

**Arizona-California Mission Board Report
AZ/CA District Reformation 500 Conference
San Diego, CA November 1-2, 2017**

Once Martin Luther, by God's grace, came to discover (re-discover) the magnificent gospel of Jesus Christ, he couldn't help but proclaim it far and wide. The desire to share the gospel with others was one of the hallmarks of the Lutheran Reformation. "[Luther] wanted as many people as possible to enjoy what life in Christ brings as soon as possible, and so he regarded it as the most urgent of tasks to proclaim the gospel" (Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, pg.18). In a sermon based on I Peter 2:9 ("*You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light*") preached in Wittenberg in 1522, Luther told his congregation: "You must, says Peter, exercise the chief function of a priest, that is, to proclaim the wonderful deed God has performed for you to bring you out of darkness into the light. And your preaching should be done in such a way that one brother proclaims the mighty deed of God to the other, how you have been delivered through Him from sin, hell, death, and all misfortune, and have been called to eternal life. . . . Let it be your chief work to proclaim this publicly and to call everyone into the light which you have been called. Where you find people who do not know this, you should instruct and also teach them as you have learned, namely, how one must be saved through the power and strength of God and come out of darkness into the light" (*Luther's Works*, Volume 30, pgs.64-65).

Pray the Lord continue to work within our missionaries and their families, the people they serve, and within each of us such an urgent, aggressive mission-mindedness.

Mission Board Personnel Update

Your AZ/CA District Mission Board is happy to welcome Pastor Steven Hillmer (pastor of The Springs, Sparks, NV) to our board. Pastor Hillmer was appointed to the board this September.

At the 64th biennium synod convention this past summer, Pastor Wayne Uhlhorn (of Beautiful Savior, Carlsbad, CA) was elected to serve as the Board for Home Missions Chairman for a four-year term. Pastor Uhlhorn had been appointed to serve as BHM Chairman for FY 17. Thus, he has served for a year in this capacity. We thank the Lord for Pastor Uhlhorn's willingness to serve in this role as well as his congregation allowing him to serve in this way.

In August 2017 Pastor Peter Kruschel announced that he will be retiring from his position as the Western Region Mission Counselor come July 1, 2018. We give thanks for all he has done for the sake of the gospel of Christ in his various roles throughout his 41 years of ministry. He will particularly be missed by our DMB, missionaries and missions. Tentatively, a Call for Pastor Kruschel's replacement will be extended by the BHM Executive Committee in January of 2018.

WELS Board for Home Missions

Home Missions supports both subsidized missions and unsubsidized missions. There are a total of 85 subsidized missions. In this listing of subsidized missions are these groupings:

- 19 missions are cross-cultural supported through the budget / divisional gifts
- 48 missions are supported through the budget / divisional gifts
- 3 missions are supported through JMC funds and are all cross cultural
- 9 missions are supported by CEF grants, 6 new starts and 3 enhancements, one of the enhancements being cross-cultural
- 1 mission is supported by special project funds and is cross cultural
- 5 missions are classified as enhancements

In addition to the 85 subsidized missions, there are 31 unsubsidized missions. Home Missions has three classifications for unsubsidized missions.

- A new church has started. Working with a District Mission Board, it is a mission in every sense of the word except it does not receive subsidy.
- A mission has finished receiving subsidy. Following that, for three years these missions receive the label of unsubsidized mission. These missions continue to work with a District Mission Board.
- A self-support congregation has some specific issues and works with a district mission board. After following guidelines, a self-support congregation can become an unsubsidized mission for up to three years.

Cross Cultural Ministry

Below is a list of locations where cross-cultural ministry is being done. Some of these ministries receive BHM subsidy. Some receive financial assistance through Home Mission special funds. Some receive support through DMBs, or the Global Hmong Committee or the Hispanic Outreach Consultant or the Joint Mission Counsel or designees of the JMC.

