



Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." (Mark 1:38)

Better than any of us, of course, Jesus recognized that the time was short for him to do the Lord's work here on earth. Without downplaying or neglecting the need for ongoing instruction in the Word and strengthening of the faith of the faithful, Jesus was passionate about reaching the lost with the saving message of God's grace. Having had the zeal for the salvation of souls worked within us, we as a church body also are ever driven to go to new places to reach new souls for Christ. To God be the glory!

In his grace the Lord has enabled nine new mission efforts to have been initiated within our district over the past four years (five of them since last district convention). Currently our district has eighteen separate mission efforts working with the mission board.

The mission board would like to thank Pastor Lynn Wiedmann, who is retiring this summer, for his years of faithful service. His service to the Kingdom in this capacity has been blessed and has been a blessing to numerous mission efforts throughout the district. His seasoned mission experience, wisdom and thoughtful zeal for the proclamation of the gospel and expansion of the Lord's Kingdom have served our mission board and the missions and missionaries of our district well. He will be dearly missed! On behalf of the district, we express our gratitude for his leadership and his efforts for the cause of gospel outreach and mission expansion. We pray that the Lord of the Church continue to richly bless him and his service to the Lord in his retirement.

Our mission board also is appreciative of its partnership with the Pacific-Northwest DMB. Over the past four plus years we have held joint meetings twice each year. These meetings have enabled us to sharpen our skills and fine tune our requests to the Board for Home Missions. Starting this past winter and moving forward, our joint meetings will be held at one of our districts' mission sites (one each year in each of our districts). A part of each meeting will be at least a half day of doing canvassing work in the community on behalf of the mission.

New Mission Openings in 2014-2016

In response to the synod's appeal for congregations to review their CMO commitments, additional funds were generously committed to the operating budget of WELS in the summer of 2014. As a result, the Board for Home Missions was able to grant two more mission grant subsidy requests. One of those granted was to help support an outreach pastor for Redeemer, Tucson, AZ for three years. (The rest of the funding came from local Tucson sources.) Redeemer has since called Pastor Matthew Langbartels.

At its spring 2015 meeting, the Joint Mission Council granted a generous subsidy support package to the African Refugee/Immigrant ministry in Las Vegas, NV. In June 2015 the Board for Home Missions authorized the funding for a second site (located in Vistancia, AZ) and a missionary for Cross of Glory, Peoria, AZ. In its fall 2015 meeting, the Board for Home Missions granted Unsubsidized Mission Status to two district mission efforts: a new mission in Cornville, AZ (Our Shepherd Lutheran) and Grace, Sahuarita, AZ (a multi-site effort of Grace, Tucson). In its spring 2016 meeting, Unsubsidized Mission Status was granted to The Way Lutheran (Rancho San Diego, CA), a multi-site effort of Shepherd of the Hills, La Mesa, CA.

An exciting new world mission opportunity has developed in Liberia, spawned in connection with the African Refugee/Immigrant cross-cultural ministry in Las Vegas. Pastors Matt and John Vogt accompanied Pastor Isaac David for a three week mission exploratory/teaching trip. On this trip the Confessional Lutheran Church of Liberia (CLCL) was formed, currently consisting of 20 mission sites, 25 pastors/pastors-in-training, and over 1800 souls. Over 65 church leaders attended two weeks of Bible training.

Special Grants in 2014-16

In addition to the large mission grants reported above, a number of other special grants were approved since last convention (totaling nearly \$63,000): \$3,600 to Santo Tomas for audio/visual equipment to support the addition of English services; \$9,000 for Crown of Life, Yucaipa, CA to purchase sound equipment for their newly refurbished sanctuary; \$8,999 - Vans for Missions (Las Vegas African); \$2,500 – Tools for Outreach (Peace, Gilbert); \$500 – Children’s Ministry (Peace, Gilbert); \$1,665 – Tools for Outreach (River of Life, Goodyear); \$4,000 – Tools for Outreach (Las Vegas African); \$2,000 – Jesus and Me Children’s Ministry (Cross of Glory, Vistancia); \$3,500 – ESL Outreach (Water of Life, Las Vegas); \$3,000 – First Service (Crown of Life, Yucaipa); \$1,750 – Transport of Altar Furniture (Las Vegas African); \$3,000 – First Service (Our Shepherd, Cornville, AZ); \$4,964 - purchase audio visual equipment for building renovation (Crown of Life, Riverside); \$12,000 – mission exploratory/teaching trip to Liberia (Las Vegas African); \$2,500 - Children’s Ministry Assistance for Mornings with Mommy (Crown of Life, Yucaipa).

