

their desire is to help women get into the Scriptures to better know their Lord and help congregations encourage women in their service as part of the body of Christ.”

For more information about WELS Women's Ministry, including the Heirs Together Bible study, visit www.wels.net/women.

Gifts toward Year of Jubilee continues

The synod's special Year of Jubilee celebration will be coming to an end next month at the synod convention in Saginaw, Mich. Rev. Dave Liggett, director of WELS Ministry of Christian Giving, says it's not too late for congregations that have not yet participated to get involved.

So far, 62 percent of congregations have submitted offerings, giving more than \$3.6 million. The offering was authorized by the 2007 convention to eliminate or reduce the synod's \$22.4 million debt. Combined with regularly scheduled debt

payments, the offerings have reduced the debt total to \$15.1 million.

Year of Jubilee instructions and worship resources are available online at www.wels.net/jubileeworship. This site includes a link to Northwestern Publishing House where congregations can order free Year of Jubilee offering envelopes for gathering Jubilee offerings through July 2009.

Spotlight on Streams: WELS Connection

If you didn't catch the May edition of *WELS Connection*, you have another chance. Each edition is posted on Streams the month after it is shown in congregations. May's edition features Crown of Life in Ft. Myers, Fla., and how graduates of Martin Luther College's specialized Early Childhood Ministry program were prepared to start up and manage all aspects of a new preschool there. Watch it online at <http://streams.wels.net/video/may09>.

Districts grapple with issues

From the office of President Mark Schroeder

By the end of this week, meetings will have been held in nearly every district of the synod to discuss the important issues that will be considered at the synod convention later this summer. In some districts, those meetings have been full district conventions involving pastors, teachers, staff ministers, and lay representatives. In other districts, districtwide pastor-teacher conferences have been taking place. In still other districts, regional conferences have been held.

These meetings are an attempt to keep the grassroots members—called workers and lay leaders alike—fully informed and to give them an opportunity to provide additional input and direction for the delegates to the synod convention. The two primary topics of discussion were the recommendations contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Commission and the budget proposed by the Synodical Council.

As the scope and impact of the budget reductions become clearer, questions are being voiced: “What can we do to reduce the scope and impact of these reductions on our mission fields and on our ministerial schools? Are there other options available that can be considered?” Ideas and suggestions were in plenti-

ful supply, and many of these will likely be forwarded to the convention for consideration.

Regardless of what the final convention's decisions may be, any mission program of the synod will be supported primarily by Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO). Congregations have already made commitments for the year, and the proposed budget is built on those commitments. For that reason it is absolutely essential that all congregations meet or exceed the commitments they've made. Since Congregation Mission Offerings are the foundation of our synod's financial support, a shortfall in CMO could result in even more extensive reductions in our mission efforts.

Throughout the synod, prayers have been offered for the faithful missionaries, pastors, professors, and lay workers whose positions have been eliminated. On a positive note, we are happy to report that five world and home missionaries have received calls to congregations. In some home missions, creative ways are being considered to retain pastors whose funding from the synod has been reduced or withdrawn. Commendably, some home mission pastors have indicated they would find a



way to stay with their congregations even without full salaries provided by synodical funding. A number of world missionaries have also chosen to remain in their fields of service beyond the time when funding for their positions has ended. Thank God for these faithful and committed workers!

We also continue to pray for the unassigned graduates of Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. We are pleased that several unassigned candidates from both schools have recently been assigned and that several more assignments are in the process of being made.

It has also been gratifying to see that the district discussions are characterized by sincere concern for the work of the synod and a desire to find solutions to our difficult challenges. There has been anguish and heartache over the painful choices before us, to be sure, but there has been no anger. The people of our synod, it seems, have been led by God to look to him in faith in this difficult time and to work more closely with each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. In this time, we are reminded again that God has promised that he will use all things to work for the good of those who love him and that he will allow nothing in this world to prevent his Word from accomplishing his purpose. Those promises, not human resolve or solutions, will continue to

be the source of our hope and confidence in the weeks and months ahead.

Serving in Christ,
Mark Schroeder

Top news stories

Compiled by WELS Communication Services

Commission on Parish Schools administrator accepts call

Mr. Jim Brandt, administrator of WELS Commission on Parish Schools (CPS), accepted a call June 4 to serve as the vice president of Adult and Graduate Studies at Wisconsin Lutheran College (WLC), Milwaukee. Brandt will begin his work at WLC in early July.

Rev. Dave Kehl, acting administrator of WELS Board for Parish Services, reports that WELS Commission on Parish Schools will seek nominations to fill Brandt's position as soon as the calling process for teachers is reopened in the fall. In the meantime, Parish School's associate administrator, Mr. Jeff Inniger, will assume full oversight of this area of ministry, which exists to provide resources, training, and personal assistance for

starting and strengthening Lutheran schools. Greg Schmill, a full-time consultant for Parish Assistance's Forward with Lutheran Schools, will assist Inniger with daily operations such as the preparation of teacher call lists so that current programs such as the WELS School Accreditation process can continue.

In his new position, Brandt will oversee Wisconsin Lutheran College's new School of Adult and Graduate Studies, which will offer degree completion programs for working adults who have completed two or more years of college but do not have a bachelor's degree. A master's degree program is also being developed.

WLC President Dan Johnson notes, "The School of Adult and Graduate Studies will permit us to take our mission of preparing servant leaders for Christ and impact the lives of working adults. Jim Brandt brings a wealth of ministry experiences to the college. He is the perfect fit for this position."

Brandt says, "It is my hope that God will work mightily through this new program to extend the proclamation of the gospel to the broader community. I envision a foundational course for every program in the new college that will be designed to introduce adult students to the Wisconsin Lutheran College mission and vision by introducing them to Jesus Christ, the ultimate servant and Savior of all."

New Women's Ministry conference set

WELS Women's Ministry Committee, a part of the Commission on Adult Discipleship, has scheduled the second national WELS women's leadership conference for July 16-18, 2010. Under the theme, "Leading with a Christ-like attitude," the conference will focus on Philippians 2:1-18. It will be held at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.

The first national WELS women's leadership conference was held July 7, 2007. It focused on presenting the biblical principles of men and women serving together in God's kingdom that are the basis of the *Heirs Together* Bible study written by seminary professor Richard Gurgel and Kathie Wendland, both members of WELS Women's Ministry Committee.

The Women's Ministry Committee, which added 19 new members in October 2008, is working on a variety of other new projects, including compiling strong Bible-based materials for WELS women and gaining feedback on women's ministry in WELS through a Web-based survey.

Rev. Dave Kehl, administrator of WELS Commission on Adult Discipleship, says, "The energy and excitement of the women in our expanded WELS Women's Ministry Committee has been outstanding. It is evident that