Hispanic	Hmong	Additional Cultures	
Detroit, MI	St. Paul, MN	Sudanese	Liberians
NYC, NY		Des Moines, IA	New Hope, MN
Falls Church, VA	Manitowoc, WI	Omaha, NE	Las Vegas NV
Doral, FL	Appleton, WI (<i>vacant</i>)	Renton, WA	Korean
Edna, TX		Calgary, AB	Des Moines, WA
Houston, TX	New Hope, MN	Mankato, MN	Salem, OR
Phoenix AZ		Ottawa, ON	Las Vegas, NV
Denver, CO	Kansas City, KS	Vietnamese	Thousand Oaks, CA
Santa Ana, CA	Fresno, CA	Boise, ID	Santa Clara and
Anchorage, AK**	Anchorage, AK**		San Jose, CA
Antigua		Navajo	Morton Grove, IL
Milwaukee, WI (<i>4 sites</i>)		Farmington, NM	
Watertown, WI			Chinese
Menasha, WI		Japanese	Wauwatosa, WI
Yakima, WA		Findlay, OH	Vancouver, BC
El Paso, TX		African American	Chicago, IL
Houston, TX		St. Marcus-Milw.	Nepean ON
		Siloah-Milw.	Des Moines IA

***Faith in Anchorage has English, Hmong and Hispanic worship each Sunday.*

WELS Multi-Site Conference

A WELS National Multi-Site Conference will be taking place on November 12-14, 2018 in the Milwaukee, WI area. Committee members are Rev. Nathan Strutz, Rev. John Dorn, Mr. Ron Demulling.

What is it all about?

The multi-site movement is all about reaching more people, and bringing mission work to many more congregations, by helping to start new churches in new locations. The potential for this relatively new strategy among WELS congregations is tremendous. While multi-site churches may have many practical benefits such as shared resources, efficient organization, cost-effective programs, and more; the greatest blessing possible is that God would use it to reach more people with the gospel.

Why should you join us for this conference?

Some congregations are already multi-site churches. Others could benefit from considering multi-site ministry, or learning from those who have multi-site church experience. Attendance is open to everyone. There will be beneficial information for churches that are already doing multi-site ministry as well as churches that are considering multi-site ministry to reach more people with the gospel.

Praise and Proclaim Ministries

Having participated in four separate Praise and Proclaim Ministries outreach campaigns as a mission board (on behalf of our mission efforts in Vistancia, AZ, Goodyear, AZ, Coeur d'Alene, ID and Meridian, ID), the members of our DMB are happy to strongly endorse and encourage the use of Praise and Proclaim Ministries, a WELS gospel outreach campaign ministry.

Praise and Proclaim Ministries can help a congregation in its outreach efforts in the following ways:

1) Help congregations train and equip members on how to conquer fears and share the gospel by providing a well-organized, meaningful, and transforming experience going door-to-door. 2) Help congregations who may be having a difficult time gaining traction in their outreach efforts by providing a campaign that can help spur outreach momentum. 3) Help pastors by taking over all the nitty-gritty, but necessary elements associated with outreach activities so they can focus on what they do best – teach and preach.

Praise and Proclaim Ministries recently released this statement of purpose: “Praise and Proclaim Ministries assists congregations by training members how to confidently and comfortably proclaim the gospel. We don’t teach people how to canvass, but use this as a component of our training as an opportunity to immediately put their training into practice. This is very important, because many Christians wrestle with the fear of verbally proclaiming the gospel to lost souls. The intent of our outreach initiatives is to break the thin layer of ice that causes us to refrain from witnessing and start looking at the cross instead of a mirror. Our primary goal is to provide a pastor with a core group of members who are ready, willing, and equipped to continue to boldly proclaim the gospel and assist in making follow-up visits.” To learn more about Praise and Proclaim Ministries, go to: www.praiseandproclaim.com.

Ministry of Christian Giving

In partnership with the Ministry of Christian Giving, Missions (Home and World) had an “Individual Missions Campaign” in FY 17. The campaign was titled: “**Every Neighbor, Every Nation – WELS Missions and You.**” A key component of the campaign was a special fall *Forward in Christ* mission edition (September of 2016). Copies are still available.

