

TOGETHER

September 21, 2021

New home mission plans approved


The WELS Board for Home Missions met Sept. 16-17 and approved financial support for three home mission locations.

A new home mission plant was approved in Collinsville, Ill. Christ Our Savior in Collinsville has served as a preaching station of Martin Luther in St. Louis, Mo., since 2002. The core group has maintained an average of 25 to 30 people attending worship through the years. The core group is increasing its outreach efforts, including reaching students at a local college and workers on a nearby military base, as well as offering services for the deaf in their community. Martin Luther has committed time, manpower, and financial assistance to help Christ Our Savior grow and become its own congregation. Home Missions funding will allow Christ Our Savior to call a full-time pastor to assist in this effort.

Home Missions is also providing financial support to two existing ministries:

- **Crossville, Tenn.:** Crossville is a growing area of eastern Tennessee that is attracting many retirees thanks to the retirement communities and activities in the area. A core group at Ascension Lutheran Church is committed to restarting the church and expanding gospel outreach. More and more visitors are coming to church, and its Bible information class had six people in it this past year. Home Missions funding will allow the congregation to call a full-time pastor to help kick-start this ministry.
- **Summerlin, Nev.:** Summerlin Lutheran Church was originally approved to receive three years of financial support in spring 2021 to restart its congregation, which already owned a large facility in a growing suburb of Las Vegas. Situations have changed, and a number of leaders within the core group have moved away. Home Missions is providing the congregation additional funding with the optimistic anticipation of great blessings from the Lord.

Home Missions also approved unsubsidized mission status for Good Shepherd in Beloit, Wis. Home Missions provides assistance to unsubsidized mission congregations through its district missions boards, mission counselors, synodical support staff, and special project funds, but does not provide direct financial support. Learn more about all of WELS Home Missions work at wels.net/homemissions.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

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New mission opportunities in Europe

A new mission in London is one step closer to reality. After a trip to England earlier this month, Rev. Larry Schlomer, administrator of the Board for World Missions, is recommending that the board call a full-time missionary to London.

During his trip, Schlomer met with a group of WELS families in London to talk about the possibilities. These members will serve as the “core group” for this mission and its work. “They are more than excited,” says Schlomer. “A couple of the members even shared with me that they have been praying for a pastor.”

In the past, this group in London—about 30 people—has been served with the Word and sacraments by the WELS European chaplain, who travels monthly from Germany where he is based. The chaplain, part of WELS Military Services, ministers to WELS military personnel on large bases in Germany as well as serves civilians and troops in Germany, England, Switzerland, and scattered throughout Europe. Currently Rev. John Hartwig fills that role.

According to Schlomer, besides serving current members weekly with the Word, a new missionary will be able to explore opportunities for reaching out to the many immigrant populations that settle in London. WELS already has connections with several groups, including members and pastors from WELS’ sister synod in Hong Kong who have recently relocated to London. Once initial exploration has been completed, a second missionary may be called to work

specifically with these immigrant groups. Funding has already been approved for both positions. “Right now our priority is to get someone there with this group of believers, and we’ll let the Spirit guide it as the Spirit will,” says Schlomer.

Phil and Sandy Parker, who have been members of this group in London since 2000, are excited about the possibilities. “London is such a multicultural area, and we think that the field amongst these immigrant populations will be particularly ripe because we can offer useful services, such as English as a foreign language classes, that can benefit them as they try to integrate into their communities,” says Sandy.

They also recognize the need for their English friends and family to hear the pure gospel message, something that is in short supply in London. “We know that the Holy Spirit is stronger than even the most stoic Englishman, and so, with a missionary here to help us with these conversations, we might be able to rest assured that our loved ones know God’s salvation too,” says Sandy.

During Schlomer’s visit, Hartwig led worship in person for the group for the first time since he arrived in Germany in June 2020. COVID-19 had made it impossible for him to travel to England, so the group had been worshiping through Zoom video meetings.

“It was such a happy experience,” says Hartwig about the service, which included communion and a baptism affirmation. “And on top of that, seeing that we may have an opportunity to have a permanent pastor—we’re definitely excited about that.” ☪

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