



“Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.” (Acts 5:42)

What joy it is to be part of the New Testament church! What privilege it is to serve the Lord of the New Testament church! What an encouragement it is to see all that the Lord is doing through his people as the Good News of Jesus Christ is proclaimed! This has been and continues to be the story of the New Testament church and is ours as well here in the AZ-CA District of the WELS. As you read this report, give thanks to God for all that he has done, and continue to pray for that “Every-day zeal” in all our congregations and schools so that the Gospel of Jesus may remain front and center of all we do.

On behalf of the district, the Mission Board would like to thank Pastor Matthew Vogt who has faithfully served on our District Mission Board since 2006, serving as our Chairman since 2012. During these years we have been blessed to have the start of many new missions. He has pushed both the Mission Board and all our congregations to keep their eyes open to new mission possibilities. We pray that God would bless him richly as he now serves us as our Western Regional Mission Counselor, taking over for Pastor Peter Kruschel. Pastor Vogt’s territory includes the Arizona-California District; the Pacific Northwest District; Colorado-Utah Mission District; as well as the western half of WELS Canada.

We would also like to thank Pastor Peter Kruschel who announced his retirement from full-time ministry as of February 28, 2018. The past 9 + years he has served as Mission Counselor primarily serving the AZ-CA, PNW and western halves of Dakota Montana and Canada. His wealth of experience and his organizations skills have been a blessing for the Home Mission team. On February 19 at 6:30 p.m. at Beautiful Savior Lutheran church in Las Vegas, there was a service of thanks to the Lord for the 41+ years in ministry Pastor Kruschel served in ministry. His son, Pastor Jonathan Kruschel preached the sermon.

We would like to thank Pastor Paul Mueller who has served on our AZ-CA Mission Board since 2001. His insights and leadership have been a valuable asset to us all over these years.

This past fall, the AZ-CA Mission Board asked me to serve on the board as the eventual replacement for Paul Mueller who would serve until June 2018. When Pastor Vogt accepted the position as Mission Counselor, I was asked to serve as the Mission Board Chairman and Pastor Noah Bater was asked to serve as the replacement for Matt Vogt.

Finally, sharing a bit of history, there used to be two Mission Boards in our district; one covered the CA-NV-HI missions, and another covered the AZ-NM-TX missions. In 2010, the two Boards combined into one. Due to the increased mission activity which this report will highlight, the AZ-CA Mission Board is asking our District in Convention for authority to increase the number of members serving on the board by one so that we can have greater and more equal representation throughout our district. This would then bring the DMB up to 5 pastors and 2 laymen.

Highlights from the WELS Board for Home Missions – Pastor Keith Free, WELS BHM Administrator

Church Extension Fund: Home Missions continues to be blessed through its partnership with CEF. In August of 2017 the first endowment payout was made (\$840K). Planning on that payout, back in the spring of 2017, Home Missions authorized four missions and three enhancements.

CEF is now operating with a base interest rate at the cost of CEF ministry + 2.5% (250 basis points). When a loan is renewed every 5 years, the rate will be at CEF's cost of ministry + 2.5%. It is the desire of the CEF Board of Directors that the interest rate will not escalate over the twenty-five-year to thirty-year life of the loan, but remain at a more stable interest rate. In going to this formula for an interest rate, this should also encourage missions which have a worship facility and have received a great blessing in land and facility grants to remain with CEF throughout the life of the loan. In past years, when CEF was not as flush with cash, after a mission would have a loan for 10 years or so, CEF would encourage missions to refinance with a local bank so CEF would have additional funds. Now, CEF desires that congregations remain with them through the life of the loan. As it relates to a new mission, their base rate will be - .25%.