We give thanks that God’s people have offered just over \$668,000.00 in gifts along with committing \$419,000 in expectancies. On February 23, 2017, the Joint Mission Council approved an allocation of \$150,000.00 from these gifts to Home Missions. At its spring meeting, the Board for Home Missions designated the \$150,000 in three ways; \$60,000 toward church in the box purchases, \$40,000 toward Praise and Proclaim campaigns, and \$50,000 toward Mt. Lebanon Lutheran in Milwaukee (a new mission enhancement opportunity).

Church Extension Fund

Church Extension Fund (CEF) is a valuable Home Mission partner. Through the ministry of CEF, loans are made to mission churches to purchase land and help build the first worship facility. Additionally, through its grant programs mission churches receive financial support which allows them the opportunity to afford paying on land and worship facility. At the 2013 Synod Convention Section CEF was granted authority to make “grants to Home Missions” (CEF Grants) to help support additional Home Mission ministry. The by-law change allows the CEF Board of Directors flexibility in helping to serve Home Missions, if the CEF Board of Directors would so choose. Since that time following a formula relating to CEF funds, the CEF Board of Directors has approved distributions of \$833,000 (FY 16) and \$843,000 (FY17). With these financial blessings Home Missions has been able to authorize two additional mission churches, planning on these funds of \$1,676,000 to cover the majority if not all the subsidy needs of those two missions.

On February 14, 2017, at a CEF Board of Director meeting, the CEF BOD approved setting up an endowment from the permanently restricted assets of CEF (\$25M). Each year the payout from this endowment will be around \$1M. From that amount, \$800,000 will go to Home Missions. \$200,000 will go to the CEF grant program. We give thanks to the Lord for the continued blessings Home Missions receives through its partnership with CEF.

In the Works – New District Mission Start Opportunities

Looking to the future, the mission board is working with a number of congregations on sites for possible future mission expansion. A community profile has been or is being conducted for a number of these sites over the course of the next few months. Annually the mission board meets for two days of mission expansion planning with review of these profiles as the only agenda item. Our goal is to have at least our top two or three priority sites ready for application to the Board for Home Missions in the spring of 2018. Those sites currently include, but are not limited to: Downtown Phoenix (partnering with CrossWalk, Phoenix, AZ); Reno, NV #3; Crown of Life, Corona (restart).

Areas that the mission board (and local mission partners) have their eye on for mission efforts a bit further down the road include:

CALIFORNIA NORTH CONFERENCE (Fresno north to Oregon border & northern Nevada)

Redding CA #2; Northern California (LiveStream); Chico, CA; Reno, NV #4; Carson City, NV; Eldorado Hills, CA (East Sacramento); Elk Grove, CA (South Sacramento); Santa Clara - Peace (Korean); Stockton, CA; Merced, CA; Turlock, CA; Visalia, CA; Bakersfield, CA.

CALIFORNIA SOUTH CONFERENCE (Bakersfield south to Mexican border & southern Nevada)

Camarillo/Oxnard/Ventura, CA; Santa Clarita, CA; Palmdale, CA; Hesperia/Apple Valley/Victorville, CA; Ontario/Chino Hills, CA; Palm Springs, CA; Lake Elsinore, CA; Menifee, CA; Poway, CA; East Chula Vista, CA; Newport Beach/Huntington Beach, CA; SW Las Vegas, NV; NE Las Vegas, NV; Henderson, NV.

APACHE CONFERENCE (Apache reservations and northeastern quarter of AZ)

(None identified)

GADSDEN CONFERENCE (South central and southeastern AZ, New Mexico and El Paso, TX)

Marana, AZ (NW Tucson) and Oro Valley, AZ (NE Tucson).

BLACK CANYON CONFERENCE (Northwestern quarter of AZ and metro Phoenix area)

Carefree/Cave Creek (NE Phoenix), AZ; Anthem/New River, AZ; Sun City Festival, AZ; Buckeye, AZ; Central Phoenix – Urban and Hispanic Outreach; Eastmark (Mesa/Apache Junction) AZ; Queen Creek, AZ (SE Phoenix); San Tan Valley/Florence, AZ (SE Phoenix); South Chandler, AZ (S Phoenix); Maricopa, AZ.

If you have any opinions, advice, former members or prospects to contribute toward any of these fields, please contact the mission board. Any insights or help you might have to offer would be greatly appreciated. If you are aware of or interested in any other mission fields, please contact us as well.

