

*** SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN DISTRICT ***

Called Worker Call Activity:
Visit www.wels.net

Congregation mission offering
Update 2006

\$3,376,155 has been committed by our district congregations in 2006 for Synod-wide work. This is \$226,357 less than what was actually received in 2005. To date for 2006 we have sent in \$376,238. As a Synod, \$2,429,719 has been already received.

*“Use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves,
so that when it is gone,
you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings”
Luke 16:9.*

*We are the WELS...Proclaiming Peace Through Jesus
For Every Soul Is A Treasure!*

WELS NEWS - APRIL 2006

WWW.WELS.NET

EVERY SOUL IS A TREASURE

CHURCHES COMMIT MORE OFFERINGS TO SYNOD FOR 2006

WELS Ministry of Christian Giving has released the latest forecast for 2006 Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO). Based on more than 1,000 congregations submitting their subscriptions to synod, a 2.6% rise in giving is projected for the 2006 calendar year. More than 150 congregations still have not submitted CMO subscriptions. In the absence of these subscriptions, actual receipts from 2005 were used to help estimate funds for 2006.

“We are grateful for the 2.6% increase,” said Pastor Dave Liggett, WELS Director of Christian Giving. “However, with inflationary costs running close to 5%, there is a gap between revenue and expenses. If this gap isn’t closed, it will result in a yearly operating deficit of approximately \$1 million over and above the growing support needs of our ministerial education schools. A gap of that magnitude cannot be absorbed without significantly impacting the work that we do together as a synod, specifically the training and sending out of gospel workers.”

Liggett encourages congregations to incorporate the 10/10 concept in their giving. Congregations are asked to give 10% of their annual receipts to the synod or raise their subscription to the synod by 10% over 2005 gifts.

SYNODICAL COUNCIL APPROVES FINANCIAL CONTINGENCY PLAN

The Synodical Council approved a financial contingency plan to balance the synod budget through 2007 at its February meeting. The plan, put together by WELS President Karl Gurgel in consultation with synod administrators, stated that WELS will forego internal repayments so that it can cover anticipated deficits at its ministerial education schools.

Although the synod’s four ministerial education schools have collectively been blessed with more than \$3 million in gifts since the opening of advancement offices at each school in 2005, additional resources are needed. Michigan Lutheran Seminary will

need \$1.7 million, and Martin Luther College \$900,000 through 2007. “In keeping with a synod convention resolution that affirmed the importance of the prep school system, we did not feel we could decline to cover the operating deficit at Michigan Lutheran Seminary,” said Gurgel.

Payment on internal loans is being deferred so more mission and ministry programs won’t have to be cut. “We could have balanced the budget by curtailing approximately \$1 million of ministry this and next year,” said Gurgel. “However, that would have meant the loss of 20 positions, including professors and home and world missionaries. That was just too high a price to pay. As important as it is to balance the budget, it’s even more important to use our best judgment in allowing as much mission and ministry to go forward as possible.”

God continues to work through WELS to spread the gospel. Since 2004, Home Missions has partnered with congregations to help establish 19 new congregational groupings, 10 in places WELS has never been before. In India, 75 students are in WELS pre-seminary and seminary programs. In Ministerial Education, 1,600 students are preparing for full-time service in the church. About 40,000 prisoners are being served on a regular basis, and thousands of Christian leaders are being trained in congregations for a variety of ministries.

Gurgel will present a contingency plan for the next four years (2007-2011) at the Synodical Council meeting in late April. The plan will outline possible adjustments to each area of ministry depending on the amount of support received. Preliminary forecasts indicate that there could be a shortfall between \$3 and \$4 million annually beginning in 2007.

***** REAL TREASURE VISITS REACH NEXT LEVEL *****

WELS’ “Real Treasure Visits,” involving a Bible study for one on one discussion about Christian stewardship, are continuing. President Karl Gurgel started things off when he met with WELS’ 12 district presidents and their wives in January. The district presidents for the most part have met with pastors and their wives from each of the WELS circuits. The next step is for these pastors in the circuits to meet with their fellow pastors before the study moves to the congregational level. Resources are available for

implementation of the one on one studies at the church level. Visit www.wels.net/jumpword/realtreasure. The Web site includes helpful items such as a planning timetable beginning 10 weeks ahead of member visits, suggestions for recruiting members to serve as the “visitors” and possible agendas for visitor training sessions.

WELS OFFERING CHURCH “CALLING CARDS”

WELS Communication Services is providing production resources to congregations looking to develop DVD calling cards of their ministry. These DVDs are used to promote a church within a community and can serve as a great outreach tool. A production crew spends two days on-site to shoot the material needed for the DVD—any aspects the church would like to highlight including worship and Bible studies, opportunities for involvement, information about Sunday school and Lutheran elementary school as well as interviews with members and church leaders.

Communication Services then edits the material into a 15 to 20 minute DVD presentation including up to five separate chapters. A congregation receives 1,000 DVDs printed with four-color artwork and packaged in compact plastic holders for \$4,900.

About six congregations have used the service so far and feedback has been good. “The DVD brochure provides us with a new way to reach out to an increasingly technology savvy society,” said Pastor Steven Pagels of St. John’s, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

WELS offers other media-related services to churches and schools as well. Visit www.wels.net/jumpword/media for more information or to contact WELS Media Director Steve Zambo.

CORRECTION

In the March WELS News bulletin insert, an incorrect phone number was given for contacting a WELS Christian giving counselor about employer matches on charitable gifts. The correct number is 800-827-5482 (414-256-3881, if local).

