

focused initiative. WELS CEF funds these loans through WELS congregations' and members' investments in WELS CEF products. With the need for funds increasing, WELS CEF, through this special offer, has been seeking to raise approximately \$10 million in investments. So far, investments of nearly \$9 million have been made.

Mr. Scott Page, director of WELS CEF, says, "WELS Church Extension Fund would like to thank all our investors. These investments help WELS missions and self-supporting congregations build and expand their ministries. We are pleased to assist you in being good stewards of your gifts while also providing funding to help spread the gospel around the United States."

View rates online at [wels.net/cef](http://wels.net/cef). New IRA investors should contact WELS CEF at 866-511-7793 for investment materials. Investors can also manage their accounts and investments online. 

### Did you know...

WELS has a Facebook page?  
[facebook.com/welslutherans](https://facebook.com/welslutherans)

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To sign up for the e-mail version, visit [wels.net/together](http://wels.net/together).

# TOGETHER



September 17, 2019

## Commission on Inter-Church Relations holds its fall meeting

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The WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR) held its fall meeting last week. The CICR serves under the Conference of Presidents in the following ways:


- To preserve and strengthen—on the basis of complete unity in scriptural doctrine and practice—the bond of confessional fellowship with those church bodies with which such fellowship already exists.
- To extend the bond of confessional fellowship with other church bodies where complete unity in scriptural doctrine and practice becomes apparent.
- To extend the true doctrine and practice of the evangelical Lutheran church by offering testimony and assistance—outside of fellowship—to groups that show a desire to grow in their understanding of scriptural doctrine and practice.
- To keep itself informed on doctrinal trends as they become evident in the church at large.
- To formulate doctrinal statements needed for dealing with other church bodies and, upon request, to address other doctrinal issues.

The members of the CICR keep in contact with churches around the world that are a part of our worldwide fellowship. Those contacts are intended to provide encouragement and support to those churches and to keep our synod informed of how God is blessing those church bodies. In addition, members of the CICR are also assigned to monitor and observe what is happening in Lutheran church bodies that are not a part of our fellowship. A good part of the meeting was spent reviewing reports from CICR members.

The CICR also participates in reviewing requests from Lutheran groups around the world seeking possible fellowship with our synod. In the past two years, the CICR has recommended to the synod convention to recognize and declare fellowship with Lutheran church bodies in Ethiopia and Kenya. Other opportunities continue to increase, especially in Africa, with inquiries coming to us from countries like Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Congo, Guinea-Bissau, and others. The same can be said about Asia (Vietnam, Bangladesh, the Philippines) and Latin America

(Costa Rica, Ecuador, Argentina, Paraguay, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Cuba, and others)

God continues to open doors of opportunity for the proclamation of the saving gospel. Please pray that God would continue to build his church around the world. Pray also for your Commission on Inter-Church Relations as it works diligently to strengthen these fellowship relationships.

Serving with you in Christ,  
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

## Celebrating the blessings of WELS youth ministry

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As one decade comes to a close and another begins, WELS youth ministry programs have exciting milestones and events on the horizon.

First, the monthly video news magazine *Kids Connection* is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Created to complement the WELS Connection monthly video news magazine, *Kids Connection* encourages children and their families to “stay connected to Jesus” through Christ-centered stories and segments presented by two teenage hosts.

“We have an incredible number of passionate kids and adults in our church body,” says Mrs. Kris Snyder, producer. “God places each of us in spaces and situations and in different relationships to nurture our faith and provide us with opportunities to serve him by serving others. *Kids Connection* is our chance to share their stories and connect us through our common faith.”

Snyder recalls how the tagline “stay connected to Jesus” first came to be a signature element of the program.

“Early on, we used the line ‘stay connected to Jesus’ to close a few episodes, just encouraging kids to stay in their Bibles, to learn more about their Savior,” Snyder says. “Soon, kids began to quote that line when they wrote letters to us; it became a permanent tagline. I even heard it used during one of our WELS grade school graduations!”

*Kids Connection* is valuable in numerous settings, including grade schools, Sunday schools, preschools, early childhood education centers, and Christian homes. It can even be shown after worship for the whole congregation or during visits to elderly homebound church members.

Another way for young people to stay connected is the WELS International Youth Rally. The next rally will be held at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, June 23–26, 2020, under the theme “Vision

2020: Seeing Christ Clearly, Serving Christ Boldly.”

“So much in our culture distracts, distorts, or outright denies the incredible love of God who sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for their sins,” says Rev. Donn Dobberstein, director of WELS Commission on Discipleship. “This rally will position Christ and his cross in front of them to encourage clarity of faith and motivate bold service to him in their lives.”

Youth rally attendees will join more than 2,000 others who share their faith, making this event the largest regular assembly of WELS members. Special speakers and workshops will further bring into focus the meaning of their Savior’s presence in their lives today and in the life to come. Christ-centered discussions of critical topics like evangelism, anxiety, and social media will guide and empower teens long after the event.

“We don’t want the rally to impact them for just four days,” says Dobberstein. “We want this to be transformational in their lives as they understand who they are and what their God has equipped them to do.”

Attendees also will be able to enjoy the Anakeesta Theme Park, river tubing, paintball, and other recreational activities around Knoxville for an additional fee, all the time growing through fellowship with their Christian brothers and sisters.

Churches and schools are encouraged to start promoting

and planning for the youth rally by announcing the dates of the event to church teens and youth leaders and by connecting with the event on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Registration booklets will be available at churches and online in January. Early-bird registration begins March 2.

To learn more about and subscribe to *Kids Connection*, visit [wels.net/kidsconnection](http://wels.net/kidsconnection). To learn more about the 2020 WELS International Youth Rally, visit [wels.net/youthrally](http://wels.net/youthrally). 

## WELS CEF special rates coming to an end

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To meet the need for increasing requests for loans from WELS home missions and mission-minded congregations, WELS Church Extension Fund (WELS CEF) has been offering special interest rates for new investors.

For a limited time, WELS CEF has been offering a four percent interest rate on a minimum investment of \$5,000 in either a 56-month-term loan certificate or a 60-month-term IRA certificate. WELS CEF’s investment certificates pay and compound interest quarterly. The four percent interest rate applies only to new money investments. The opportunity to invest under these terms is ending Sept. 30.

WELS CEF makes loans below or at market rates for WELS churches that are either new and building for the first time or established congregations with a new mission-