On January 9 the BHM EC and five CEF Board members along with CEF and BHM staff met for three hours. Assorted items were discussed. Each group better understands the challenges each faces in ministry. There was also discussion regarding the September 12, 2017 decision of the CEF Board to remove the voting rights of the Director of Mission Operations from the CEF Loan Committee. The main reason for this is the CEF Board believes it is a conflict of interest to have Home Mission staff on the CEF Loan Committee. During discussion it was understood the reason the BHM Administrator was not removed from the CEF Loan Committee is because the CEF by-laws require to have him on the CEF Loan Committee as a voting member.

Mission Counselor: While not formally titled a Mission Counselor, Pastor Tim Flunker serves the BHM as the Hispanic Outreach Consultant, serving in many ways as do Mission Counselors. On the meeting site Tim has a power point presentation which reviews Hispanic ministry in North America as well as sharing some thoughts on mission direction for Hispanic ministry in the WELS. In going through the process to call the next pastor to serve as Mission Counselor, the job descriptions for Mission Counselors and the Hispanic Outreach Consultant have been updated. Those job descriptions are posted on the meeting site.

WELS Missions Promotion Team: has produced a 24-page magazine titled: *Faces of Faith*. Check it out.

New Starts from Declining Churches: From time to time Home Missions will approve subsidy for a church which has declined. The congregation cannot afford a full-time pastor. Yet, the congregation is willing to do outreach ministry and desires a shepherd to lead them. During the DMB training DMB members heard a presentation on what several the keys are when determining if a declining church is a church the DMB will bring to Home Missions for consideration of financial support (subsidy).

Mission Program Support Agreement – MPSA: When a mission is authorized, it receives a budget for one to two years. After that, working through its DMB, the mission requests financial support, called the MPSA. It is well understood that as a mission is able to lower its requested MPSA to the point it can cover all its ministry costs, that allows the BHM to have more funds from which to start the next missions.

Spring Board for Home Mission Meeting: On April 12 and 13, the BHM Executive Committee met to act on requests for new starts, new ministries, MPSA renewals and Vicar in Mission requests, along with other items. There were over 20 new ministry requests! See below for the ones granted.

Antioch II Application Schedule: Looking ahead to the 2019 grant application process, the directors decided to adjust the Antioch II application schedule so that it starts in mid-August and ends earlier (with the directors approving the grants in early November). That would allow the Antioch II directors who also serve on Antioch I to consider any unfunded Antioch II requests as they review the Antioch I applications – provided that seems good to them. Antioch II provides grants for synod supported ministry. Antioch I provide grants for synod self-support ministry.

Mission Advancement: The Missions team continues to work with the Ministry of Christian Giving (MCG) on ways in which Missions (Home and World) can not only thank donors, but personally visit donors to share opportunities to support WELS Home and World mission ministry. Recently Keith and Sean went through some MCG training. The goal is, after some additional training, Keith and Sean to be able to make personal donor visits.

Joint Mission Council: On the meeting site (for DMBs) is a two-page document which overviews the specific direction of Joint Mission Council (JMC) ministry. The purpose of the document is to help show Home Mission personnel what directions JMC is undertaking. The primary ministry JMC continues to support is assisting people group ministry taking place in the US to reach back to their country of origin. Also starting to ramp up is bringing together WELS members from the same people group but living in various parts of the US to ask them for their thoughts as to how to reach back to their country of origin. Finally, an English version of Academia Cristo (reaching close to 1M in Latin America through face book) is continuing to ramp up in the US – Academia English. More will be coming on this newer venture.

Summer Student Assistants: The Summer Student Assistant (SSA) program is a 10-week summer program for 1st and 2nd year seminary students. The students serve at a congregation in numerous ways. Some say it is a mini vicar year. Over the years both mission churches and self-support churches have benefitted from the SSA program. The past two years though, only two mission churches have requested a SSA. The question Professor Tiefel (who administers the program at WLS) and BHM Administration has is what is the reason for only two mission churches applying the past two years? We appreciate your responses.

