

March 5, 2019

## **Synodical Council adopts ministry financial plan for 2019–2021**

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**A**t its meeting on Feb. 22–23, the Synodical Council approved the ministry financial plan (budget) for 2019–2021 that will be recommended to the synod convention in July.

In the first year of the biennium (2019–2020), the plan calls for a small increase in the synodical support portion and in the overall spending levels (which include support from special funds, gifts, tuition, and fees). In the second year of the biennium (2020–2021), there is a small increase in synodical support and a small decrease in the overall spending levels.

The Synodical Council will continue to monitor the financial situation; changes could be made prior to the convention if circumstances require.

The Synodical Council approved several adjustments to spending for the current year, with all approved projects funded without additional synodical support.

As a part of the ministry financial plan, the synod convention also approves the “Unfunded Priority List.” These are programs that are not funded by the recommended ministry financial plan but would be implemented if additional funds become available. The Synodical Council will be recommending the following list of priorities:

1. World Missions—mission support/expansion: \$125,000
2. Home Missions—mission expansion: \$125,000
3. Ministerial Education—financial assistance at MLC: \$125,000
4. Congregational Services—congregational counselor program: \$150,000
5. World Missions—mission support/expansion: \$100,000
6. Home Missions—mission support/expansion: \$100,000
7. Ministerial Education—top capital projects priorities: \$150,000
8. Special Ministries—WELS Military Services Committee: \$50,000
9. Special Ministries—WELS Prison Ministry Committee: \$50,000
10. Ministry of Christian Giving—additional giving counselor: \$120,000

While 2019 Congregation Mission Offering (CMO) subscriptions pointed toward a one percent decrease from 2018 actual offerings, CMO results through the end of February are very encouraging. February's CMO totals were 6.8% higher than a year ago, and year-to-date totals are 6.6% higher than the previous year at this time. We thank God for his blessings and for the gifts of his people.

Serving in Christ,  
President Mark Schroeder 

## A new voice for WELS Daily Devotions

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Starting March 3, the audio version of the WELS Daily Devotions features a new voice: Zach Steinke. Steinke is a senior at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., with prior experience in the radio communications industry.

"We are thrilled to have Zach as our new narrator for the WELS Daily Devotions," says Rev. Eric Roecker, director of the WELS Commission on Evangelism. "His experience and expertise will be a blessing to the thousands of souls who listen each day."

Narrating the Daily Devotions was an unexpected opportunity for Steinke. Rev. Donn Dobberstein, director of the WELS Commission on Discipleship, was teaching one of Steinke's classes recently and mentioned that they were seeking a new narrator for the Daily Devotions. Dobberstein asked the students to take turns reading portions of some devotional material, and Steinke's abilities captured Dobberstein's attention.

"When it was my turn, I read my paragraph," Steinke recalls. "Then Pastor Dobberstein asked me to read the next one . . . and the next one."

Afterward, Steinke shared his voice demos with Dobberstein and other WELS staff, eventually meeting with them to discuss the opportunity. He was quickly brought on board.

"I was not planning to audition myself as a candidate, and Pastor Dobberstein was not necessarily looking for a

'voice' from the classroom that day," Steinke explains. "However, the Lord brought this all together, so to him be the glory."

Steinke replaces Rev. Mike Hintz, retired director for the WELS Commission on Evangelism. Coincidentally, Hintz was once his pastor. Steinke sees this connection as another example of God's hand in shaping this opportunity.

"It just shows you that this is something only the Lord can plan and work out," Steinke says. "I am surprised and honored to be succeeding Pastor Hintz."

In 2018, the Daily Devotions had nearly 11,000 subscribers in more than 15 different countries. Thousands of listeners tune in each day.

"The Lord has already blessed this ministry exponentially," Steinke notes. "I pray that I'll be a good steward of this ministry and that God continues to make it fruitful through me and the many writers of the Daily Devotions."

Steinke expresses gratitude for being able to share the gospel in this unique way. For listeners of the Daily Devotions, he shares this message: "As you incorporate these devotions into your day, may the Holy Spirit strengthen your faith as God speaks his gospel comfort to your heart. I'd also like to challenge you to think of people in your life who need to know such comfort. Share these devotions with them so they can know Jesus, their Savior, and how precious they are in his sight."

To read, listen to, and subscribe to WELS Daily Devotions, visit [wels.net/daily-devotions](http://wels.net/daily-devotions). 

## First WELS EdTechLead conference to be held

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The 2019 WELS Education, Technology, and Leadership Summit (WELS EdTechLead) will be held June 25–27 at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells, Wis.

This new event combines the National School Leadership and the WELSTech conferences into one expanded convention. It offers information and fellowship to those interested in exploring ministry tools, techniques, and best practices in the areas of education, technology, and leadership.

Created to be more sensitive to the time and funds of those who may have been interested in attending both conferences, WELS EdTechLead also aims to draw a broader audience than either conference might be able to alone.


"I think the conference really is for almost anybody in ministry," said Mr. Martin Spriggs, WELS chief technology officer. "It's an opportunity to help everyone put a bit more brainpower and a bit more passion into their efforts. It just makes sense to share that knowledge and energy and come up with better ministry plans and strategies together."

The speakers and sessions offered at WELS EdTechLead are not simply related to one of the three topics of education, technology, and

leadership. Many demonstrate the intersections between the topics. For example, teachers will be able to learn about instructional technology at the conference, and school principals and early childhood directors will have opportunities to develop their leadership skills.

The schedule is organized to allow attendees to experience a variety of workshops from each of the three fields. Half-day and full-day preconference sessions are also available to allow visitors to dive deeply into a specific subject.

"It's to strengthen the network of support we have with one another in ministry," said Mr. Jim Rademan, director of the Commission on Lutheran Schools. "You are going to learn some tips and some tools, but, in many ways, this conference is to inspire you to move forward in your ministry."

Registration for WELS EdTechLead is now open, with early bird discounts through May 1. Visit [welsedtechlead.com](http://welsedtechlead.com) to learn more and register. 



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