

by the end of the 2016–17 school year. For more information or to schedule a workshop in your area, contact evangelism@wels.net or lutheranschools@wels.net. Learn more at wels.net/tellingthenextgeneration. Watch this month's *WELS Connection* to learn more about how Lutheran Schools is working to train school leaders. ☩

***My Son, My Savior* available this Advent**

During Advent and Christmas 2015, congregations distributed more than 85,000 copies of *My Son, My Savior*. This WELS outreach movie and its related materials are still available for use this year.

My Son, My Savior portrays Mary experiencing and pondering the miracle of Jesus' coming and then humbly growing in her understanding that her son is also her Savior. The main message for viewers is that Jesus is their Savior too. WELS has a number of resources to complement the movie, including an Advent by candlelight program titled *A Mother Remembers*, a small group study resource, and a four-session Bible study.

Rev. Mike Hintz, director of WELS Evangelism, suggests that congregations can use the movie for outreach by

- giving the DVD to guests at Christmas services;

- distributing the DVD to those on the prospect list and then following up with a discussion about the movie's message;
- having members give their relatives and friends a copy of the movie along with an invitation to worship services;
- handing out the movie to visitors at events such as Advent by candlelight, live nativities, or Christmas for kids; or
- hosting a movie night at church or a local theatre with a showing of the movie.

If you or your congregation would like to use *My Son, My Savior*, visit wels.net/mysonmysavior to find links to purchase the movie and to see all the resources available to assist you. A bulk discount is available so that the purchase price is only \$2/DVD plus shipping when bought in boxes of 100.

My Son, My Savior is the third in a series of four outreach movies that are planned as a collaboration between WELS Commissions on Evangelism and Adult Discipleship, Northwestern Publishing House, WELS Multi-Language Publications, and Boettcher+Trinklein Television, Inc. The first two movies, *Road to Emmaus* and *Come Follow Me*, have been distributed worldwide and received critical acclaim from a number of Christian film groups. The fourth film is being planned for distribution in 2018. ☩

Summary of the September meeting of the COP

The Conference of Presidents (COP) held its fall meeting on Sept. 20–23 at the Center for Mission and Ministry in Waukesha, Wis. The COP received a number of reports and presentations from groups such as Martin Luther College, the Reformation 500 Committee, the Commission on Lutheran Schools, the Commission on Congregational Counseling, WELS Christian Aid and Relief, and the Compensation Review Committee. The Conference of Presidents welcomed four newly elected members: Rev. David Kolander (Southeastern Wisconsin), Rev. Michael Jensen (Western Wisconsin), Rev. Chuck Westra (South Atlantic), and Rev. Phil Hirsch (Nebraska).

Items of business and actions taken included:

- The Reformation 500 Committee continues to make plans for the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. The committee is producing books and Bible study materials for use in congregations and also has been directly involved in the production of a documentary that will be aired nationally on PBS. The committee also will compile and publicize a list of various Reformation-related activities throughout the synod.
- The COP received an update on formal doctrinal discussions taking place between WELS, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), and the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). A joint statement on when church bodies need to sever fellowship for doctrinal reasons was adopted by the nine-member committee. The statement was adopted by the ELS convention last summer, shared with WELS district conventions (and will be considered at the 2017 WELS convention), and was discussed at the CLC convention last summer with directions for further study in CLC pastoral conferences. The committee plans to meet again in August 2017.
- The COP received an update on the synod archives project. The space for the archives has been prepared, and the archivist (Susan Willems) has been working at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to prepare the archives collection for relocation. The first phase of the move will take place this fall, with the remainder of the materials to be moved in the spring. In addition to the archives, the space on the lower level of the Center for Mission and Ministry also includes a visitor center with displays depicting synod history and current ministry programs.
- The COP received an update on the development of a revised catechism, scheduled to be released in 2017.

- A special committee had been appointed to review the Military Chaplaincy to determine if military policies had changed sufficiently to allow WELS to participate. After a yearlong review, the committee concluded that the original reasons preventing WELS from participating had not changed and recommended that WELS continue to serve military personnel with civilian chaplains. The committee also encouraged all WELS congregations to do as much as they can to provide ministry support to military personnel.
- In keeping with a resolution of the 2015 convention, the COP will appoint a committee to oversee a thorough review of the newly revised Christian Standard Bible (formerly the Holman Christian Standard Bible). The Translation Liaison Committee has been providing suggestions to the translators of the Christian Standard Bible, and many, if not most, of those recommendations have been accepted.
- In an effort to assist organizations and groups as they plan conferences and seminars, the COP adopted guidelines that can be used when speakers and topics are chosen for such events. The guidelines encourage early communication between the planners and the president of the district(s) in which such events are planned.
- The COP once again reiterated its support for the calling of a director of Family Ministry. This position would provide leadership to the Commission on Youth and Family Ministry and to the Commission on Adult Discipleship. Some discussion has begun about whether or not it would be beneficial to combine these two commissions into a single group assisting congregations in addressing spiritual needs of both adults and youth. The Synodical Council will now consider this position as it develops the Ministry Financial Plan for 2017-19.
- The COP is working toward the timely submission of both Congregation Mission Offering subscriptions and congregational statistics. The goal is to have all congregations submit this information in a timely way, with district presidents encouraged to follow up with congregations that do not provide the information.
- The COP is working with the director of communications to improve the process for preparing delegates for the synod convention.
- The COP is making plans to give appropriate expressions of thanks to God when the synod capital debt is fully eliminated in the coming months.
- A special committee conducting a thorough review of the Ministry of Christian Giving has submitted a preliminary report. Initial recommendations from the committee include the calling of additional Christian giving counselors who work with individuals to encourage current gifts. The COP resolved to request that the Synodical Council approve the addition of one counselor in the next biennial ministry financial plan if possible.

- The COP encouraged WELS Lutheran high schools to complete their study of the COP-produced Bible study dealing with fellowship principles and applications in our schools. The COP looks forward to hearing reactions, questions, and input from all of the schools.
- The COP was informed that People of Grace, an organization that has made many presentations throughout the synod on the subject of same-sex attraction, has announced that it is an educational and informational organization (not a ministry) no longer affiliated with WELS. Even though the main presenter is a WELS member, non-WELS members are now serving on its board of directors. Congregations, schools, and other groups will need to be aware of this when they consider inviting this organization to make presentations.

Serving in Christ,
President Mark Schroeder 

New program helps schools intentionalize outreach

A new program from the Commissions on Lutheran Schools and Evangelism is now available to guide congregations on how better to use their Lutheran elementary schools and early childhood ministries for reaching out into their community with the gospel's saving message.

Telling the Next Generation: Utilizing our Schools for Outreach is a daylong workshop that helps congregation and school leaders focus on their joint mission, build relationships within the church and with school families, and develop an organized program to connect school families with the Word.

"Our schools are recognizing the growing opportunities to reach out to the community with the gospel," says Mrs. Cindi Holman, national coordinator of early childhood ministries. "They are finding that just having a child and a family enroll in

their school isn't enough. What they are looking for—and what we're trying to share with them—are specific ways they can do both outreach and harvest strategies within their school ministries so they can connect people with the means of grace."

Besides offering information and resources, the workshop allows time for a congregation's ministry team to meet and work on developing a specific ministry plan to facilitate the outreach they want to do. Assigned advisors also will stay in contact with the congregation to answer follow-up questions and provide additional resources and encouragement.

Telling the Next Generation: Utilizing our Schools for Outreach is meant for all Lutheran elementary schools, early childhood ministries, and high schools, whether small or large, growing or struggling. Holman says the goal is to provide one workshop in every district, more if requested,