The Las Vegas African Refugee/Immigrant ministry also has received a \$16,000 Humanitarian Aid grant the past two years from WELS Christian Aid and Relief, enabling them to welcome each new immigrant with a practical welcome gift which serves as a bridge for the gospel.

In the Works – New Mission Start Opportunities

Looking to the future, the mission board is working with a number of congregations on sites for possible future mission expansion. Annually the mission board meets for two days of mission expansion planning. Our goal is to have our top two to three priority sites ready for application to the Board for Home Missions in the spring of each year.

Those sites include, but are not limited to: New River/Cave Creek/Anthem (North Phoenix, AZ); Palm Springs, CA; East (Eldorado Hills) and South (Elk Grove) Sacramento, CA; Queen Creek and San Tan Valley, AZ; Oxnard / Camarillo, CA; CA Highway 99 corridor between Sacramento and Bakersfield (several options); Reno, NV (site #3); Wickenburg, AZ; Merced, CA; S/SW Las Vegas, NV (site #9); Buckeye, 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.

Please understand that this is not intended to be busy-work. We need to be proactive in determining where we (under God’s grace) can open missions and advance the Kingdom. Even work on fields that don’t ever work their way to the top of the list is time well spent as a part of this determination process.

“Saving Sacred Spaces” and Multi-Site Mission efforts

Over the past years a number of mission efforts within our district have been serving as a bit of a training grounds for a couple different pilot projects, which are now being endorsed and encouraged by the Board for Home Missions. “Saving Sacred Spaces” is the term used to describe the efforts of a mission-focused missionary and ministry to assume the facilities of an established and dying congregation and breathe new life and apply aggressive outreach minded ministry to that mission field. This is particularly valuable in areas of our district/synod where the cost of purchasing land and building facilities is cost-prohibitive. “Multi-site” is the term used to describe the efforts of an established congregation to reach out into a new mission field with a second site for ministry (often under the same name and same administration). The multi-site model comes in many shapes and sizes, but efforts are currently being made for these varied models to share ideas and resources with one another. If you are interested in learning more about either of these mission models, please contact us. Mission Counselor Peter Kruschel is happy to meet with leaders, members or pastors to talk about partnering opportunities and possibilities at any time.

Praise and Proclaim Ministries

Having participated in a Praise and Proclaim Ministries outreach campaign as a mission board (on behalf of our new mission effort in Vistancia, AZ), we are happy to 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. To learn more about Praise and Proclaim Ministries, go to: www.praiseandproclaim.com.

News from the WELS Board for Home Missions

Recently Approved Mission Starts

In April of 2016, the Board for Home Missions authorized eight new mission starts. Five of the eight new missions are multi-site missions (which means the mission is connected with an existing church). In addition to the eight mission starts, the Board for Home Missions approved three enhancements and one relocation. Enhancements are typically two to four year subsidy agreements to assist a congregation with expanding or cross-cultural ministry. The total funding for the twelve requests which received authorization (means funding starts July 1, 2016) is \$983,000. In being able to take the above steps, Home Missions says “thank you” to our church body for its mission offerings and synod members for the many individual gifts which make it possible for Home Missions to do what it does.

While not a part of the funding which supported the above twelve ministries, Home Missions also wants to say “thank you” to the Church Extension Fund (CEF) for its unrestricted net asset policy distribution. Established in February of 2015 to aid Home Missions, the distribution in FY 15 of \$832,000 and the projected \$800,000 distribution for FY 16 allowed Home Missions to authorize two missions in the spring of 2015. Without these distributions, in 2015 our church body would have opened two less missions. Home Mission truly appreciates this “over and above” support from our CEF partner.

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/buy the first worship facility. Not only does CEF give loans, through its grant programs mission churches receive additional financial support which allows them the opportunity to afford buying land and building a worship facility. Since 1993 when the grant program was begun, over \$26 million in grants have been given.

