

## Synodical Council reviews blessings, makes plans

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**T**he Synodical Council (SC) held its November meeting via video conference on Fri., Nov. 6. The SC welcomed six new members: Mr. Pete Aisbet (Southeastern Wisconsin lay representative); Rev. Mark Gabb (chairman of the Board for Home Missions), Mr. Jake Lemke (Western Wisconsin lay representative), Mr. Tom Plitzuweit (teacher-at-large), Mr. Chip Woods (Nebraska lay representative), and Mr. Kyle Egan (WELS chief financial officer).

The president's report included the following:

- A reminder of the many continuing blessings of God even in a very challenging and difficult time. God permitted us to find creative ways to continue worship and to educate our children.
- God enabled his people to continue their faithful support of their congregations and the synod with their thank offerings.
- Enrollment at our synodical schools was only minimally affected by the pandemic.
- Home Missions was able to open or restart five mission congregations.
- World Missions continued to adjust proactively to new realities and to address new opportunities.

The Synodical Council adopted the draft proposal for the synod's Ministry Financial Plan for the coming biennium. The plan calls for a 2% increase in spending and called worker compensation in each of the next two years. The plan will be reviewed again in February, and once it is given final approval it will be forwarded to the synod convention next July.

The SC had planned to implement changes to the synod's pension plan in 2020 if district conventions in 2020 indicated strong support. Since the district conventions were not able to be held, the SC is now planning to bring its recommendation to the 2021 synod convention. The SC will still have the opportunity to make changes to its recommendation in February if necessary, but for now the original recommendation shared with the synod in 2020 remains in place.

Congregation Mission Offerings for the fiscal year that ended June 30 totaled \$21.4 million, which was \$467,000 higher than planned and \$353,000 more than the prior year. Those increased offerings and the \$750,000 in lower-than-planned expenditures combined to enable WELS to end the year in a better-than-expected financial position. The financial position of the four synodical schools, WELS Church Extension Fund, WELS Foundation, WELS Investment Funds, and Northwestern Publishing House also improved significantly. The financial blessings continue as Congregation Mission Offerings for the year have increased 2% over the prior year.

Rev. Dan Sims, director of WELS Christian Aid and Relief, reported that his goal is to ensure the policies and procedures of WELS Christian Aid and Relief are clearly articulated. He also reported that plans have begun to train WELS members and congregations how to work together to provide help in times of disasters. He is also developing devotional materials to be used by those affected by disasters.

The Synodical Council will meet next in February 2021. ☪

Serving with you in Christ,  
**WELS President Mark Schroeder**

## Worship resource previews new hymns

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To help WELS members get a taste of some of the new hymns that will be included in *Christian Worship: Hymnal*, the WELS Hymnal Project has released *Christian Worship: Hymn Preview*.

This digital resource showcases 54 of the more than 200 new hymns that will be included in the new hymnal scheduled to be released by Advent 2021. With each hymn is a brief comment on its origin, spiritual meaning, usage in the wider Christian church, or other interesting detail. The booklet also includes several examples of additional ac-

companiments that will be available for musicians in the accompaniment edition.

“It’s more than just a little appetizer—it’s a full course,” says Rev. Aaron Christie, chairman of the Hymnody Committee. “If you spend time with it, you will have an excellent sampling of the various types of hymns and concepts that are there for you in the new hymnal.”

Due to copyright restrictions, *Christian Worship: Hymn Preview* is only available as a downloadable, viewable (but not printable) PDF at christianworship.com. The WELS Hymnal Project has also added several other hymn resources online, including

a comprehensive list of the 683 hymns planned for inclusion in the new hymnal and a list of cut and retuned hymns from the 1993 hymnal and 2008 supplement. Several articles explain more details behind the creation of a new hymnal. Read more about these new additions.

Christie prays that the preview will be a tool to help leaders make a decision about the new hymnal but also that “it gives a wide swath of members a new appreciation for the treasures we have in hymnody.”

He continues, “Spend time experiencing it. See what wonderful things are there. Work with it. Read it. Listen to it. Pray its texts.”

Learn more about *Christian Worship: Hymnal* at christianworship.com. ☪

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