Mission Counselor for Campus Ministry: For many years the Camus Ministry Committee (CMC) has looked at different ways to promote and start new campus ministries as well as strengthen and encourage current campus ministries. To that end at the November CMC meeting there was discussion of having a Mission Counselor for Campus Ministry. While there is the financial reality which comes with such a step, it is a step which is being considered. Another action item the CMC took is to have an annual meeting with campus ministry pastors. That will take place May 20 and 21 at the Center for Mission and Ministry.

Mission Journeys: On the meeting site is a document which explains what Mission Journeys is. Both Home and World missions are excited to have a program in place where mission teams can connect with mission ministries around the world. Not only will this benefit the mission, but we pray it also blesses the congregation / institution which sends the missions team. As part of the program, before the mission team goes on its trip, working with the congregation, there will be an outreach program(s) planned for when the mission team ends returns home. In doing this, the prayer is that the mission team will not only do mission work to wherever it travels, but will do mission work at their home congregation and be a blessing there as well.

With this program still in its beginning stages, it will be important for the DMBs to let the mission churches you serve know of this new program. Share the document on the meeting site. Encourage missions to think creatively about using a team. Can hosting a mission team become an annual or bi-annual event? Might there be the canvass team and then the follow-up team? There are a lot of positives to Mission Journeys. Thanks, DMBs for helping this program get off the ground (And brothers who are members in larger churches, might you encourage a group of 6-10 to be a part of a mission team to serve one of the missions in your district?).

Joint Mission Council: As the JMC works at gospel ministry, the past three and one-half years, the primary ministry JMC has been supporting is people group ministries which have in its ministry plan the plan to reach back to its country of origin. As this has been done, the primary person reaching back has been the pastor or spiritual leader of the spiritual group. Men like Pastor Peter Bir, Pastor Bounkeo Lor, Pastor Pheng Moua, Mr. Isaac David, Mr. Matthew Cephas*, Mr. Chiang Wang* have been active in serving both in the US and abroad. (* These men are also enrolled in the PSI program.) A second ministry which is starting to see some progress through JMC is connecting a certain people group by bringing them together / teleconference to receive input for ministry. An example of this is Pastor Mike Hartman with

Cubans. Modeled after Academia Cristo, a third ministry which is starting up in 2018 in the US is Academia English. Regarding Academia English the aim again is to get Christian materials out to share Christ. When blessed with individuals showing interest and participating, if possible there will be work to connect them to a local WELS church.

2018 Home Mission New Starts Across WELS

- **Reno, Nev.** - Two area congregations are partnering to start this congregation in the Northern Valleys area of greater Reno. On March 25, the first worship service was held; 63 people attended.
- **Phoenix, Ariz.** - Crosswalk, Phoenix, is opening a second site to reach out into downtown Phoenix.
- **Joplin, Mo.** - A strong core of WELS and Evangelical Lutheran Synod members from the two nearest churches are helping support this mission.
- **Brandon, S.D.** - Near Sioux Falls, this new congregation includes core members from two WELS churches and an Evangelical Lutheran Synod congregation.
- **Milwaukee, Wis.** - Grace in downtown Milwaukee, one of WELS' original congregations, is establishing a new location in the area known as the Third Ward.

2018 Home Mission New Starts – Unsubsidized

- **Hobart, Wis.** - Mount Olive, Suamico, Wis., is starting a second site in Hobart. The congregation is calling a second pastor to begin this new ministry.
- **Horicon, Wis.** - Members of St. John's, Juneau, Wis., see an opportunity to reach out in nearby Horicon, where 90 members of St. John's live. Saturday worship services are scheduled to begin in Horicon in June.

