



Congregational Guidelines for *Equipping Christian Witnesses* Campaign

Theme

Our gracious Savior, “who is not willing that any should perish” (2 Peter 3:9), is opening mission doors beyond our imagination. We want to seize these opportunities to his glory. Now is the time for all of us to equip even more Christian witnesses to share Christ’s love with the world.

We will work to re-energize student recruitment for the holy adventure of ministry. We will provide even more financial aid so that every student who wants to train for ministry can do so. And we will equip these students with enhanced and enlarged facilities—a living and learning environment worthy of this training. By the grace of God, Equipping Christian Witnesses (ECW) will positively impact ministry for the 21st century.

Goals

Lord willing, the goals of the two-year (July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021) *Equipping Christian Witnesses* campaign are to

- Recruit students for gospel ministry resulting in an MLC on-campus enrollment of 900-1,000;
- Increase student financial aid by receiving gifts totaling \$3-5 million for MLC’s Congregational Partner Grant Program gift matching fund;
- Improve MLC student facilities by receiving gifts totaling \$13 million to build Luther Heights residence hall and the Knight Center recreational facility.

Resources

To assist with member encouragement and participation, Martin Luther College has prepared a variety of materials available online at mlc-wels.edu/ecw-toolbox. Resources can be downloaded directly from the website or ordered from MLC and shipped to the congregation. For assistance with promotional materials, please contact Martin Luther College at 507-354-8221 or emailing campaign@mlc-wels.edu.

- ECW casebook – This is a 24-page thorough explanation of the campaign and can be ordered for each member. The casebook can also be viewed online.
- Bulletin inserts, newsletter updates, posters, social media graphics and posts, display slides, etc., are available to order and/or download.
- Videos – A wide variety of videos are available to introduce the campaign and explain the wide impact of the campaign. The videos can be viewed online or downloaded to share with the congregation. These videos include the October 2019 *WELS Connection* video highlighting ECW.

Recommendations for promoting ECW in congregations

Consider appointing a campaign congregational liaison who will work with church leaders to share ECW information and assist in the following:

- Planning a special service in the fall (e.g., October) or during the church seasons of End Times, Advent, Epiphany, Lent, or Easter
- Encouraging members to pray for the ministry at MLC
- Assisting members in recommending students who would be interested in enrolling at MLC
- Sharing information regarding the need for increased student financial assistance and student facilities improvements at MLC
- Encouraging special offerings for student assistance and facility improvements, and forwarding donor requests for assistance to WELS Ministry of Christian Giving/Martin Luther College

Recommendations for promoting ECW in schools

- If your school collects mission offerings, consider designating one or more for ECW.
- Order promotional posters, coloring books, and flyers to promote ECW with families.
- Show videos from the ECW toolbox page in classrooms.
- Consider conducting an MLC Day on, or leading up to, the first Wednesday in May.

Contributions and commitments to ECW

We encourage churches to participate in special gifts for Equipping Christian Witnesses that are in addition to their Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO). A few suggestions:

- Congregations could distribute the ECW casebook to each family. That allows families to recommend potential students and offer financial gifts directly to MLC using the casebook's reply page and envelope.
- Congregations could consider an additional three percent of their congregational offerings designated for *Equipping Christian Witnesses* during the next two years. Based on the WELS 2018 Statistical Report, if each WELS congregation would dedicate three percent of its annual offerings received for ECW we would surpass the financial goal.
- The \$9 million per year (\$18 million total) goal for ECW is roughly 40 percent of the \$21 million committed as CMO subscriptions. Therefore, a congregation might consider a goal of 40 percent of the amount they have committed to WELS for their CMO over two years.
- Churches can report their ECW offering commitments at mlc-wels.edu/ecw-donate. (Note: Please send payments towards your reported commitment directly to MLC.)

Gift remittance instructions

- Individuals may recommend students and offer their ECW gifts directly to Martin Luther College (1995 Luther Court, New Ulm MN 56073) using the response form and envelope included with the casebooks. They may also give online at mlc-wels.edu/ecw-donate.
- Churches can remit offerings from members, using a *Choice* coupon or *Other Gift* coupon and return envelope to send the offering to the synod's lockbox (St. Paul MN).
- Churches also can remit offerings from members directly via check to WELS, note "Equipping Christian Witnesses" in the memo line, and mail to WELS Center for Mission and Ministry, Attn: Gift Processing, N16W23377 Stone Ridge Drive, Waukesha WI 53188.
- WELS-Canada congregations should mail their offerings to WELS-Canada treasurer Robert Brander at Box 537, Picture Butte AB T0K1V0.

For assistance with submitting congregational offerings, contact WELS Ministry of Christian Giving at 414-256-3209 (toll-free 800-827-5482) or mcg@wels.net.