Reports from the Mission Fields

River of Life, Goodyear, AZ – Presenting a stark contrast with the very dry, lifeless Agua Fria river bed nearby, River of Life congregation continues to flourish under God's blessings. Reorganized in 2013 (from St. Thomas, Goodyear), River of Life called its first full time pastor, Pastor Lincoln Albrecht, in summer 2014. With a renewed emphasis on outreach training and activities, River of Life has grown to 63 communicants and a total of 76 souls. As worship attendance numbers challenged its initial store front limitations, in January of 2017 River of Life moved to a much larger and more prominent commercial site on one of Goodyear's most traveled arterials. Worship, Bible Class, and new visitor gains have been significant. The congregation held its combined Fall Festival/Grand Opening service and activities on October 29th. The DMB sees our Goodyear presence as an eventual stepping stone to the fast growing Buckeye area right next door.

Cross of Glory, Peoria/Vistancia, AZ – Cross of Glory Lutheran Church and School of Peoria and Vistancia, AZ (a multi-site congregation) has had many changes this past year. They are located in the second fastest growing area in the country and are surrounded by a major housing and business boom. The field is definitely filled with new souls to reach. God blessed them with a second pastor (Pastor Benjamin Foxen) in September of 2016 and their work to add an additional site to their ministry began. 6 months later they held their opening service in Vistancia on Easter Sunday 2017. 47 were in attendance. Now 6/7 months old, their attendance has been all over the map (anywhere between 8 and 40). They averaged high teens to low twenties during the non-snowbird season. To date the mission has brought 4 families to their ministry they would not have reached before. Although canvassing slowed for the summer, it doesn't mean they have not been reaching out. Nearly every month they have been co-sponsoring a community event, each of which reach anywhere from 300-800 people. Challenges seem to revolve around: a lack of attendance at the many spiritual growth opportunities they provide for young and old, a smaller than expected number of actively committed people who want to serve, and actively serving members who have had to follow jobs away from the Cross of Glory area.

The Springs Lutheran Church, in Sparks, NV – In July, 2008 Pastor Steven Hillmer arrived in Sparks (Reno) and began holding Bible classes and canvassing neighborhoods. The first worship service of The Springs Lutheran Church was on Palm Sunday, April 4, 2009. At that time there were 39 members and 24 communicants. They continued to meet at a community building in a county park for worship and Bible study. In 2011, following a fire in the Hillmer house, a Ministry Center / office space was rented to be used as an office and for meetings. In 2013, The Springs acquired 2.62 acres of land on the main highway. In April of 2016, they broke ground for construction. A 6,600 sq. ft. building which includes a dedicated sanctuary, a large gathering space and office and classrooms was dedicated on June 4, 2017. Nearly 300 attended! Presently there are 184 members and 143 communicants. This fall, they welcomed their first full-time Vicar, Nathanael Jensen. Since moving into the new building, worship attendance has increased 25-30%, now averaging around 125 on a Sunday. 12 people have almost completed the first BIC class since Dedication Sunday; another 20 are enrolled in the second BIC class. On October 28th a Community Grand Opening / Open House was held. In November they plan to begin holding a "Mornings with Mommies" program every other Thursday. In January 2018, they are looking to have two worship services on Sunday mornings. They are presently scheduled to be off of WELS BHM subsidy by June of 2018; and subsidy from Shepherd of the Mountains (Reno) by December, 2018.

