

# 100 MISSIONS IN 10 YEARS

## WELS HOME MISSIONS 2023-2033

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: This is a big goal. Why start 100 new home missions?**

A: Our Savior directs us to reach more souls with his good news. This initiative isn't as much about planting more churches as it is about sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's about Christ's mission to his church. It's about aggressively reaching lost souls.

**Q: How does Home Missions choose where to plant mission congregations?**

A: Home Missions works through district mission boards, which are the heart and core of Home Missions. These mission boards are the "boots on the ground," working with area congregations to identify new locations in cities, communities, and among various people groups all over the United States, Canada, and English-speaking West Indies. District mission boards help to build a solid foundation for each new mission start in various ways, including a two-year coaching program for home missionaries and identifying and developing solid core groups of members. Oftentimes new locations for churches are selected based on the core group of members in that area.

Are you interested in joining a current mission effort and/or working with your district mission board (DMB) to identify a new home mission opportunity? [Contact your DMB Chairman today.](#)

**Q: Why are we looking to start more churches when so many existing churches are dying?**

A: It is not a secret that WELS has been declining numerically in membership and in congregations. If we desire to have a Confessional Lutheran presence long after current generations are in heaven, starting more churches is imperative. Many of these declining churches are located near other WELS congregations that can continue to spiritually support members, freeing up resources to plant churches where there is no WELS presence.

**Q: We don't have enough pastors for our current churches. Why should we start more?**

A: Jesus' command is to make disciples of all nations. This includes both outreach (reaching out to the lost) and nurture (teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you). So, while we recognize there are many vacancies, we also recognize the need to keep reaching out to more of the lost through the work of Home Missions. We don't believe we should be focusing on *either* filling the vacancies in our churches *or* starting more missions. Instead, we believe we should be focusing on having pastors *both* for our current churches *and* to start new missions. As we do that, we pray that the Lord of the harvest would provide workers to serve in both our current congregations and in new missions. We also do our part in encouraging young men to consider studying for the pastoral ministry.

There are some indications that the pendulum could be changing direction and that more of our vacancies and our new missions might be filled. Pre-seminary student enrollment at Martin Luther College and class sizes at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary are some of the largest we've seen in a while. In addition, we pray that the excitement of starting new home mission churches will assist with recruitment efforts. Home Missions is currently working alongside both schools to ensure the curriculum equips these men for the unique job of planting new churches.

On the flip side, WELS Congregational Services is currently working with around 40 different churches that are considering closing their doors for a variety of reasons. In the past decade, WELS lost congregations in seven out of the ten years. As churches close, vacancies will also decline.

Let us pray that the Lord provides more future leaders, called workers, and home missionaries as he continues to grow his church!

**Q: Sometimes it seems easier to go to other countries to spread the gospel than it is to share the gospel with those who are actively rejecting it. Why here?**

A: First, because these lost souls need to hear God's message of salvation! Starting new home missions and expanding world mission outreach are both important. Healthy WELS churches with an outreach mindset grow Christ's kingdom and reach more souls locally, but they also financially support additional world outreach through our synod. By expanding the WELS base in North America, we pray that WELS can also support more mission efforts globally.

**Q: Why can't mission churches support themselves?**

A: During the first several years, it is difficult for a small core group to support the costs of calling a new pastor and providing funds for a worship space, its furnishings, and doing aggressive outreach. Additional costs also come into play as the mission looks for a permanent worship space or to buy land and build a worship facility. On average, it takes about \$1 million in subsidy to support a home mission until it can support itself. It is the prayer that as the church grows, additional members practice God-pleasing stewardship and the church becomes self-supporting.

**Q: How are we going to fund this ambitious initiative?**

A: Home Missions currently funds about six new home missions and three ministry enhancements per year. WELS Home Missions is looking to increase that number to 10 new missions per year and continuing to support ministry enhancement requests as able. Additional funds would come from increased Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) from churches, synod reserves (when available), proceeds from closing WELS churches, and generous gifts from WELS members.

**Q: Why are special donations needed? Shouldn't Congregation Mission Offerings be enough?**

A: In the eight years leading up to this initiative, Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) have funded 70% of Home Missions expenses (\$5.7M of \$8.1M in average annual expenses). Annual Home Mission expenses are project to steadily increase to about \$14.5M per year by the end of this initiative: \$6.4M more than the previous average. If we relied only on CMO to fund this increase, CMO allocation for Home Missions would have to increase dramatically (more than double by year 10). Therefore, other

funding sources, including special donations, are being encouraged to support the 100 Missions in 10 Years initiative.

**Q: This seems like a very long process with many variables. Will my gift really make a difference?**

A: You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was rich, yet he became poor so that through his poverty we might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). God's generosity has resulted in the riches of forgiveness, peace, joy, and the confidence of life in heaven through faith in Christ Jesus. Let that move you to give generously to your local congregation, to your synod through your church, and to this initiative. Every gift matters, and every gift truly is a blessing from the Lord!