2018 Home Mission Enhancements

- **Crown of Life, Corona, Calif.** - This multi-site mission currently has 4 different locations for worship. Home Mission funding will support a 3rd pastor.
- **Faith, Anchorage, Alaska** - A second bi-lingual pastor will allow Faith to enhance their Hispanic ministry.
- **Grace, Seattle, Wash.** - Two congregations will be combining to restart their ministry in the heart of Seattle. Funding will allow a full-time pastor to again serve at Grace.
- **Ascension, Harrisburg, Penn.** - Remaining members of Ascension are ready to restart their congregation. They have demonstrated they are willing to take on ministry responsibilities and support outreach efforts that will be guided by their next pastor.
- **Shepherd of the Hills, Knoxville, Tenn.** - A group of members are ready to restart their congregation after a longer-term pastoral vacancy. With the congregation back on its feet, they hope to begin a preschool ministry to jump start their outreach efforts.
- **Trinity, Waukesha, Wis.** - Trinity hopes to reach out to a large population of Hispanics in their community by bringing in a bilingual pastor to lead the ministry.
- **Epiphany and First, Racine, Wis.** - These two Racine congregations currently operate a joint Lutheran Elementary school. Home Mission funding will allow the school to call a staff minister or teacher to coordinate outreach efforts to prospective church families.

Koine: The WELS musical group from Milwaukee will shift their ministry focus to producing worship materials for congregations. They are offering them **FREE** to congregations and individuals. Visit their website for more information: www.KoineMusic.com.

Reports from the Mission Fields – Missions Receiving Subsidy (8)

1. Peace Lutheran Church, South Gilbert, AZ

Beginning as a “raw start” mission in 2013 and led by Pastor Greg Hein, Peace Lutheran has flourished under God’s blessings in the Valley of the Sun’s fastest growing sector. South Gilbert and neighboring Queen Creek continue to see large population growth in young families attracted by affordable housing and reasonably near high tech jobs. Membership has grown to 94 communicants and 143 souls.

Late last year Peace moved its worship site to a larger nearby charter school facility, which can easily handle attendance numbers which average near the 100 mark. The congregation is also allowed mid-week use of the facility and can store its Church-in-a-Box accessories on site. Peace has recently started a permanent site land search in South Gilbert with a specially designated and staffed committee.

2. River of Life Lutheran Church, Goodyear, AZ

River of Life, Goodyear, AZ, is our westernmost mission congregation in the greater Phoenix area. With services starting in 2013 and led by Pastor Lincoln Albrecht since 2014, the congregation has grown to 74 souls and 61 communicants. Over 7,200 homes were reached through River of Life’s canvassing efforts last year. Assisting in this work was a Praise and Proclaim event and a Faith in Action team. The congregation’s move last year to a larger and better located worship facility has led to an average weekly worship attendance increase of 11 (to 57), to a doubling of monthly prospect visitors (to 24), and to a tripling of first-time visitors (to 112) for the year. River Kids, a “mornings with mom” program, has just been added to help make additional neighborhood connections.

3. Santo Tomas Lutheran Church, Phoenix, AZ

Hispanic outreach in Phoenix has continued to be blessed by God for 20 years through Santo Tomas, Maryvale. The congregation celebrated its anniversary in November 2017 with a special bilingual worship service and a fellowship meal accompanied with traditional Mexican music performed by its members. Attendance topped 200. Outreach is led by Pastor Tom Zimdars, Pastor Frank Cossio, and Evangelist Jorge Galan. Forty-two baptisms were celebrated last year as well as fourteen youth and twenty adult confirmations. Membership stands at 385 souls and 172 communicants. Many members enter the congregation via the special celebrations of baptisms, weddings, and quinceaneras. The business of the congregation is handled by an active church council.

4. Cross of Glory Lutheran Church, Vistancia, AZ

Pastor John Ehlers is the lead pastor for this multi-site effort with Cross of Glory in Peoria. Vistancia is a planned community with one third 55 and older, and two thirds family centered. He has been blessed to have three retired pastors to aid him in his efforts. They rent a school for worship using Church-in-a-Box. This past winter their Church-in-a-box trailer was stolen and a replacement one was purchased this spring. They are averaging mid 20’s in worship each week. They co-sponsor 10 different events in the community which help to get the name out. They utilized Praise and Proclaim for the third year, including students from Manitowoc Lutheran High School. Through these efforts, 3 families joined the main campus on Jomax Road.

