

TOGETHER

January 23, 2024

Celebration in Uganda

Last summer, our synod declared fellowship with the Obadiah Lutheran Synod (OLS), a small confessional Lutheran church body in the African nation of Uganda. On Jan. 13, the OLS held a synodwide worship service celebrating its fellowship with WELS. Members of the OLS traveled from towns and villages through southeastern Uganda to attend—some for more than six hours. More than 800 people attended the special worship celebration. Missionary Howard Mohlke and I were blessed to attend as the representatives of WELS.

The morning began with heavy rains. Because the celebration was to be held outdoors and the dirt roads leading to the location were impassable, the service was delayed for several hours until the rain stopped. But the weather did not dampen the enthusiasm of those who came to worship. The service began with songs by the youth choir and with the robust singing of many hymns by the worshippers. The service also included the ordination of a new OLS pastor, an address by OLS President Makisimu Musa, and words of encouragement from many of the OLS pastors in attendance. The celebration also included words of greeting from the WELS representatives as well as encouraging words of congratulations by local and national Ugandan government officials.

Just as the delegates at our WELS convention last summer were overjoyed to establish fellowship with the OLS and thanked God for the blessing, so the people of the OLS shared in that joy and thanks.

The OLS is planting new congregations in towns and villages throughout Uganda, and it is being blessed with a growth in membership. Along with that growth comes challenges, especially when it comes to the need for all-wheel drive vehicles that can negotiate the bumpy and muddy roads to enable contact with remote congregations. And while the synod builds its own churches with locally made mud-fired brick, it is in need of funds to provide roofs for those buildings.

WELS members have been generous in their support for these projects, and the OLS is very grateful for what has been received. But additional funds are needed to complete the necessary projects. If you would like to support the OLS in the gospel ministry it is faithfully carrying out, you can send your gift to WELS World Missions, designated for the OLS in Uganda, or donate online at community.wels.net.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

Learn more about the work in Uganda at wels.net/uganda. 

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A review of God's blessings in 2023

“Your gifts, God's blessings: An annual report to our members” is now available. The 24-page report includes photos of Christian brothers and sisters around the world, stories of faith, and updates on WELS' ministry.

“God blesses us every day in so many ways that it's easy to take those blessings for granted,” says WELS President Rev. Mark Schroeder. “That's true for us as individuals, and it's also true for us as a synod. This annual report is intended to review some of the ways that God has blessed our work together during the past year.”

Some of those blessings include:

- David, who is studying with the Pastoral Studies Institute and leads an online Bible study from his home, which has led to many East Asians around the world being baptized;
- Colleen, who didn't grow up in the church but whose life changed after she attended Intown, Atlanta, Ga., with her college roommate;and
- the 61 teenagers who attended the WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership and participated in conversations with other WELS members about leadership, ministry, and outreach.

These stories and more are presented in the 2024 edition of “Your gifts, God's blessings.” Print versions of the report are being sent to every WELS congregation and individual donor.

Additional print versions are available from Northwestern Publishing House for free. Visit nph.net/wels or call 800-662-6022.

To view the report online, visit wels.net/annualreport. There you can also download a PowerPoint presentation of the report with notes that allow anyone to share the highlights of our synod's work. Alternatively, churches can invite a WELS Christian giving counselor to give the presentation. Contact WELS Ministry of Christian Giving at 800-827-5482 for more information.

Looking for a simpler communication piece that provides an overview of WELS and its ministries? Consider the new two-sided flyer that was designed to be shared with visitors and prospects. It's perfect for tract racks, narthex displays, and community fair booths. This flyer is available from Northwestern Publishing House at nph.net/wels or by calling 800-662-6022. 

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