

**South Central District
2015 Fall Pastoral Study Conference
October 19-20, 2015
Trinity, Mountain Home, AR**

**Synodical Council Report
Brad Johnston**

- The Synodical Council (SC) held its Spring 2015 meeting in Milwaukee on April 24-25, 2015. Topics of note included:
 - The SC received reports about the possible restructuring of the WELS Foundation and the WELS Investment Fund to realize savings from joint administration and shared costs. The SC asked for additional information about the possibility and advisability of making changes to the governing structures.
 - Congregation Mission Offerings for March 2015 totaled \$1,729,000 or \$261,000 (17.8%) more than March 2014. Through April 1, 2015, offerings totaled \$4,229,000 or \$219,000 (5.5%) more than the same period in 2014. These offerings represent 103.7% of subscriptions, meaning that for the first quarter of the year offerings are 3.7% above what was projected. We are thankful to our congregations for this generous support, and we thank God for his blessings.
 - The Finance Committee reported that the synod's auditors gave an unqualified audit opinion regarding synod finances. This is the best report we can receive
 - The SC began discussions about preparing a new 5-10 year long-range plan for the synod that will be based on
 - our theology;
 - our purpose as a synod;
 - our synodical philosophy of ministry;
 - the kind and number of congregations & people we anticipate serving;
 - the programs needed to serve those people;
 - the staff we need to offer and coordinate those programs; and
 - the resources needed to support the staff and carry out the programs.

Groups will be formed within the SC to study the various aspects of the long-range plan and begin formulating specific recommendations and concepts.

- The Synod held its 63rd biennial convention at Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw, Michigan on July 27-30, 2015, under the theme "One in Christ." Looking back on the convention, there is much for which to be thankful.

Over 400 delegates took a week out of their busy schedules to be about the Lord's business. As one delegate said, "Attending a convention really impresses on you the many blessings God has showered on us and the many opportunities that lie ahead of us. I can't wait to get back and share these things with my congregation." Another delegate noted how the convention theme "One in Christ" came through clearly in worship, Bible study, and in the reports from the areas of ministry. Many delegates commented on how they were moved deeply by the presentations of world missionaries and Bishop V'yacheslav Horpynchuk of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church. By all accounts the convention was both positive and productive. We join with our entire synod in thanking God for our many blessings and the work we are privileged to do.

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In addition to hearing detailed reports about the work that we have done together as a synod during the past two years, the convention made a number of important decisions. The convention:

- Determined that the synod undertake a thorough review of the Holman Christian Standard Bible when its revision is completed.
- Directed that all new WELS teachers will participate in a program of new teacher induction, carried out under the supervision of the Conference of Presidents.
- Directed that all graduates of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary take part in a three-year mentoring program for new pastors, with their congregations covering the annual cost of \$1,000.
- Encouraged the continuation of informal discussions with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and formal doctrinal discussions with the Church of the Lutheran Confession.
- Approved the initial planning for moving the synod archives from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry.
- Approved the Ministry Financial Plan (budget) as recommended by the Synodical Council. The plan feature no increase in synodical support for both years of the biennium, with slight increases to the overall spending made possible by the use of special funds held by the areas of ministry.
- Encouraged all congregations and members to participate in the “One in Christ” special offering to eliminate the synod’s capital debt.
- Rejected a proposal to change the process of gathering nominations for synod and district officers.
- Rejected a recommendation to require synod delegates to serve for two consecutive conventions.
- Rejected suggestions to change the name of the synod.
- Defeated a motion to conduct a review of Scouting to determine if the organization has changed.

In addition, the following the following men were elected to service positions:

PRESIDENT

Rev. Mark G. Schroeder

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Rev. Joel R. Voss

BOARD FOR HOME MISSIONS, CHAIRMAN (parish pastor)

Rev. Charles A. Westra

BOARD FOR WORLD MISSIONS, CHAIRMAN (pastor)

Rev. Howard O. Mohlke

COMMISSION ON ADULT DISCIPLESHIP, CHAIRMAN

Rev. Gary A. Pufahl

COMMISSION ON CONGREGATIONAL COUNSELING, CHAIRMAN

Rev. David G. Scharf

COMMISSION ON SPECIAL MINISTRIES, CHAIRMAN

Rev. Joel P. Gaertner

COMMISSION ON WORSHIP, CHAIRMAN

Rev. Jon F. Zabell

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COMMISSION ON YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY, CHAIRMAN
Rev. John H. Boggs
MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE GOVERNING BOARD, CHAIRMAN
Rev. Michael A. Woldt

You can find a complete list of election results and convention resolutions online at wels.net/2015synodconvention.

- The next Synodical Council Meeting will be held November 6-7, 2015 in Milwaukee.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brad Johnston