5. Pan de Vida / Bread of Life Lutheran Church, Santa Ana, CA

Pastor Chris Schroeder serves at Pan de Vida, a fulltime Hispanic Ministry that reaches out in the Latino community of Santa Ana in both English and Spanish. Currently membership is 93 baptized and 72 communicants. Weekly worship is around 65. Amy Reede continues to develop Latino worship resources and will coordinate the ESL Classes which will resume in September.

6. Faith Lutheran - Hmong Missions in Clovis and Fresno, CA

Pastor Tong Xing Yang serves Faith Family Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fresno. He and his wife, Xee, use Hmong gatherings like markets, funerals, and other events to meet people. Xee gathers Hmong women for Bible studies. Pastor Xing goes door to door, weather and health permitting. Faith Family averages 74 in weekly worship. Pastor Xing is teaching his members to be personal evangelists by having them memorize Bible verses and rehearsing the answers to basic Bible questions. Although year by year the Hmong people become more assimilated into American culture, the older generation is resistant to evangelism efforts, and tries to prevent their family members from learning about Christianity.

7. Shepherd of the Hills, Las Vegas, NV – Pastor Tom Unke

Pastor Tom Unke and the congregation are joyfully overwhelmed with all the aspects of construction, deadlines and trying to get all things ready to open their Pre-school as soon as possible. For this position Jessie Stibb (Princeton, WI) was assigned from MLC as their ECE Director. She will be installed July 8. A major part of the construction includes two classrooms designed specifically to meet all the preschool requirements. Their sanctuary will hold about 140. Current membership stands at 114 souls and 118 communicants with an average of 80 in worship. Dedication Day has been set for August 19 at 4 pm. Tom and his family are in WI this week as their oldest daughter, Emily, is getting married.

8. The Springs Lutheran Church, Sparks, NV

Pastor Steve Hillmer and family arrived in July 2008; they began meeting for Bible study in August and did lots of canvassing. The first service was held in April 2009. The congregation surpassed 100 in three years and then endured some challenges with a fire to the Hillmer's house and a flood at their Ministry Center. In 2013 the congregation acquired 2.62 acres of land on the main thoroughfare in Sparks/Spanish Springs. Ground breaking was held in 2016 and on June 4, 2017, 300 people gathered in the morning for the dedication of the permanent worship center.

In August, Vicar Nathanael Jensen arrived. This past year has seen membership grow to 212 and 171 communicants, with an average in worship nearing 140. The congregation is looking to add a second service this fall. They give thanks to God for the support of the BHM. This month will be their last subsidy check from WELS; the last subsidy from Shepherd of the Mountains (Reno) will be in December. Jacob Brohn will arrive in August 2018 to serve as vicar in the coming year.

Reports from the Mission Fields – Unsubsidized Missions

Unsubsidized missions are churches not receiving subsidy but maintaining a working relationship with the DMB and BHM, which makes them eligible for certain grant and CEF loan opportunities.

1. Grace Lutheran Church, Sahuarita, AZ

Pastor Ryan Heiman began serving Grace-Sahuarita in 2017. The congregation has been greatly blessed since joining Grace Lutheran of Southern AZ in 2014. This last year God blessed all areas of ministry with growth and expansion. Worship attendance increased, the largest single service was held this past Easter, and new youth ministries offered opportunities to reach the rapidly expanding community.

Grace Sahuarita has purchased new land in a highly visible, prime location in the heart of Sahuarita. This 5-acre campus will be home to a newly constructed Child Learning Center and sanctuary. The congregation is raising funds and working with CEF and Kingdom Workers for a potential ground breaking this fall with completion anticipated mid-2019. The child learning center has already been blessed by calling Laura Heiman as director and having 12 non-member children pre-registered. The congregation is excited to meet the needs of the community and share the Gospel through education and worship.