Prince of Peace, Thousand Oaks, CA - Prince of Peace received an enhancement grant this year to help them afford a full-time pastor. It is hoped that Prince of Peace can serve as a springboard to serve other communities along the coast. Pastor Noah Bater arrived four months ago. In his words: "I'm trying my best to avoid making any drastic changes just yet. My focus has been: 1) build relationships with people by spending as much time with them as possible, and 2) do everything, no matter how small or big, well. We had 68 in worship on Oct 8th. The attendance of everyone who attends has improved incrementally. Those who came a couple times a year are now coming every month. Those who came once a month are now coming 2-3 times per month and so on. We are seeing an increase in Bible Class (19) and Sunday School (14) attendance as well. The Lord is blessing us with more people in the Word--children and adults--and at His Table. Faith is being fed and growing daily and for this we rejoice. I reached out to and recruited 5 new teachers who absolutely love spending time with the kids. I spend time with the teachers going over their lessons and training them to teach God's Word well. The kids are responding and families who never brought their kids before are coming every week. We had 12 first-time visitors in my first three months. I followed up with those who left contact information and received some very good "outside perspective" information. "It seems like a wonderful church but..." One of the common concerns I received from multiple visitors was our age--both of the people and our facilities. While we can't make people younger (although we've had a number of younger families begin to attend or return to attending), we can do something about our facilities. We're having discussions about updating a number of things. The challenge is finances. But it's been wonderful to see guys get excited at the thought of investing in the facilities God has given us and we're looking for ways to make things happen."

Peace, South Gilbert, AZ - Located in the Valley of the Sun's fastest growing sector, Peace Lutheran has just moved its worship site to a larger nearby school facility. With attendance averaging 99 souls, Peace had outgrown the comfortability limits of its initial school location. The new facility also allows its use for special mid-week services, access to its kitchen, and provides storage room inside the building for the congregation's Church in a Box accessories. Pastor Greg Hein was assigned from his seminary class in 2013 to start outreach in the South Gilbert area. With several nucleus families from supportive neighboring congregations, Peace has been blessed under Pastor Hein with rapid growth. Membership stands at 101 communicants and 155 baptized souls. The congregation has recently rented a store front location for office and meeting room space, and has started a permanent site land search in South Gilbert.

Pan de Vida/Bread of Life, Santa Ana, CA - Pan de Vida began in Pomona with Pastors Chris Schroeder and Brian Doebler in 2001. After a few years there, the decision was made to relocate to Santa Ana, with a greater concentration of Latinos. A building was purchased and extensively remodeled in 2005, and has served as a good location for worship, outreach, and the Big Back Yard preschool. Pastor Mike Foley served Pan de Vida from 2006 to September, 2017, when he accepted a call to Santa Maria. We thank him for his many years of service at Pan de Vida. Pastor Schroeder had been serving part-time after the mission's funding was reduced in 2010. Schroeder has now stepped back into full time ministry. In September, average attendance was up to 82. They celebrated the confirmation of five adults, and baptized a ten-year-old boy. Pan de Vida receives subsidy from the BHM, but the amount of subsidy has been reduced each year, as the congregation grows and as members grow in their stewardship.

Faith Lutheran Church (Hmong mission), Fresno, CA – Faith Lutheran Hmong mission (served by Pastor Xing Yang) began as an offshoot of St. Peter's Lutheran Church's Hmong ministry in 2015 (Clovis, CA). St. Peter's Hmong ministry began over fifteen years ago when Pastors David Wa Chung Thao and Mike Engel began to work together to reach the rapidly growing Hmong immigrant community. This work eventually became two Hmong congregations, one of which, under Pastor Daniel Thao, continued to worship at St. Peter's, and the other of which sought to become better established in Fresno, nearer to the majority of the Hmong people. The Clovis group, Christ's Gospel Lutheran Hmong Mission, was defunded and discontinued services this year. Pastor Thao moved to Kansas City, where he and his family are active in their outreach efforts. Faith Lutheran, on the other hand, currently has average attendance of 82, with 7 enrolled in Bible Information Class. Pastor Xing, his wife Xee, and their children are energetic and active in sharing the gospel and inviting people to come to church and Bible study. As his health permits, Pastor Yang continues to aggressively share Christ with Hmong families from home to home, at the park, area stores, hospitals, funerals, weddings, graduations, family reunions and other gatherings, scattering the seeds of the gospel far and wide.

Santo Tomas, Phoenix, AZ – Iglesia Luterana Santo Tomas, six miles directly west of downtown Phoenix, continues its vital cross-cultural ministry originally begun by the Anglo St. Thomas congregation in Maryvale. With its first services having been held in November 1997, the congregation will celebrate its 20th anniversary this November 25th. Pastor Tim Otto, the congregation's first pastor (until 2010), will be the guest speaker. Current pastors are Tom Zimdars, installed in August 2011, and Frank Cossio, who prior to being called as Santo Tomas' second full-time pastor, vicared at Santo Tomas, beginning in 2009. Today the congregation counts 169 communicants and 360 baptized members, and thanks to a CEF loan the congregation has purchased the former St. Thomas campus. Current outreach is being enhanced by a full-time lay evangelist, while many baptisms and quinceaneras regularly allow the pastors to reach extended family groups with the Gospel.