In the recent past, CEF also has given two special grants (\$1M in Feb. of 2011 and \$1.3M in Sept. of 2013). There are twelve churches which have received portions of those two grants to help those churches purchase land / put money toward building costs. Two of these missions (Shepherd of the Hills, Las Vegas, NV - \$200,000 and The Springs, Sparks, NV - \$250,000) are in our district. Home Missions continues to track how those mission ministries are doing with the special grant blessing.

Vicar in Mission Settings

For many years Home Missions has supported a program called Vicar in Missions (VIMs). Some of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary class assigned to be vicars are assigned into mission or mission-minded congregations. The past six years Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary has joined Home Missions in this venture. Before this partnership 8-12 students were assigned into a VIM setting. Based on available funding from Home Missions, WLS, and the participating congregations, up to twenty VIMs will be assigned this year (of the twenty-six second year students at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary who are eligible to be assigned as a vicar).

WELS National Multi-Site conference for WELS churches - November 14-16, 2016, in Tucson AZ

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. For these reasons, the national multi-site conference for WELS churches has been organized and 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 as a way to reach more people with the gospel.

Host: Grace Lutheran Church in Tucson, Vail, Sahuarita, and Benson, Arizona.

Activities: The conference will include nearly a dozen speakers from some of the most experienced WELS Multi-site churches and pastors. Their experience will be valuable for all participants – pastors, congregational leaders, and interested lay people – regardless of their level of multi-site church experience.

Ministry of Christian Giving

On October 15, 2015 the Conference of Presidents approved an “Individual Campaign” for Home and World Missions for July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017. An “Individual Campaign” means that while individuals will be approached to consider making a special gift to Missions, promotional materials and invitations to each WELS congregation won’t be a part of the campaign. While WELS churches won’t be directly invited to participate, congregations are welcome to do so if they so choose.

Missions (Home and World) have been working with the Ministry of Christian Giving Director, Pastor Kurt Lueneburg and his staff in preparation for the campaign. During the fall months of 2016, Planned Giving Counselors (PGC) will make visits to donors. Joining the PGCs on many of their visits will be Mission representatives; mission pastors in both home and world settings, administrative committee members as well as district mission board members and other Mission personnel as well. The gifts to Missions will be going to new initiatives in both Home and World mission efforts. The distributions of the gifts will be 40% to Home, 40% to World and 20% to the Joint Mission Council.

Subsidized Missions / Unsubsidized Missions

At the April 2016 Board for Home Mission (BHM) meeting, the BHM approved changing designations for mission congregations. Over the years there have been various designations. Starting on July 1, 2016, there will only be two designations: subsidized missions and unsubsidized missions. A subsidized mission receives financial support from the BHM. An unsubsidized mission is truly a mission but does not receive financial support from the BHM (both subsidized and unsubsidized missions are eligible for special project funds on a per request basis). In both the subsidized and unsubsidized missions, before receiving its specific designation, required documentation is submitted and the BHM determines whether or not to grant authorization of the mission request. Over the past 10 years there have been a number of churches which have been under the unsubsidized classification. In Home Missions we are thankful to work with all the mission congregations in order to reach more souls with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Home Mission Personnel

Continuing to serve as Mission Counselors are Pastor Mark Birkholz, Pastor Peter Kruschel and Pastor Ed Schuppe. Pastor Tim Flunker serves as the Hispanic Outreach Consultant. We thank these men for the many ways in which they serve Home Missions. We also thank Dr. Keith Eldred, Pastor Nate Strutz and Pastor Wayne Uhlhorn. For the past years they have served on the Board for Home Mission's Executive Committee (BHM EC). Their terms are done. Replacing them on the BHM EC are Pastor Mark Gabb, Mr. Mark Hartman and Pastor Matt Vogt. We thank them for their willingness to serve. Also on the BHM EC are Pastor Chuck Westra (also BHM Chairman) and Mr. Steve Wolf.

Joint Mission Council

The Joint Mission Council (JMC) is made up of the two mission administrators; Pastor Keith Free - Home, Pastor Larry Schlomer - World, the two mission chairmen; Pastor Howie Mohlke – World, Pastor Chuck Westra – Home, Mr. Sean Young, Director of Mission Operations (Chair) and a layman from the World Mission Board – Dr. Bob Anderson, and a layman from the Home Mission Board – Mr. Jude Peck. The JMC works on mission issues which impact both Home and World Missions.