2. Grace Lutheran Church, Vail, AZ

With the assistance of WELS Home Missions, the AZ-CA District Mission Board, and our Mission Counselor, Grace-Vail began as the second site for Grace Lutheran Church of Southern, AZ in 2011. Since then Grace has expanded to four locations (Tucson, Vail, Sahuarita, Benson). The mission site at Vail worships at an elementary school, using Church-in-a-Box, which means setup and takedown each Sunday. A ministry center office space is rented in a neighborhood/business complex in another section of the mission field. This provides a weekday presence, a place for the pastor's office, and a location for Bible study during the week.

The Lord has blessed the ministry there. It has grown from a handful of core members at the beginning to about 50 in worship each Sunday. Residential and business growth was delayed in the area, but it is in full swing now and Grace anticipates the Lord's blessings as they share the Savior with many new neighbors! Pastor Colin Rieke served Grace until early 2017; and calls have been extended since June 2017. Pastor Ron Koehler has been serving in the interim. They look forward to welcoming the shepherd the Lord provides so that they may work with him to share the gospel in the Vail area!

3. Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Cornville, AZ

Pastor Steven Wilkens serves in Cornville, AZ which is about 1 ½ hours north of Phoenix. He serves a very active group of 101 members with about 80 in worship each week and 50 in Bible Study. They are looking to add on to their worship facility and add an LED sign for greater visibility in the community.

4. The Way Lutheran Church, Rancho San Diego, CA

Praise and Proclaim conducted a program with The Way in the spring of this year. Grateful for the grant they received from BHM so they could afford to do it, Pastor Aaron Boehm sees its benefits. Almost 100 gospel seeds were planted during the campaign and since. The members who received the training seem to be utilizing their gifts to reach out with the gospel. Attendance has been flat, with attendance averaging in the mid-20s. Pastor Boehm and the leadership of Shepherd of the Hills, La Mesa, will determine the long-term viability of the area. The option of moving to a different area and continuing this outreach is being considered.

5. Prince of Peace, Thousand Oaks, CA

Prince of Peace, Thousand Oaks, received approval for subsidy to help them call a pastor during the 2017-18 fiscal year. Thousand Oaks is considered a crucial location as an established congregation that can help us reach out into Camarillo, Oxnard, and areas farther north and west. In the year since Pastor Noah Bater has been serving, attendance has risen to an average of 60 per Sunday. Pastor Bater has been emphasizing getting everyone into a BIC, both members and prospects. Last summer he visited all willing members. This year, he will be more insistent on visiting every member, even those who were hesitant last summer. Currently 7 nonmember adults are taking a BIC. This summer, they hope to begin a Moms and Tots program. The beauty of the area and affluence of the people present a double challenge to outreach in So Cal. It is often difficult to see the need for Jesus when life is so good and fun. Prince of Peace hopes to get a little bit more subsidy extended, to get them on a firm footing for future growth.

6. Living Water, Yuba City, CA

Since the early Fall of 2016, Retired Pastor Ken Bartelt has been conducting worship services in Yuba City. Through canvassing, mailing, flyers and word of mouth, they have been able to gather together a group of people who are faithful in worship and Bible study. The Bartelts operate a tutoring center and are able to use this building for worship and Bible study. Current membership stands at 12. Until now, Ken has donated his time to this ministry; the congregation is now offering a small stipend.

Reports from the Mission Fields – NEW 2018 Home Mission Approvals (3)

1. **Light of the Valleys Lutheran Church, Reno, NV**

Pastor John Derme and the members of Shepherd of the Mountains Lutheran Church in Reno have committed themselves to the start of another daughter congregation. Planning for this mission start began in 2014 as they continue to hold to the motto from 2008 of “5 Churches in 20 Years.” After extensive evaluations, canvassing and pre-work, the area of the “North Valleys” of Reno was chosen. This area has doubled in size in the past 10 years to 65,000 people with only 4 churches of any kind. The growth is projected to exceed 100,000 by 2025.