The Way, Rancho San Diego, CA –The Way (served by Pastor Aaron Boehm) is a second site for Shepherd of the Hills, La Mesa, meeting at a library that is about fifteen minutes away. Recently their attendance has reached into the 40s for some Sundays. Quite a few members of SOTH will worship at either site, but there is a growing sense among those attending The Way that “this is my church.” Since they meet at a library, they have an opportunity to do many service activities that benefit the library, and, through them, the community. They are planning to invite Praise and Proclaim Ministries to work with them to train their members for evangelism and plan an outreach program in 2018. As an unsubsidized mission, The Way is not receiving funding from WELS Home Missions, but may seek grants or funding in the future.

African Cross-Cultural Ministry, Las Vegas, NV – This unique cross-cultural ministry serves largely refugees/immigrants from 10 or more different African nations. This ministry was initiated 4 ½ years ago. Pastor-in-training Isaac David and Evangelist Bryan Harvey have been receiving ministry instruction from a variety of WELS pastors and professors. Pastors Matt Vogt and Myrl Wagenknecht have been giving practical theology guidance and leadership training. Since the inception of the “Joseph Project” (a ministry which provides a welcome gift of practical household items to each new immigrant family – serving as a bridge to the church and the gospel; funded by WELS Christian Aid and Relief) and “First Friends” (a ministry in which area WELS lay members are partnered with new immigrants to assist them with assimilating into life in America; also a wonderful bridge to the gospel; coordinated by Kingdom Workers), the Lord has blessed the church with more contacts and added some new members to the congregation. The opportunity for the ministry to reach the African refugees and immigrants with the Gospel of Christ Jesus is awesome, because every month new families arrive in Las Vegas. WELS Kingdom Workers is working on a proposal to send a lay person/couple to help recruit for and coordinate the “First Friends” mission project. Transportation is a huge issue for the ministry. Because most of the members do not drive (the church has only one van that is working), the same van is used to collect donations from sister WELS churches and to bring members to church. As a result any time the van has an issue, members are not able to come to church.

Related to this ministry (as Pastor Isaac David is the lead), a new WELS world mission field in Liberia is well along its way. Three Bible training trips have been taken by Pastors John and Matt Vogt, in which over 115 pastors and lay leaders have received instruction in the Word. The newly formed Confessional Lutheran Church of Liberia currently consists of 9 churches and 22 total ministry locations with membership over 2000 souls. The WELS One Africa Team is assuming the responsibility to formalize the training of the pastors.

Crown of Life Lutheran Church, Corona, Riverside, Yucaipa, CA - 2017 has been a difficult year for Crown of Life (a three site multi-site ministry currently being served by Pastors Stephen Koelpin and Glenn Wenzel). Since an investigation and a lawsuit are still an unfortunate part of their story, it does not seem wise to report on details in writing at this time. The circuit pastor and the district president have been involved since the beginning of the difficulties in January. The leadership board has grown in their leadership abilities and the congregation that remains is cohesive and dedicated, with an upbeat spirit. Although over half of the members of the Corona campus have left, the King’s Kids Learning Center continues to operate at or near capacity each day. The number of members who worship at the Yucaipa and Riverside locations have grown. Some combination of the District Mission Board and WELS Board for Home Missions, Arizona-California District, and/or several parachurch foundations will be assisting COL financially until things settle down. Pastor Glenn Wenzel has officially retired as of October 31. We thank him for his many years of pastoral ministry. He will continue to serve on a part time basis as needed. Pastor Steve Koelpin has been called to step into the role of lead pastor. A call for an associate pastor has been issued to Pastor Daniel Lange of Covington, WA. The leadership and pastoral staff are committed to making the multisite ministry model work and have aggressive ministry plans in place. The Riverside campus will be hosting a Grand Opening on November 5th, following a remarkable remodel of the church facilities and grounds.

