



Oak Leaves

Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society

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Issue 3

Historical Society Wins Award for Storytelling DVD

By Robin Ouren

On Thursday, November 9, ELS Historical Society President, Robin Ouren, and *Oak Leaves* co-editor, Rebecca DeGarmeaux, flew to St. Louis, Missouri, to attend Concordia Historical Institute's 32nd Annual Awards Banquet and reception. The trip was made to accept an Award of Commendation given the ELS Historical Society for the DVD: *Understanding Our Heritage—Through the Stories Handed down from Our Forebears*.

The ELS Historical Society Presents

Understanding Our Heritage

Through the Stories Handed
down from Our Forebears



DVD Video

The DVD was the product of the June, 2004 Historical Society annual meeting program, which consisted of oral history presentations based on stories from the lives of four people from Norwegian Synod/ELS history: Julia Reque (The Crossing and Early Settlement Period), Elisabeth Koren (Arrival of Pastors from the Old Country), Peder G. Tjernagel (A New Generation is Born in the New Land), and Gladys Tolander (Transition to the Twentieth Century). Portraying these people were Caroline Lee, Julie Quist, Mark Harstad, and Robin Ouren. Committee members who put together the program included Rebecca DeGarmeaux, Mark Harstad, Robin Ouren, and Sigurd Lee.



Robin Ouren with the awards display at CHI

Concordia Historical Institute (CHI), headquartered in St. Louis, is the world's largest repository of artifacts and documents pertaining to Lutheranism in America. Its mission is to

bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to serve the members of His Church by promoting an interest in, appreciation for, and understanding of the history of Lutheranism in America ... as the story of our Lord's gracious dealing with His people, by collecting and preserving articles of historical value, stimulating historical research, and publishing its results.

The Institute also endeavors to recognize special effort made in the area of preserving Lutheran history. According to CHI Director, Dr. Martin Noland,

each year, members of the CHI Awards Committee consider a large field of applicants and select more than a dozen award winners. Awards are granted by the committee on behalf of CHI to individuals, congregations, agencies, or boards for historical publications, for unique contributions to Lutheran literature, or for personal service in the field of Lutheran Archival and historical work.

This year, seventeen awards were given. Projects included four church anniversary history booklets, a biography on Ohio Synod leader Matthias Loy, "The Story of Bethesda Lutheran Homes and Services, Inc.", and journal articles about hymns and hymn writers in the Missouri Synod, and the life and ministry of Reverend Theodore Kohn. The "Understanding Our Heritage" DVD was the only non-print media project receiving an award.

Program committee member, Mark Harstad, provided the ELS Historical Society's written response to receiving this honor:

History comes alive when people of the present experience the world of people of the past through their personal stories orally presented. We attempted to open a window to the past. We are pleased, honored, and grateful that CHI has recognized value in our efforts.

Concordia Historical Institute was established in 1847, and consists of a museum, genealogy department, and archive - home to records and personal papers from the Missouri Synod, as well as a collection of books and various genealogical resources. The archive includes a section for documents from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. For more information about CHI, call 314-505-7900 or e-mail: chi@chi.lcms.org. You can also access their website at: <http://chi.lcms.org>

To find out more about the ELS Historical Society's Award-winning DVD, or for society membership information, contact President Robin Ouren at 507-246-5309 or e-mail: heyraab@hickorytech.net. More information about the society can be found at their website:

<http://www.evangelicallutheransynod.org/synod/history>.

Robin Ouren is president of the Historical Society and a member of Norseland Lutheran Church, Saint Peter, MN.

Send us *your* ideas, articles, and suggestions for **Oak Leaves**. We welcome information and articles on church anniversaries, and articles of Synodical and local significance.

And remember to visit the Historical Society's website:

www.evangelicallutheransynod.org/history

OR

www.els.name/history

History Is More Than Words


By Craig Ferkenstad

History is more than just words. It also is people and pictures and artifacts. A “Founders’ Table” was set to mark the actual founding date of Norwegian Grove Lutheran Church of Gaylord, Minnesota. The congregation was founded in the home of Mrs. Anne Nereson on February 1, 1881. One-hundred twenty-five years later, a table was set in the church narthex to recall that God-given day.



A small table was set with six place settings to represent the twenty-one members who gathered with their pastor to organize a congregation. The photograph of one charter member was bonded to the plate of each place setting. This was done by using a photocopy and a mixture of half-glue and half-water. The individuals were chosen because of the significant additions which they made to the development of the congregation. Here was the first secretary, the first “klokker” (song-leader), the first marriage, and the man who donated the land for the church building. At the head of the table was seated the pastor who was with them on that day.