Serving under the JMC are the Global Ministry Committee (GMC) and the Global Hmong Committee (GHC). The GMC assists WELS congregations in reaching out to immigrant people groups here in the United States and in their country of origin. The assistance can be connecting people together who have interest and ability to move the ministry forward, planning, encouraging, and recommending ministry plans to the JMC for funding. Serving on the GMC are Pastor Nathan Seiltz (Chair), Professor Tom Hunter, Pastor John Vogt, Mr. Bill Meier, Mr. Juan Garcia, Pastor Paul Prange and Mr. Sean Young.

Since July 1, 2015, the GHC has been looking at Hmong ministry both in the United States (US) and Asia to determine what are good ways to coordinate Hmong ministry as well as what are the best ways to utilize and allocate the funds designated for Hmong ministry. Two Hmong pastors; Bounkeo Lor and Pheng Moua and two Anglo pastors; Keith Free (chair) and Robb Raasch serve on the GHC. A US Hmong Convention takes place July 8-10 in St. Paul MN. In October the annual Asian Conference takes place at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

Through gifts and endowment earnings, the JMC uses these resources to help support US ministry which is also reaching back to the country of origin where its members are from. Two examples of this are:

1) Chapel of the Improvement Lutheran Church in Las Vegas NV – this ministry has Liberian spiritual leaders. In March and April of this year, Isaac David and Anglo mentor Matt Vogt were in Liberia for two weeks training spiritual leaders to share God's Word where they live. Funding has been approved for two fiscal years.

2) Jerusalem Lutheran Church and School in Morton Grove IL serves a number of Koreans through its school. Morton Grove itself is close to 30% Korean. The JMC is financially helping Jerusalem Lutheran so that a Korean MLC student might be assigned to this school. If the assignment takes place, in addition to classroom duties, the Korean teacher would look to start an after school Academy. The prayer is more Korean students will participate, and through more Korean contacts we may learn of more contacts in South Korea with whom we can share God's Word.

Summer Student Assistants

Similar to the vicar program, Home Missions and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) work together on the Summer Student Assistant (SSA) program. This program places first or second year WLS students into mission or mission-minded congregations over the summer for a 10 week period. The students lead in worship as well as preach. They participate in outreach events as well as do canvassing and witnessing. These students receive a mini-vicar training experience during the summer. For the coming summer (2016) Home Missions is supporting three SSAs in mission congregations. Four self-supporting congregations also are sponsoring a SSA.

Campus Ministry

The WELS Campus Ministry Committee (CMC) is an eight-member committee of laymen and pastors who serve under the Board for Home Missions. Pastor Charlie Vannieuwenhoven serves as the chairman. The CMC exists to assist congregations in ministering to college students and other young adults with the means of grace so that they may grow in the faith and be trained for service in Christ's kingdom. These congregations reach out to about 6,500 students. Please consider finding someone in your congregation to gather each college-age student's educational plans and share it with the CMC. To sign up and learn more about submitting information, visit wels.net/campus-ministry.

At its November 5 & 6, 2015 meeting, one of the action items of the CMC was to grant to Divine Word Lutheran in Plover WI \$50,000 from its special project funds to assist this congregation in the purchase of a building which is a mile from the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point. The building will serve two functions. Starting in the fall of 2016 it will serve as a campus center for the active campus ministry Divine Word has. The building will also serve as a second worship site as Divine Word has chosen to take the multi-site approach (see above).

As it does every two years the CMC is looking to encourage and enhance campus ministries by hosting a Campus Ministry Conference in Waukesha on May 15 & 16, 2017. More information will be coming on this Conference.

Kingdom Workers

This ministry supports both Home and World missions through the coordination and support of lay volunteers. Builders for Christ (BFC) uses members skilled in construction to build houses of worship, schools, or other ministry structures for existing and new congregations of believers. The Lutheran Health Alliance works with members to serve and care for families and people through community health ministry and long-term development support, developing leadership and outreach opportunities.

In January 2017, Kingdom Workers along with several other para-synodical organizations is hosting a Christian Leadership Experience conference in Orlando, FL (January 6th-8th). To learn more, go to: www.christlead.com.

