

Minnesota District Mission Board

District Convention Report – June 2022

The Lord of the Church is blessing the missions in our district with more opportunities and God's people are providing financial support. As one of 14 mission districts in the Synod, the Minnesota District will do what we can to contribute toward the WELS' goal of 100 new missions and 75 mission enhancements over the course of 10 years (starting in 2023). Here is a quick overview of the missions we currently have going:

Good Shepherd, Cedar Rapids and North Liberty, IA A second site of Good Shepherd, Cedar Rapids, has been planted in North Liberty. Bible studies and worship services are regularly held at the local community center. Pastor Lucas Callies was assigned to serve the mission in the spring of 2021. He and his wife Emily have happily made North Liberty home.

Holy Week 2022 was a "grand opening" for the second campus. This meant a Palm Sunday service in the community center attended by 93 people (20 guests), an Easter Fest with more than 300 kids, and an Easter Fest Worship service—held outdoors when the community center was closed for the holiday—attended by 70 people (25 guests). They are doing all they can to meet new people, establish a good name for Good Shepherd, and lead people to Jesus.

Immanuel Hmong, St. Paul, MN Immanuel remains a vibrant congregation serving a significant Hmong population in the Twin Cities. While in-person attendance has not returned to pre-pandemic levels, Rev. Pheng Moua has made the most of online Bible studies, making contact with both international attendees and local prospects.

Rev. Moua has been emphasizing the gospel message and the power of giving to the Lord's work. He says they want to give members the opportunity to serve and continue to serve by giving their time, talents, and treasure. This has led the congregation to be very active in compassion ministry; examples include hosting a Toys-for-Tots event at Christmas and utilizing special funding from WELS Christian Aid and Relief to distribute Asian food items to neighbors in need last spring.

Christ Our Savior, Collinsville, IL This group has been a preaching station under the care of Martin Luther in St. Louis since the early 2000s. The core group, which averages 20-25 in weekly worship, secured funding from Home Missions to call their own pastor. This will enable them to do more concentrated outreach work and establish their own congregation in the St. Louis Metro East.

Among other outreach opportunities, Christ Our Savior sees potential for ministry to the deaf and hard of hearing, ministry to military members, and campus ministry. The group enjoys the backing of Pastor Seth Georgson and the members of Martin Luther, who are committed to seeing Christ Our Savior off the ground. They are currently calling for a pastor.

St. John, St. Paul, MN This historic church is located in a changing neighborhood. After years of careful study and deliberation, in consultation with different ministry groups, St. John has resolved to take on cross cultural ministry.

Outreach to the Hispanic population makes a lot of sense here, as the state's Mexican Consulate is right next door. A statewide service organization for Latinos, called CLUES, will be renting a portion of St. John's facility. CLUES will use this space for charitable activities, such as distributing pantry items and clothing to the community. Additionally, a Spanish Bible study for women is already being conducted on site by Mrs. Karen Hennig, who connected with these women through her work with a pregnancy

resource center. These activities bring dozens of people to the building every week, ensuring that the Spanish speaking missionary will have no trouble meeting people.

This ministry enhancement has gone from dream to reality very quickly. The WELS Board for Home Missions approved their request for subsidy. Pastor Timothy Otto has accepted the call to serve the Hispanic ministry at St. John, and will be installed on June 19, 2022.

Beautiful Savior, West Des Moines, IA The mission board has a long history in West Des Moines, dating back to its time as a WELS home mission in the 1990s. The congregation grew and became self-supporting. However, disagreement among leadership led to a sharp decline in active membership in the early 2010s.

Now seems to be the right time for a restart of this mission. Many members who experienced the fall-out of years past are not there anymore, and the ones who remain have long been ready to move on. There is an entirely new leadership group in place. West Des Moines (population ~70,000) has been, and will continue to be, a growing suburb of Iowa's largest metropolitan area (population ~700,000). The congregation has an outstanding worship facility and a very nice parsonage on an adjacent lot.

The synod's Board for Home Missions sees the potential for a re-start and has expressed a desire to prioritize the mission, but ultimately decided to defer the request and reevaluate next year.

We thank Mr. Dave Sauer for his 12 years of faithful service on the district mission board. As his term comes to an end, we recognize the time and dedication he has used for the good of God's kingdom.

Please feel free to reach out to any member of our board with ideas, suggestions, or opportunities in your area.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pastor Steve Waldschmidt

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