.

Keep up-to-date with the synod convention at its website, wels.net/2019synodconvention. ☩

TOGETHER



October 16, 2018

COP holds its fall 2018 meeting

The Conference of Presidents (COP) met for its fall meeting during the first week of October. Here are some of the highlights of that meeting:

- The COP issued calls for three Christian giving counselors. Rev. Jonathan Stern was called to a part-time semi-retirement position to serve the Arizona-California District; Rev. Bryan Schwarz was called to serve in a full-time position serving the South Central and South Atlantic Districts; Rev. Thomas Mielke was called to serve in a full-time position serving the Northern Wisconsin District.
- There are 106 vacancies in parish pastor positions, seven in semi-retirement positions, two in foreign mission fields, three in professor positions, and three in other pastor-trained positions.
- The COP received a progress report from a special committee assigned to make recommendations regarding the coordination of campus worship activities and worship curriculum in our ministerial education schools.
- The Translation Review Committee submitted its final report of its review of the Christian Standard Bible. The review will be made available soon. The committee is also currently conducting a similar review of the Evangelical Heritage Version and plans to complete that review by the end of the year.
- The COP discussed the process for conducting discipline and carrying out suspension of called workers. It was agreed that the COP will review the synod's bylaws dealing with this process and recommend any necessary changes to the next synod convention.
- The COP received a report from a special committee reviewing the synod's pension plan for called workers. The COP expressed support for the recommendations, which will be presented to the Synodical Council in November.
- Aaron Bublitz was appointed to serve on the Commission on Discipleship.
- The COP established age 55 as the earliest age at which a called worker may retire. Departures from the ministry prior to age 55 will be categorized as resignations.
- The COP discussed the matter of Calvary Academy. Calvary Academy was a boarding school for troubled teens, located near Lakeland, Fla. It was a WELS-affiliated, independent, parasynodical ministry, meaning that it was a ministry carried out and supported by WELS members but was not operated by the



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synod or a part of the synod's ministry. Several months ago, Calvary Academy ceased operations and declared Chapter 128 bankruptcy. This means that a lawyer has been appointed by the court to liquidate the assets of Calvary and to use those assets to pay creditors. Many WELS members had made loans to Calvary; they are now waiting to see what portion, if any, of those loans can be returned to them. It was reported to the COP that people are still sending gifts to Calvary. The COP advises that no one send additional gifts to this ministry that has been discontinued. The court has determined that any gifts received for Calvary will be forwarded to a different organization. In addition, if you have included Calvary Academy in your estate plan, the COP strongly encourages you to take steps to remove Calvary from your will.

- The COP continued its discussion on how to provide additional assistance to the presidents of the three largest districts (Northern Wisconsin, Southeastern Wisconsin, and Western Wisconsin). A likely solution will be to make greater use of the district vice presidents in the work normally done by the district president.

Serving in Christ,
President Mark Schroeder 

Christian Aid and Relief Oct. 2018 update

When Hurricane Michael made landfall, Amazing Grace, Panama City, Fla., took a direct hit. Rev. Jerry Enderle, pastor at Amazing Grace, reports the church and parsonage suffered extensive damage, as did several members' homes, along with the entire community. Rev. Joel Russow, pastor of Faith, Tallahassee, Fla., also reports trees down in the neighborhood, but the church and parsonage are okay.

WELS Christian Aid and Relief chairman, Rev. Robert Hein, reports:


"We have mobilized relief trailers from Mobile, Ala., and Jacksonville, Fla., to assist in cleanup and recovery efforts. Right now, some areas are still hard to reach and power is still out. For the short term, Risen Savior, Navarre, Fla., served by Rev. Craig

Born, is serving as the relief staging area. Members of the local WELS congregations in Florida and Alabama are eager to help out once it is feasible to go into the affected areas. We have also made funds available to local pastors to provide immediate aid to those in need and to purchase needed supplies. Efforts are underway to provide temporary housing for those displaced from their homes.

"Many homes suffered roof damage, so our first priority is putting plywood and tarps on top of the parsonage and sanctuary at Amazing Grace and salvaging sanctuary furniture, and then repeating those steps for members with major loss. We will bring in a project manager soon to help us assess damage and opportunities for assistance throughout the community. We also made a \$10,000 gift to Direct Relief, which provides immediate assistance to people affected by this hurricane."

While Christian Aid and Relief is working to assess and help with the recent hurricane damage, it is also conducting ongoing rebuilding efforts in Puerto Rico in the aftermath of last fall's Hurricane Maria. Missionary Larry W. Schlomer accepted a call to Puerto Rico in June 2018 to assist in coordinating the rebuilding and repairing of churches and pastors' homes as well as aiding in the ongoing training of our sister church body's future called workers.

WELS Christian Aid and Relief approved a \$150,000 hurricane relief grant for phase one of repair and rebuilding in Puerto Rico, which includes rebuilding the church building in Humacao, repairing the church in Guayama, and repairing pastors' homes. Schlomer reports that rebuilding in Humacao began earlier this fall.

To support WELS Christian Aid and Relief hurricane relief efforts, you can donate online at **community.wels.net** (select "Hurricane Disaster Relief" in the designation field) or send it to WELS Christian Aid and Relief, N16W23377 Stone Ridge Dr. Waukesha, WI 53188, and designate it for the "Hurricane Fund." If you'd like to volunteer to help with clean up and repair work, visit **wels.net/relief** and fill out the volunteer form. 

Record attendance at annual OWLS convention

The Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors (OWLS) challenged seniors to "Finish the Race" well when it held its annual

convention for seniors in Elkhart Lake, Wis., Oct. 9-12. The convention had 207 attendees from around the United States, which exceeded attendance for many recent years.

Elkhart Lake, the home of Road America, is known for its ties to auto racing, relaxation, and history. Attendees were treated to a rare opportunity to ride on the race track or visit the horse-powered world of the Wade House, a historic stage coach inn.

Discussion of finishing the Christian race was focused through presentations of keynote speakers. Former missionary wife Rebecca Wendland shared the challenges of life in Africa but also spoke of the grace and strength of God to protect and guide his people. Martin Luther College President Rev. Mark Zarling and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary President Rev. Paul Wendland gave a glimpse into the preparation of the next generation of church workers, but also answered audience questions about heaven, eternal life, and other topics. Former U.S. Army Blackhawk helicopter pilot Steve Schroeder and his wife, Sarah, shared the challenges they've experienced running their race during Steve's military career, both before and after a crash changed their lives. Home Missions Administrator Rev. Keith Free provided insight into the opportunities worldwide to share the gospel.

For over a decade, the OWLS have used their offerings to support the WELS European Civilian chaplaincy, which serves military personnel and WELS civilians in Europe. This year,