The mission board was pleased to see well over a dozen of the district's congregations put in requests for Faith in Action teams for 2016. The deadline for 2017 requests is in early September.

Reports from the Mission Fields

River of Life, Goodyear, AZ – The Lord has blessed River of Life with truly “good years.” Pastor Lincoln Albrecht continues to lead and train his congregation in its outreach efforts. Blessings that can be counted include a membership of 59 souls (up from 47 in 2014), average attendance at 50+ (up from 40 in 2014), and a doubling of prospects to 250+. As ROL nears the end of its store front worship site lease, it is in negotiations to secure a larger, more visible facility (71 of its current 73 seats were filled on Easter Sunday). The West Phoenix Valley has resumed more aggressive single family home construction after a slowdown in 2014. And since Goodyear was recently named #7 in the top 50 places to live by *24/7 Wall Street*, Ezekiel Albrecht, born in May 2015, chose to live there also, with his parents and big sister.

Peace, South Gilbert, AZ – “Simple strategies, yet great goals” are working well for Peace as God richly blesses the congregation's mission “to gather, grow, and go” in the Southeast Phoenix metro area. Only two full years into holding services, the congregation now averages 90 in regular attendance and numbers 101 souls. Two Christmas Eve services were held this year to accommodate the 190 worshipers at their school gym location. To facilitate growth, a full-time ministry center is being considered as well as the hiring of a part-time secretary. Ample outreach opportunities in neighboring Queen Creek and San Tan Valley are being considered as this entire area continues to be the Valley's largest housing boom community. With a boom of their own, Pastor Hein and Julie in April welcomed Leo to their growing family!

Santo Tomas, Phoenix, AZ – Several congregational activities have been enhanced with the filling of new leadership positions. A congregation Evangelist/Director of Evangelism has been called to assist in outreach efforts, including traveling to various community locations and encouraging contacts to attend Bible classes and church services. A worship coordinator now organizes the members in assisting with ushering, communion preparations, and communion assistant duties. Other Gospel activity continues to flourish, with 14 baptisms in 2015, following a record 52 baptisms in 2014. Eleven youth were confirmed last spring and nine adults later in the year. The congregation's first Christmas Eve concert drew 120+ worshippers. Pastors Zimdars and Cossio continue to faithfully serve this flock of 330 souls about 15 minutes west of downtown Phoenix.

African Cross-Cultural Ministry, Las Vegas, NV – Pastor Isaac David continues his faithful and aggressive PSI training with the goal of completing his studies this fall. Monthly men's and women's Bible studies are being held. Great strides are being made in raising up and training lay leaders and providing recognized structure to the ministry. ESL classes run by Water of Life members are offered weekly. The "Joseph Project" (a "first friends" welcoming of new immigrants – many thanks to the support of a generous WELS Christian Aid and Relief grant) has been wildly successful. To date the number of adult confirmands as a direct result of the first year of the "Joseph Project" is over 20 souls. Small group Bible studies are being organized on the west side of town where most of the recent immigrants are being situated. This will make the planned transition to a new location on the west side more fluid. A trip to formalize mission efforts in Liberia and offer Biblical training to leaders was conducted this spring.

Korean Fellowship Lutheran Church, Las Vegas, NV – Korean Fellowship Lutheran, served by Pastor Taesang (John) Kim, has been blessed with a very active group of lay leaders (especially young leaders) and a series of aggressive largely education-oriented outreach ministries to the Korean community of Las Vegas. A Saturday cultural school is maxed out at around 90 students. Summer school was offered for 5 full days each week of the summer and after school tutoring is held throughout the school year. Two ESL classes are offered each week (taught by members of Water of Life). An active teen youth group and a separate college/young 20's group are led by Korean youth leaders. A youth service is led by Korean youth worship leaders, with the vicar at Water of Life leading the message and writing the after-service study (which divides into 3 different levels for study). A wide variety of remarkable musical talent is nurtured (from youth on up) and featured in the worship services weekly in the adult Korean service. An after worship fellowship meal is held for over 100 every Sunday. One young Korean man, Pat Ki, is receiving Pastoral Studies Institute training with the goal of becoming a WELS pastor.

