

**South Central District  
2013 Fall Pastoral Study Conference  
October 14-15, 2013**

**Synodical Council Report  
Brad Johnston**

The Synodical Council (SC) held a Special Meeting on July 29 in New Ulm, Minnesota prior to the Synodical Convention. Topics of note included:

- **Synodical Administration Building.**

The Synod administration's move to the new WELS Center for Mission and Ministry in Waukesha, Wis., was completed on June 24. The 3-day move went smoothly following the completion of some minor renovations and office reconfigurations. A chapel area has been created adjacent to the main lobby area. An open house was held on October 8 in conjunction with the Council of President's meeting. The Center for Mission and Ministry is located at N16W23377 Stone Ridge Drive in Waukesha, just north of the 1-94 exits at either Hwy 164/J or Hwy 74/F.

- **WELS Pension Plan Update.**

Beginning in 2014, the WELS Pension Plan (the Plan) will raise its normal retirement age to more closely align with Social Security. The Plan's normal retirement age is the age at which a retiree can receive his or her full benefit and will now be based on each participant's date of birth. The normal retirement age will remain 65 for participants born prior to Jan. 2, 1943. The normal retirement age will increase to 66 for participants born Jan. 2, 1943 through Jan. 1, 1960. The normal retirement age will increase to 67 for participants born after Jan. 1, 1960.

The Plan change coincides with two emerging dynamics. First, individuals are generally working and living longer than any time in the past. Second, financial markets have underperformed and are displaying greater volatility and long-term uncertainty.

The WELS Pension Commission and Synodical Council approved this change to preserve the security of benefits for future retirees. They believe that this change strikes the appropriate balance between protecting benefits already earned by current participants and sustaining the Plan's long-term viability to provide meaningful benefits to future retirees, while remaining mindful of the cost impact to the ministry efforts of each local organization.

If you have questions about the changes, contact the Benefit Plans Office at [bpo@wels.net](mailto:bpo@wels.net) or 414-256-3860.

- **Financial Plan/Congregation Mission Offering**

Through August 31, 2013, the WELS Ministry Financial Plan is generally in line with plan. CMO through August was down 1.7% (\$213,000) compared to the same period in FY2012, which is in line with projections based on 2013 congregation subscriptions. CMO will be monitored closely since key elements of the plan call for meeting 2013 goals and increased CMO giving of 4.0% in 2014.

Special Funds are also consistent with plan. Through August, unrestricted support and revenue was \$899,000 compared to expenses of \$1,154,000, with these funds coming primarily from endowment distributions that lag expenses as gift restrictions are generally satisfied quarterly.

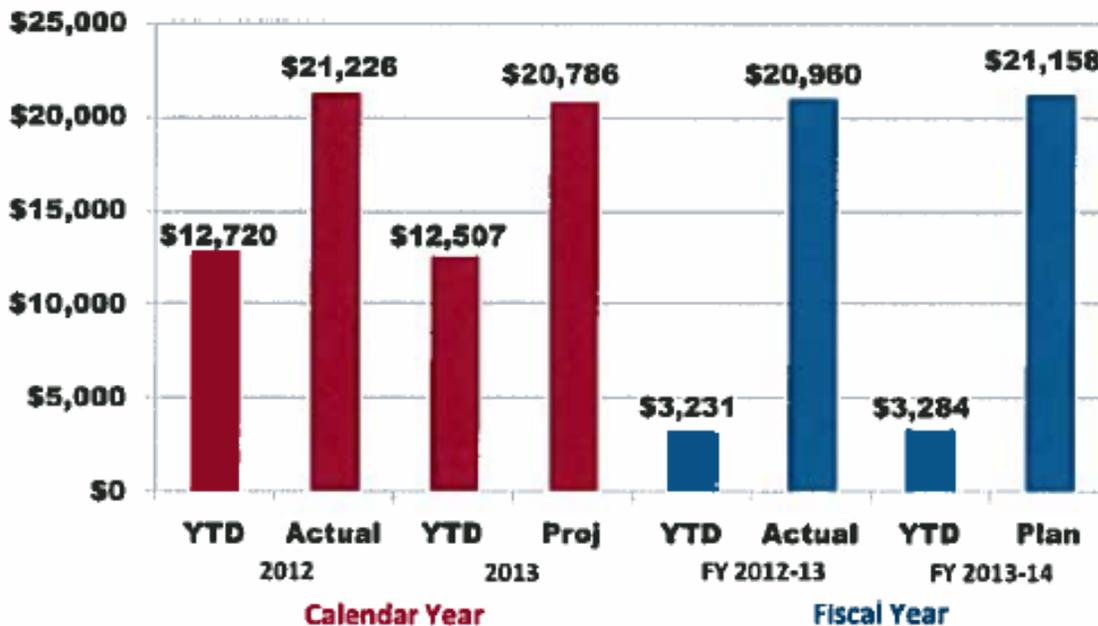
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Temporarily restricted support through August was \$1,098,000, which is \$81,000 greater than the same period in FY2012 and represents 21.5% of planned receipts for the year. The positive variance and increase over the prior year is due primarily to strong investment performance, gifts from individuals and bequests.

Through August, the Financial Stabilization Fund received \$1,066,000, or 18.4% of planned receipts for the year (\$98,000 more than the same period the prior year). At the end of August, the FSF held net assets of \$13,909,000. The financial plan anticipates that these net assets will be drawn down to about \$10,000,000 by the end of the 2013-15 biennium.

**Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO)  
August 31st, 2013  
(amounts in thousands)**



Respectfully Submitted,

Brad Johnston