

TOGETHER



February 6, 2024

Another year of record Congregation Mission Offerings

By God's grace, Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) received in December were \$3.39 million. This was \$30,000 more than the previous December. For calendar year 2023, CMO totaled \$23.39 million, which is \$60,000 (0.3 percent) more than 2022 and \$436,000 (1.9 percent) more than projected receipts. This marks the fourth consecutive year of record Congregation Mission Offerings and the second year in which CMO surpassed \$23 million.


It should be noted that God's people in our synod have also responded to special needs and projects above and beyond CMO. WELS congregations and members received information on the "100 missions in 10 years" effort that began in 2023. We have already received \$3.01 million in gifts and commitments from WELS congregations and individuals.

Clearly, this generosity reflects the Savior's promises: "God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work . . . so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God" (2 Corinthians 9:8,11).

Most congregations have submitted their CMO subscriptions for 2024. We pray that the upward trend continues, even in these difficult economic times.

God is already answering that prayer. CMO for January 2024 of \$1.53 million (compared to \$1.31 million last year) was the highest CMO level for the month of January on record.

Thank you, and with you we pray for God's continuing blessings on our synod.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

Missionaries called to explore new world mission fields

The Board for World Missions, working alongside the various World Missions One Teams, has identified new world mission fields and is taking steps to deploy missionaries into three new areas.

"Spreading God's Word in any and every place is our high calling," says Rev. Larry Schlomer, World Missions administrator. "We ask the Lord of the harvest to use us to bring many into his kingdom through our work."

Missionaries asked to relocate to Australia

Two missionaries from the Asia One Team, currently based in Chiang Mai, Thailand, have been asked to consider relocating to begin outreach based in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. Schlomer shares, "People in Australia have asked us for help. WELS members who have moved to Australia, brothers and sisters who have had to move from Hong Kong, and long-time partners in churches in the Brisbane area, have reached out. It is a joy to be able to meet these needs with WELS missionaries." Both missionaries would remain on the Asia One Team as they continue their work with contacts throughout Asia.

Calls issued for Muslim outreach in Senegal

Two calls have been issued to explore new outreach in the West African country of Senegal. The goal would be for new missionaries to spend up to six months living with a Muslim family from the Wolof tribe, immersing themselves in the culture and language of the people they are trying to reach with the gospel. Once they have a better understanding of the culture and Muslim influence, they would develop more specific plans for outreach. The Board for World Missions is committed to supporting this new mission field for a minimum of two years in order to give the missionaries ample time to work within the culture. Learn more about this opportunity at wels.net/mission-work-approved-in-senegal.

New Native American outreach in Four Corners region

The Board for World Missions has approved a new missionary position

to coordinate outreach to the Native American tribes in the Four Corners area of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado. This new missionary would be tasked with developing a new model for Native American outreach, working closely with native Apache members who want to reach out to friends and family members from other tribes with the pure gospel message. He will work closely with Missionary John Holtz, who leads the discipleship arm of the Native Christians Network and is training Apache WELS members for service and outreach through the Apache Christian Training School (ACTS) program. This missionary also will coordinate with Christ the Rock, Farmington, N.M., to develop existing outreach to Native Americans in the area and work to expand digital outreach efforts.

"These new fields will allow us to bring the gospel to places where the announcement of pure grace is scarce or even nonexistent," says Schlomer. "May God use these missionaries to bring joy in sadness and hope where darkness has hidden God's face."

Learn more about additional world mission fields that are being explored at wels.net/newworldmissionfields.

New Home Missions administrator


WELS Missions welcomes Mark Gabb as the new administrator for WELS Home Missions. Gabb began serving in this role in January following a vacancy in the position since spring 2022, when previous administrator Keith Free accepted a call to parish ministry.

Gabb was formally installed as the Home Missions administrator Wed., Jan. 31, at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry weekly chapel service.

Gabb is not new to the work of WELS Home Missions. He has served as a member of the Board for Home Missions for ten years and as chairman for three, taking on additional leadership responsibilities during the vacancy.

Gabb says Home Missions has been part of his life for as long as he can remember. His father was a pastor and planted a mission church in Texas; Gabb's first parish assignment was to a mission congregation in Ohio; his brother—also a pastor—was assigned to plant a church in New York. When Gabb moved to Florida, he was appointed to serve on the district mission board of the South Atlantic District in 2006. "I was eager to do what I could to encourage missionaries and existing missions and help plant new churches in our district. It never occurred to me that Home Missions would become a major part of my life and ministry," says Gabb.

Gabb is taking on this role during an important time: A new initiative, "100 Missions in 10 Years," officially was launched at the 2023 synod convention. "Together we can do what most individual congregations can't do alone, and that is plant new churches throughout North America," he says. "We bring a wealth of expertise from our district mission board members and mission counselors, and we have a partnership

with WELS Church Extension Fund that provides grants and loans to our new missions. All this helps us to carry out the outreach aspect of Christ's Great Commission." 

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