Redeemer, Marana, AZ - After nearly 18 months of calling, God in his Grace has sent Redeemer a second full time pastor, Matthew Langebartels. His duties involve youth and family ministry, especially focusing on outreach to the unchurched families in the preschool and LES. After just four months, Redeemer has already seen the fruits of his labors. They have welcomed a class of 8 to 101/BIC with 6 prospects from the preschool and LES, and another post-Easter class of 24 with 13 prospects enrolled. Adam Mueller is now focusing his attention on leadership development and training, reclaiming the straying, worship and outreach. Outreach remains a sizable opportunity with more than 900 walk-in visitor families that have left information over the last couple years, including more than 200 since January. Pastor Wayne Mueller continues in a part time capacity visiting the sick and shut in, as well as limited teaching and preaching. Redeemer sincerely thanks the Synod for their partnership. The congregation is in an advantageous position to carry out exciting ministry for the foreseeable future.

Pan de Vida/Bread of Life, Santa Ana, CA - Served by Pastors Mike Foley and Chris Schroeder, the congregation has been using a revised reporting form that allows them to report the many interesting categories of visitors and contacts--souls served in some way with the Gospel by Pan de Vida/Bread of Life. Anglo outreach uses a cooperative preschool (Big Back Yard) that involves 42 families in weekly Bible lessons along with their children. Hispanic outreach uses ESL as a way of establishing and maintaining connections, connections that bear fruit, in one case five years later. The second largest ethnic group in Santa Ana is the Vietnamese population. Work continues faithfully as Pan de Vida/Bread of Life assumes responsibility for more and more ministry support. Please remember these saints with your prayers.

Grace-Vail, Vail, AZ - Grace-Vail has continued to show steady progress over the last two years despite one unanticipated setback. Sunday worship has taken place in a school multi-purpose room since the mission site began holding services in 2012 and since last convention, there was hope of finally securing a permanent ministry center. This would provide an office for Pastor Rieke and a location for weekday Bible Classes and Fellowship activities. Unfortunately, property agreements fell through. Instead, the ministry pressed forward by relocating the worship site to Esmond Station, a brand new school on the major thoroughfare between Rita Ranch and Vail. Grace continues to have new guests visit and join the church, and Sunday worship attendance now averages over 50. In the last year, more businesses have been established in the area and there is more residential development immediately around Esmond Station. With God's continuous grace, there is a bright future for Grace-Vail.

Hmong missions, Clovis and Fresno, CA – Pastors Chu Hua Thao (St. Peter's Hmong) and Tong Xing Yang (Faith) serve two separate Hmong congregations. Our Clovis/Fresno Hmong partners welcomed Pastor Mark Schewe to the ministry at St. Peter's Anglo in Clovis. We thank God for the blessings he brings to our ministry there. Both Hmong congregations are working through their application as members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The leadership in Fresno has chosen a new name: Faith Ev. Lutheran Church. Faith is serving small groups of Hmong and Lao people in three neighboring towns. They have an extensive FRAN (friends, relatives, associates, neighbors) network and very faithfully follow up with them all. St. Peter's Hmong uses its weekly radio broadcast as a way of connecting to the Hmong people in the Fresno area, promoting all three ministries. On the horizon is the vision of television advertising and, later, a television program. Pastor Thao is conducting Pastoral Studies Institute classes in his own congregation as an advanced Bible Class curriculum and lay leadership training series. He will be involved in PSI work with a lay leader from Sacramento as well. Making donations to support the radio/television ministry frees synodical dollars for the growing opportunities to minister to Hmong people all over Southeast Asia.

Crown of Life, Corona/Beaumont/Riverside, CA - Pastors Steve Koelpin and Rick Johnson share responsibilities for four Sunday morning services at three separate locations. God has continued to bless this three-site ministry. They are in the process of combining with St. Paul of Riverside to form a new site there to save a sacred space. They are currently putting in a new parking lot, refurbishing rooms, adding air conditioning and paying off debt to make this ministry first rate. After combining Prince of Peace in Yucaipa with a new site there, attendance has more than doubled from what the previous two had. We ask God to do the same in Riverside. Crown of Life continues to develop and implement many creative outreach efforts into the community. They are also looking seriously at a fourth site in Palm Springs, Lake Elsinore or another location nearby.