Shepherd of the Hills, Las Vegas – Our WELS mission in the northwest part of Las Vegas was started in 2008 and will be celebrating its 10th anniversary next May. Pastor Aaron Strong served the mission for the first seven years. Believers from Water of Life Lutheran made up the original nucleus and regular worship began in May of 2008. An office building site was chosen and nicely fitted out as a church. In early 2016, land was purchased and discussions of building began. This was the time when Pastor Tom Unke accepted the call to serve at Shepherd of the Hills' second pastor. He began his ministry in Las Vegas in June of 2016.

This is an exciting time for our young mission church. They are currently in the middle of building their first permanent worship and education building. God willing, their new church will be completed by next May. They are planning to begin a preschool in the fall of 2018. The best feature of their new site will be its visibility, as it sits alongside CC-215, the freeway beltline of north and west Las Vegas.

Even more exciting than building, their ministry to the people of this area is moving forward with God's blessing. They have been averaging nearly 80 people in worship per week, and a total of 55-60 people in Bible Study and Sunday School weekly. They recently finished a Bible Information Class that had 28 people attend, 8 of which were not members. A new class will start in November with more prospects ready to pursue membership. It is their belief and prayer that they will see a large number of new prospects when their new church is complete.

Grace Lutheran Church, Vail, AZ Vacancy Pastor Ron Koehler

Grace Lutheran Church in Tucson became a multi-site congregation when it started Grace-Vail as a mission site as it celebrated its 100th Anniversary in 2011. Grace-Vail began with about ten Grace members committed to worshipping there as the prep work for the mission site started, but enthusiasm for the ministry there grew and more joined in leading up to the beginning of weekly worship in April of 2012. Utilizing *Church In A Box*, everything needed for worship, Bible Class, Sunday School, and fellowship is set up in a grade school multi-purpose room each week. In the years since its beginning, weekly worship attendance average has grown to over 50, a move was made to a brand new school in an area where residential construction is taking place, and office space has been leased for a ministry center. The pastor's office is located at the Ministry Center and midweek Bible Study is held there. Business growth in the Vail area had been delayed, but is currently exploding just one mile from Esmond Station School where Sunday worship is held.

Grace Lutheran Church, Sahuarita, AZ Pastor Ryan Heiman

Grace-Sahuarita hasn't always been part of Grace Lutheran Church of Southern Arizona. Peace Lutheran (Tucson) was the original name of the congregation which included efforts to establish Hispanic mission work in south Tucson. 15 years ago it relocated about 17 miles to the south in Sahuarita. It purchased a small ranch house which was converted into a worship facility, fellowship hall and Sunday School classrooms. The congregation experienced a pastoral vacancy four years ago when their pastor resigned to pursue another occupation. After a year of vacancy, Peace reached out to Grace for a potential partnership. In 2014 Peace formally became a site of Grace's multi-site congregation. Grace-Sahuarita was established as a mission site of the congregation. The pastoral vacancy remained for 2 more years but during that time it achieved unsubsidized mission status with the AZ-CA District Mission Board. Finally, Pastor Ryan Heiman arrived in September of 2016. Since then God has blessed the congregation with steady growth in all areas of ministry. Over 60 members of Grace make Grace-Sahuarita their regular place of worship. Worship attendance averages just over 50 May-October and almost 100 November-April. A new ministry highlight was its first summer Youth Fitness Camp which was at capacity with 25 youth, mostly non-members. The ministry has outgrown the current facilities, forcing Grace to address the need sooner than anticipated. Grace-Sahuarita's growth in numbers, future ministry plans, and current buildings have driven a search for land and facilities. Grace has entered into an agreement with Kingdom Workers to receive consulting expertise as it begins the process of acquiring new land and building new facilities in Sahuarita. The congregation has targeted a highly visible, prime location for its new site on Sahuarita Road next to Sahuarita Town Hall. Grace is working with CEF for financing the purchase of 4.5 acres and then the construction of new facilities. The proposed building plan calls for the construction of a sanctuary and a child learning center/fellowship building.

