

TOGETHER



February 2, 2021

More than 50 WELS-connected families have been identified for a potential new congregation in the capital of Great Britain. With the Lord's blessing, it is the prayer that such a congregation could provide a springboard for further work on the continent.

Plans are currently being made for more thorough follow-up research as well as multiple exploratory trips to each location. Schlomer says, "We pray that these explorations will allow us to send missionaries who will learn a language and culture from scratch, plant churches, and start the long journey of raising up leaders who will be able to pastor them in the future. While much more time is needed to investigate, plan, and prepare for potential mission work in these areas, please pray for these efforts as we look to share the gospel message in more places!"

Learn more about WELS World Missions at wels.net/missions. 

New opportunities to offer pandemic relief

WELS Christian Aid and Relief has set aside \$200,000 to help WELS congregations offer pandemic relief to their communities. Congregations can receive up to \$2,500 in matching grant money to

provide aid to those who are struggling in their neighborhoods.

"Like no other time in most of our lives, people are hurting—both in our churches and in our communities. And we can help them," says Rev. Daniel Sims, director of WELS Christian Aid and Relief. "God has blessed us with an abundance of daily bread and with the good news of the Bread of Life, our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a tremendous opportunity to bring relief to those struggling during this challenging time."

WELS Christian Aid and Relief already has distributed pandemic relief funding this year when it teamed up with WELS Home Missions to offer more than \$160,000 in matching grant money to 24 mission congregations.

WELS Christian Aid and Relief will offer these new matching grants to congregations until June 1 or when designated funds run out.

"What an opportunity to shine the light of Christ's love into our communities," says Sims. "May God bless our efforts in his saving name."

Learn more about WELS Christian Aid and Relief and these grant opportunities at wels.net/relief. 

With the Lord

Rev. John Moldstad, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), was suddenly and unexpectedly called to his heavenly home last Friday from an apparent heart attack.

President Moldstad was my classmate and friend, and he has been the president of our sister synod throughout my time as WELS synod president. John was one of the most self-effacing and humble men I have ever known. He loved to tell jokes, often making himself the object of his humor. More important, President Moldstad was a strong defender and promoter of confessional Lutheranism and the teachings of the Scriptures. All who knew him would agree that he was a man with a pastor's heart.

Our entire synod extends condolences to his wife, Joslyn; to the Moldstad family; and to our brothers and sisters in the ELS. But even in a time of painful loss, we join with them in praising our gracious God for taking another faithful believer to his Savior's side, where he now knows the perfect joy and peace that Christ won for us and all believers. 

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

Rev. John Moldstad obituary

Rev. John Arthur Moldstad Jr., 66, of Madison Lake, Minn., was called to his heavenly home unexpectedly on Fri., Jan. 29, 2021. He died with the sure hope of eternal life through his Savior Jesus Christ, who promised, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even if he dies" (John 11:25).

He was born April 6, 1954, in Bagley, Minn., to Rev. John, Sr. and Gudrun (Madson) Moldstad. He was baptized the same day by his father in the hospital and was confirmed at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Mankato, Minn.



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He studied at Bethany Lutheran High School in Mankato for one year before transferring to Martin Luther Academy in New Ulm, Minn., where he met his future wife, Joslyn Marie Wiechmann. John went on to study at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato; Northwestern College in Watertown, Wis.; and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary in Mankato. He later completed a Master of Sacred Theology at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wis.

John married his high school sweetheart, Joslyn, on July 30, 1977. Their union was blessed with 7 children and 14 grandchildren. He and Joslyn recently moved to their new home on Lake Washington, where they planned to retire. They enjoyed many wonderful memories with their children and grandchildren at the lake.

John was a third generation pastor, serving first as vicar at Bethany Lutheran Church in Princeton, Minn., and then as pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, S.D.; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Lake Havasu City, Ariz.; and Faith Lutheran Church in Oregon, Wis. In 1994 he was called to serve as New Testament professor at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. In 2002 he was called to serve as the president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, a role in which he served until his death. It was his fervent desire that all come to know their Savior Jesus Christ that through Him they may have forgiveness of sin and eternal life.

John was preceded in death by his mother, Gudrun, and three infant siblings. He is survived by his wife, Joslyn; his father, John Sr. (June); his brother, Rev. Donald (Gina); his sister, Lois Fick (Paul); his children, Rachel Renee, John Andrew (Amanda), Rev. Matthew James (Joni), Michael John (Annie), Andrea Elizabeth Hopkins (Kyle), Joshua Ryan (Rachel), and Brittany Rachele Cordes (Tony); and 14 grandchildren, with 2 more on the way.

John was an active member of Peace Lutheran Church in North Mankato, where a funeral service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Sat., Feb. 6, 2021. The committal will immediately follow at Norseland Lutheran Cemetery in St. Peter, Minn. Visitations will be held at Peace Lutheran Church on Fri., Feb. 5, from 4 to 7 p.m. and on Sat., Feb. 6, from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. The service will be livestreamed and can be viewed at www.peacemankato.com

Potential new world mission fields identified

More than 7,000 people groups in the world live without access to the good news of Jesus Christ. With these unreached people groups and the Great Commission in mind, a group of three world missionaries were tasked with researching where WELS might have the opportunity to plant new world mission fields. "Sixty years ago, WELS World Missions sent missionaries to find prospects, plant churches, and raise up leaders," says Rev. Larry Schlomer, WELS World Missions administrator. "Today, most of our current missionaries are involved in mentoring and training leaders who will carry on the gospel ministry in many countries. We are searching for opportunities to go back to square one: where the only reason for heading to a new country is that they do not have Jesus."

Three new unreached people groups were identified as potential mission field opportunities:

Ethnic Thai in Thailand

While WELS has had a presence in Buddhist Thailand before, the Thai people have been largely unreached by previous efforts. Even most other missionary groups have focused on non-Thai, Hill Tribe people. The Thai are very proud of their language, history, culture, and religion, and leaving Buddhism for another religion is considered an abandonment of what it means to

be Thai. WELS has a small foothold with the Thai people, something other mission groups cannot claim after decades of work. WELS is in a unique position to build on a foundation already laid in Thailand to reach this new group.

Wolof people in Senegal

The country of Senegal in Western Africa has a population of almost 17 million people. The Wolof tribe makes up about 40 to 45 percent of the total population and is less than 0.01 percent Christian. Despite the fact that Senegal is an overwhelmingly Muslim country, the constitution staunchly defends freedom of religion and is a relatively peaceful and stable place. It would be the goal to send in two resident missionaries to begin sharing the gospel and gathering a congregation.

Tequila Villages of Mexico

Three WELS missionaries and a handful of other confessional Lutherans have visited villages in this region. No religious group other than Roman Catholics were found working there. Churches in the area are houses of Mary, not houses of God. It appears this may be one of those places where little to no gospel ministry is occurring at this time. While WELS has partnered with a national church in Mexico before, this area is largely unreached by confessional Lutheranism.

World Missions is also exploring outreach opportunities in London.