Shepherd of the Hills, Las Vegas – Shepherd of the Hills is currently in a vacancy, as Pastor Aaron Strong accepted a call to serve at Grace Lutheran, Milwaukee, WI in August, 2015. While it was hard to say goodbye to their first pastor, the members of Shepherd of the Hills have seen this as an opportunity for the congregation to grow up and step up in ownership and support of the ministry. The congregation has been served through the vacancy by Pastors Matt Vogt, John Vogt and Myrl Wagenknecht. Pastor Tom Unke (currently in Howards Grove, WI) has accepted the call and will be installed on June 19th. This January the congregation purchased a 3.13 acre parcel of land with frontage on the I-215 beltway right at the Durango off ramp. The Building Committee is in the design phase of their building project, working with a design/build general contractor. The majority of ministry as outlined in the congregation's ministry plans continues under the vacancy, including lay led Toddler Time, Youth Group, Men's and Women's Bible studies, Vacation Bible School, and a number of fellowship and outreach opportunities.

Cross of Glory – Vistancia, Arizona - Seeing God's blessings in Peoria, Cross of Glory (served by Pastor John Ehlers) is cultivating a second site in Vistancia. They have had the Mission Board undertake a canvassing method supplied by Praise & Proclaim Ministries. Many prospects were discovered then, and when the Lord leads a pastor to accept the call, this effort should be a tremendous blessing for Kingdom work.

The Springs Lutheran Church, Sparks, NV – The Springs Lutheran Church has been able to move forward towards construction and hopes to complete their 6,600 sq ft project before the end of 2016. Over the past two years the Holy Spirit has brought about strong growth in many areas including membership, worship attendance, offerings and special gifts. A donation of \$250,000 in January allowed the congregation to unanimously adopt a \$2.6 million total project budget. However, with grants and funding already in place, the mortgage will be very manageable. On Sunday April 3 of this year, they celebrated both their seventh Anniversary and Groundbreaking with nearly 200 people attending this joyous celebration. The very next day, workers were moving dirt and completed most of the dirt work by the end of April.

Unsubsidized missions

CrossWalk, Phoenix, AZ - CrossWalk continues to follow their vision of being a church for the unchurched in Laveen and South Phoenix. The congregation has used personal invitations, canvassing, post cards, billboards, and social media to reach out to their community. They have been blessed to have over 1000 first time unchurched guests since last district convention. They recognize the blessing of a discipleship process that focuses on getting these new guests involved in their Bible Information Class. CrossWalk has an accepted offer on land in their target area and are currently working through the legal system with the seller to have the zoning changed before closing on the property. Once that is complete, they plan to move forward with the purchase and a building when it makes financial sense.

Grace-Sahuarita, Sahuarita, AZ - Only a couple months after the 2014 AZ-CA District Convention, Peace Lutheran Church in Sahuarita, AZ and Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Benson, AZ merged with Grace in Tucson and Vail, forming a four-site congregation—Grace Lutheran Church of Southern Arizona. Grace-Sahuarita became an unsubsidized mission of our district in September of 2015. Despite the vacancy that continues since that merger, there have been many blessings: increases in worship and Bible study attendance, more service opportunities and more volunteers to fill them, some facility improvements, and vision for future ministry. Grace looks forward to having a pastor there who will build on the outreach efforts that have begun since the joining of the congregations.

The Way - Rancho San Diego, California - This relatively new ministry (starting work within the last 12 months) was started through the efforts of Pastor Aaron Boehm and his congregation in La Mesa. Their average weekly attendance is 28, with 42 on Easter Sunday. Pastor Boehm reported some encouraging news as he described the faithful worship, eager Bible study and willing service of the three adult confirmands from last year. We thank God for the commitment to gospel spreading by the saints in La Mesa and Rancho San Diego. They will be working on more detailed mission and ministry plans in preparation for requesting a vicar in missions partner in the near future.

Our Shepherd – Cornville, Arizona - Pastor Steve Wilkins was installed in January. His church is remodeling a building for a new worship center while canvassing plans are being developed. This unsubsidized mission has already seen growth and has a strong leadership team.

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 and BHM Executive Committee member
Mr. Noel Ledermann, BHM representative and financial secretary
Pastor Lynn Wiedmann, recording secretary
Pastor Paul Mueller
Mr. Roger Prigge
Pastor Ronald Koehler
Pastor Peter Kruschel, Western Region Mission Counselor