Crosswalk Lutheran Ministries, Phoenix, AZ**Pastor Jeff Gunn, Pastor Dan Solofra**

CrossWalk Lutheran Ministries started in 2004 in South Phoenix and Laveen. It is a unique mission start in that it never received any synod subsidy for its operations. It has been fully funded by local offerings from its inception. Since 2004 Pastor Jeff Gunn has served at CrossWalk. In the last 13 years CrossWalk has grown to a staff of 5 called workers and 3 part-time staff people. Jonathan Favorite serves as the Worship Director. Staff Minister Phil Bischoff serves as the Director of Outreach and Youth Ministry, Pastor Dan Solofra is the Discipleship Pastor, and Mrs. Andrea Indahl runs their children's ministry, CrossWalk Kids. Although CrossWalk has over 500 in attendance every week in worship, they have no buildings or office space. They worship at Cesar Chavez High School in Laveen and all of their weekly meetings are held in homes or in public meeting areas and coffee shops. It is sometimes a challenge to find suitable places to meet, but they are thankful for the opportunity to be present in the community in which they reach out with the gospel. In the past month CrossWalk, with the help of the CEF, has purchased a 6-acre parcel of land in Laveen. In the next few years they look forward to the possibilities of building a new church building, establishing a second site in the midtown area of Phoenix, and partnering with a new mission start in Mozambique (Africa).

Redeemer Lutheran Church, Marana, AZ Pastor Adam Mueller

For the last two years, Redeemer partnered with another local congregation and the AZ-CA District Mission Board/WELS Board for Home Missions to cover the cost of a second pastor. This gave the congregation the needed manpower to seize upon the opportunity to reach out to the incredible number of guests streaming into their worship services on a weekly basis. Highlights of the last 4.5 years include: decreasing congregational debt by half, increasing Sunday worship attendance and offerings by 40%, tripling CMO and contributions to Arizona Lutheran Academy, confirming 40 adults, and working on constitution, bylaws and ministry plans. In that time, attendance at Redeemer's school has doubled and Early Childhood Education is up 75%.

Our Shepherd, Cornville, AZ - Steven Wilkens is the pastor serving Our Shepherd along with David Lieder serving as staff minister. The mission began a little over two years ago. Currently the church consists of 82 communicants and 93 souls. Early this year the congregation moved from the rental of a class room at an elementary school to its current location on Page Springs Road. The congregation had purchased about 4 acres of land and remodeled the existing buildings into a worship center, fellowship hall, kitchen and two class rooms/office space. A covered patio was built on the north side of the building this summer to handle the after service fellowship time. A similar structure will now be built on the south side for the winter gatherings. Also a large area of the property along the road side was recently landscaped and the church sign has been erected with more to soon come.

In addition to regular inviting, an outdoor Easter service was the highlight of their outreach this spring. They mailed 5,000 flyers to their neighborhoods which resulted in over 50 visitors. That along with the open house has led to many continued guests each and every week. The first annual pig roast will be held on Sunday, November 5th. Currently they have three different Bible Information classes going with 18 in attendance. 16 of those are unchurched and come from the Cornville area.

Mission Promotions – Presentations

To ask for information you could use for mission presentations on either Home or World missions, email: missionspromotions@wels.net For schools which are focusing on a specific mission field, this can be a good source for resources to help explain the field to children.

To arrange for a speaker for a Mission Festival, church service, Bible study, LWMS rally or other event as well as learn more about WELS missions, go to: www.wels.net/missions

Finally, I and other members of the DMB would like to offer to preach and/or give mission presentations at your congregation or other church sponsored organizations. We are very excited about the gospel outreach opportunities within our district and we hope to share that excitement with the Lord's people who are supporting that work with their prayers and with their offerings. Let's keep on keeping on in Jesus!

Privileged to serve,

Pastor Matt Vogt, chairman, member of the BHM Executive Committee

Mr. Noel Ledermann, BHM representative and financial secretary

Pastor Paul Mueller, recording secretary

Pastor Dan Wagenknecht Mr. Roger Prigge

Pastor Ronald Koehler Pastor Steven Hillmer

Pastor Peter Kruschel, Western Region Mission Counselor