In January 2018, 25 Seminary students helped canvas 6000 homes, reaching over 350 people who were interested. Afternoon worship services have been held since March 25, 2018. At first, they met in a middle school, now they are in an elementary school. A more permanent 2600 sq. ft. Ministry Center is being built out and should be ready by late summer. Services are being conducted by rotating schedule of Pastor John Derme, Pastor Steve Hillmer, Vicar Nathanael Jensen and Pastor Tom Valleskey. Attendance has been as high as 63 and low as 12; consistently there are 25 people each week. On June 4, Pastor Caleb Kurbis (Asheville, NC) was called to be the fulltime Mission Pastor.

2. **Crosswalk Lutheran Church (#2), Laveen & Phoenix, AZ**

CrossWalk Lutheran Church is served by Pastor Jeff Gunn and Pastor Dan Solofra. In April they received DMB approval and support to start a second site in the Midtown area of Phoenix. The plan is to have Pastor Jeff Gunn start the new site and call a third CrossWalk pastor to serve in Laveen with Pastor Dan Solofra. The calling process is currently underway and Pastor Chris Ewings holds the call at the time this report is being written. They hope to have the official start of the mission around July 1, 2018 and the start of regular worship by January 1, 2019.

CrossWalk Lutheran Church (#1) is served by Pastor Jeff Gunn and Pastor Dan Solofra. They are in the middle of a time of blessings and challenges. They recently closed on a 6-acre piece of land in the middle of their target area. What makes the land even more desirable is the fact that a 6-lane highway - the 202 loop - is currently being built less than a quarter mile away from the land. This will give them great visibility! They are moving forward to fund a building program that they hope to complete by Christmas of 2022. We hope this building will be a landmark, lighthouse and launchpad for the city of Laveen.

After almost 15 years of faithful service, Jonathan Favorite, the Director of Worship, has taken a call to Appleton, WI. They are now calling to fill the Director of Worship position. At the time this report is being written, Mike Westendorf of Milwaukee, WI is being called as a congregational assistant to fill the position. In spite of all of these blessings and challenges, CrossWalk remains committed to reaching those who don't know Jesus in Laveen and South Phoenix. We consider it a privilege to serve as a mission in the AZ CA district.

3. **Crown of Life, Corona, Yucaipa, Riverside, and Victorville, CA**

Pastors Steve Koelpin, Phil Koelpin and Glenn Wenzel have been serving these four campuses, with help from vacancy pastors and area retired pastors and CLHS's campus pastor. Pastor Eric Hansen from Green Bay, WI accepted the call and will be installed as the campus pastor for Corona on July 15. Seminary Graduate Dean Ellis will also be Ordained and Installed on July 15. He will become the campus pastor for Riverside. After more than a year of struggles, COL looks forward to a renewal of energy for outreach and prays for God's blessings on these efforts. King's Kids, a daycare and learning center, is near capacity and considering adding capacity.

Reports from the Mission Fields – International Ministries (2)

