


the conversation about diversity awareness and cultural competency.”

Rev. Aaron Robinson, cultural diversity coordinator at MLC, says events like these offer students opportunities to grow in their understanding as WELS’ future called workers. “The reason we use days like this to talk about culture is not to divide but so we can better serve,” he says. “I want to continue the conversation and these moments—meeting the students where they’re at—so they can grow as God wants them to grow and minister to those who are not like them.” 

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WELS has a Facebook page?
facebook.com/welslutherans

WELS has Instagram?
instagram.com/welslutherans

WELS has Twitter?
twitter.com/welstweets

***Forward in Christ* magazine has a Facebook page?**
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Praying for brothers and sisters in Ukraine

If you have been following the news, there is a real possibility that Russia will take some kind of military action in the country of Ukraine. There is no way of knowing whether this will happen, and, if it does, what effect it will have on the people of Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Lutheran Church (ULC) is our sister church body in Ukraine. Whatever happens (if something does) will have a direct impact on our brothers and sisters there. Rev. Roger Neumann, our WELS liaison to the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, reports the following:

The people in Ukraine are preparing for war. . . . Currently, people are storing up essential goods such as non-perishable foods, batteries, flashlights, satellite phones, etc. Many of these items are hard to find now, as there is more and more hoarding of daily necessities. But this is somewhat understandable because these are things they may need for survival. It’s not like lasting out a hurricane or winter blizzard. They are conscious to keep their vehicles filled with fuel, and yes, many are making sure they have guns at hand and an ample supply of ammunition readily available. They are fully aware that power and essential services could be cut off, banks and bank accounts frozen, and communications disrupted, which would result in mass evacuations to safer locations, causing a great deal of panic.


One additional concern is that Ukraine receives much of the nation’s fuel, natural gas, from Russia. Russia has cut back on the amount of fuel coming into Ukraine, which has resulted in much higher costs. Many can’t afford these costs and live in frigid conditions already.

However, there doesn’t seem to be a sense of panic or fear, but one of preparedness. Yes, they do talk about these matters daily; social media is filled with discussion, opinions, and comments. But it’s difficult to deal with the unknown. Everyday life continues as normal, as much as you can call it normal. Churches, by God’s grace, still preach and administer the sacraments; online devotions and studies are still being conducted. Continuing in the Word is by far the greatest source of comfort for them. The people of the ULC, as do all Christians, truly believe that God is their refuge and strength in times of trouble.

What particularly touched my heart was their appreciation that others care about them and are praying for them. As one lady stated, “It means so much to me to know that people in the church are praying for me.” I

reassured them that there are many who are lifting them up before our Lord in prayer. It reminds them that they are not alone, that the Lord is with them, and that he is their constant companion every moment of every day.

Please remember our brothers and sisters in your personal and congregational prayers. Thank God for bringing these people to faith through the gospel. Ask God to prevent this possible war. Ask our gracious Lord to give our fellow Christians strength and comfort provided by his promises. If the worst happens, ask God to keep them safe from harm and to have the continuing opportunity to hear his Word and to share the gospel with the people of Ukraine.


Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

Congregations generously support the synod

By the gracious working of the Holy Spirit, God's people remitted \$22.68 million in Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) during 2021, which is 4.3 percent (\$938,000) more than 2020 CMO and 4.9 percent (\$1,059,000) higher than projected receipts. According to Chief Financial Officer Mr. Kyle Egan, "Calendar year 2021 CMO is the second straight year in which the synod has reached a new record level of CMO and the first calendar year where CMO exceeded \$22 million."

As part of financial planning for 2022, 98 percent of congregations submitted CMO subscriptions leading to a total of \$22,450,000 in 2022 CMO subscriptions. Already in January offerings are exceeding expectations. Churches gave \$1.43 million, which is 21.9 percent (\$256,000) more than in January 2021 and the highest level of CMO for the month of January on record.

Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, WELS director of Christian Giving, says, "This is amazing given the record amount of 2021 CMO that God's people gave. Let us thank the Lord for continuing to bless our synod through his people's generous gifts!"

For an engaging summary of how WELS uses congregational offerings to carry out Christ's work in missions and ministerial education and to support our churches and schools, review WELS annual report, titled "Your Gifts, God's Blessings," at wels.net/annualreport. 

Mission and Ministry held at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary


From February 8–10, students at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., participated in Mission and Ministry, an annual three-day event organized by the students.

Under the theme "A World Overcome," this event highlighted the worldwide work of WELS.

Each day featured a worship service, an overview of ministry highlights by WELS leaders, an encouraging keynote address by a worker in the field, and the opportunity to attend three breakout sessions of interest. WELS organizations also set up displays to share information about their work in God's kingdom.

In order to give these future pastors a cross-section of experiences they may face in ministry, 24 breakout sessions were offered on specific topics. These sessions included discussions on world missions using technology post-COVID, continued mission opportunities to the Hmong in Vietnam, urban ministry, restarting a mission, church culture, and graphic design for worship and outreach. Many workshops had the underlying, connecting themes that pastors need to be intentional in their work and have a curious mind toward potential new ideas.

The seminary family was blessed to have visitors each day: the pastor-track juniors from Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., participated on the first day and the students of Bethany Theological Lutheran Seminary, Mankato, Minn., participated on days two and three. A special moment during the opening worship service was the commissioning of Missionary Michael Hartman to England.

For photos of the event, visit the seminary's Facebook page. 

Understanding cultural diversity

Martin Luther College's (MLC) Cultural Engagement Center

offered several opportunities for students to grow in cultural awareness this January and February. The Cultural Engagement Center (CEC) works to welcome and support diverse students, provide opportunities for cross-cultural understanding, and promote community on campus—all to help students better carry out the Great Commission, Jesus' command to share the gospel with all nations and peoples.

In January, MLC planned a full day of activities to commemorate Martin Luther King Day, including a special worship service, workshops, social simulations, and thought-provoking films. Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher and Patricia James, members at Divine Peace, Largo, Md., presented the keynote address.

In February, the Center featured decorations explaining and celebrating the Lunar New Year, a traditional festival celebrated by Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese people. The Center also partnered with the campus' Art In Ministry group to sponsor a Lunar New Year crafting event to teach students more about traditional Chinese art.

Earlier in the school year, students also learned more about the cultures of the international students attending MLC during International Education Week, which included ethnic food nights, student presentations, and panel discussions.

According to Mrs. Megan Kassuelke, director of cultural engagement at MLC, the CEC is meant to cultivate diversity and culture-related discussion in respectful, mindful, and authentic ways. She says, "My goal is to foster a sense of belonging for all by inviting the entire campus family to join in