- 1. Korean Fellowship Lutheran Church, Las Vegas, NV** – Pastor Taesang (John) Kim entered the WELS ministerium through the colloquy process of our district and synod in 2013. They share a location with Water of Life Lutheran Church. The Lord continues to bless this ministry as they are no longer under the auspices of the DMB.
- 2. African Cross-Cultural Ministry, Las Vegas, NV** – Pastor-in-training, Isaac David, has completed his studies with a number of instructors locally through the Pastoral Studies Institute, overseen by Professor Allen Sorum of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Evangelist Bryan Harvey is close to also finishing his instruction under the same program. Isaac David and Bryan Harvey serve a mixed group consisting largely of over 90 African refugees from over a dozen nations. Almost all ministry is conducted in English. The church conducts an immigrant ministry to African refugees coming into Las Vegas by serving as a “First Friend” to the immigrants (the only church of any kind in the Las Vegas community to be working with the Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC) as a “first friend”). The main intent of the church is to assist the refugee immigrants as they transition to life in America using this opportunity to proclaim to them the gospel of Jesus. WELS Christian Aid and Relief has annually awarded the congregation a generous grant to provide funding for the welcome gifts and other financial assistance to the new immigrants. Kristi Sebald of WELS Kingdom Workers is taking the lead on recruiting and training First Friends from the Vegas area WELS congregations. Additionally, local WELS churches support the mission with special offerings and donations of food, household items and clothing.

Reports from the Mission Fields – New Mission Locations on the Horizon

The mission board is working with a number of congregations on sites for possible future mission expansion. We met in January in Sparks, NV to discuss all the opportunities that have been brought to our attention. We prioritized these potential sites into three categories:

- 1) 12-24 Months
- 2) 3-6 years
- 3) On the Horizon

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 2019. Those sites include, but are not limited to:

- 1) El Dorado Hills, CA – south of Sacramento
- 2) Elk Grove, CA – east of Sacramento
- 3) Santa Clarita, CA – north of St. Paul’s North Hollywood
- 4) Menifee, CA – north of Temecula
- 5) East Mark, AZ – southeast Phoenix
- 6) Queen Creek, AZ – southeast Phoenix
- 7) Coordinating Livestream Services for people who live far from one of our churches.

Locations in our 3 to 6-year window include: Reno #4; Merced; Camarillo / Oxnard / Ventura; Ontario; Palm Springs; Oro Valley; Marana; Cave Creek; Anthem; Sun City Festival; San Tan / Florence.

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 if fields don’t ever work their way to the top of the list, this is time well spent.

Special Grants 2015-18

Home Mission Congregations (either subsidized or non-subsidized) have the ability to petition the BHM for Special Grants for specific projects. A mission congregation provides the rationale and amount of the request. The District Mission Board reviews the request and with their approval, forwards it on to the Joint Mission Council for their review. Below is a listing of the nearly \$35,000 in grants awarded in the past few years. At the time of this writing, the DMB has reviewed and approved three more requests.

<u>Date Granted</u>	<u>Name of Grant</u>	<u>Congregation / Location</u>	<u>Amount Requested</u>	<u>Amount Granted</u>
Aug-15	Jesus and Me	Cross of Glory, Vistancia, CA	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Sep-16	Tools for Outreach	River of Life, Goodyear, AZ	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Oct-16	1st Service	Grace, Sahuarita, AZ	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Dec-16	Mornings w/ Mommy	Crown of Life, Corona, CA	\$ 3,000	\$ 2,500
Dec-16	Van Repair	Chapel of Improvement	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500
Mar-17	Equipment Fund	Grace, Sahuarita, AZ	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Mar-17	Tools for Outreach 1st Service	Cross of Glory, Vistancia, CA	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,220
Apr-17	1st Public Service	The Springs, Sparks, NV	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Aug-17	Praise & Proclaim Grant	Shepherd of the Hills, Las Vegas, NV	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Aug-17	Operating Subsidy	Redeemer, Tucson, AZ	\$ 6,250	\$ 6,250
Sep-17	Praise & Proclaim Grant	Shepherd of the Hills, Las Vegas, NV	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000

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!

Privileged to serve our Savior and you,

- Pastor Steven Hillmer, Chairman
- Mr. Noel Ledermann, BHM Representative and Financial Secretary
- Pastor Ron Koehler, Recording Secretary
- Pastor Paul Mueller
- Mr. Roger Prigge
- Pastor Noah Bater

- Pastor Matt Vogt, Western Region Mission Counselor