The words, with the stories of these men, were placed on placards which were hung with rope on the back of each wooden chair.



Jørgen Peterson was 52 years old in 1881. He had emigrated from Trondheim, Norway

He was one of the first Trustees of the congregation, being elected to a three-year term on February 1, 1881.

He also was the first “Klokker” of the congregation—who both led the singing and also read the Opening Prayer and Closing Prayer for each Service—He served in that capacity until 1888.



Cemetery marker:
Jørgen & Guneld Peterson

Copies of important documents were placed on the table. Next to the secretary lay his hand-written minutes of the meeting (with a translation on the reverse side). A complete list of charter members along with a picture of the meeting location also was on the table.

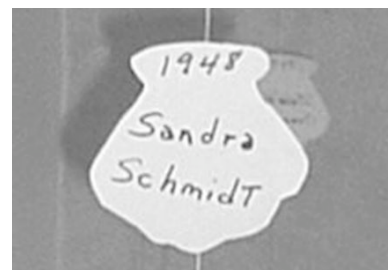



A few original heirlooms also were displayed. There was the klokker's hymnbook placed next to his plate. The family Bible of another of the men was ready to be read. Of great significance was the original portfolio belonging to the pastor.



As would have been done 125 years earlier, a kerosene lantern (from the church basement) lit the table, which was covered with gingham tablecloths. The vegetables in the bowls added to the setting. Heritage tablecloths also could be used.

On Easter Sunday, the congregation was greeted with the sight of 359 paper baptismal-shells which were hung, eight on a string, from the ceiling of the Chancel. Each shell had the name and date of an individual who had been baptized in the congregation during the past century and a quarter. The shells were cut out by members of the Sunday School and Ladies' Aid and hung by the young people of the congregation. It was explained that this was as if God had opened His hand and sprinkled the blessing of baptismal water upon the congregation.



Being more than just words on a page, the members of the congregation spent considerable time looking at the table, reading the stories, and looking at the names on the baptismal shells. 

Craig Ferkenstad is pastor of Norseland and Norwegian Grove, rural St. Peter and Gaylord, MN.

Christian Day Schools — Part 2 of 2

By Theodore Aaberg — Reprinted from the 1951 Synod Report

Editors: In 2006 the ELS approved the establishment of Lutheran Schools of America to promote education and establish more Christian Day Schools across the United States. This article shows the Synod's long history of valuing Christian education.

Continued from last issue...

What about the Christian Day School? It is without a doubt the best school which a congregation can have for the thorough teaching of the children. To find out *why* it is the best school, one needs to consider what the Christian Day School is, how it operates, what it does for the child.

Many people will describe the Christian Day School as being the same as the public school, except that the Church operates and pays for it, that it teaches one hour of religion every day. It is true that most Christian Day Schools devote the first hour of every school day to the study of God's Word. And this is no small matter. Just this one hour a day amounts to about 180 hours of instruction during the school year, which is about *5 times* as much as one gets in Sunday School, or *four times* as much as one gets in a three-week Summer School. This allows for a thorough study of the Bible, catechism, explanation, hymn book, and Church history. 180 hours a year—think of what that means to a child who goes to a Christian Day School for eight years!

But much more can be said for the Christian Day School than its one hour of instruction each day. There are the opening and closing devotions which play no small part in the education of the child.

And what about the other subjects which are taught in the Christian Day School—history, science, health, geography, etc? Is that done in the same way as in the public school? By no means! All of these subjects are taught in the

light of God's Word. In *geography* the child not only learns the names of continents and oceans, he not only studies the different nations and how they live, but he also learns that God has created these lands and oceans, that He is the one who has made provision in His creation so that people the world over can keep alive. In *history* the child not only learns about the nations and how they have carried on in the past years, but he also discovers that God has His hand in the affairs of the nations, that He directs the rise and fall of the nations and other affairs for His own purposes. In *science* the child not only learns about the plants and animals and other things belonging to science, but he also learns that it is God who has created these things, and they see the wisdom and power of God in the marvelous ways in which all of creation is constructed and in its ways of operating. In *health* the child not only learns the proper rules for caring for his body, but he also learns the proper *motive* for such care, namely that his body is a temple of God, and that God wants him to care for it properly.

Consider also that in the Christian Day School the pupils are, for the most part, of the same congregation. There is Christian fellowship; they study, work, play together with fellow believers. This builds up a close relation between the pupils which lasts long after they have finished school and are adult members in the congregation.

The discipline which prevails in such a school is also very valuable. School discipline is not based on vague and general moral lines, but on what God has written in the Ten Commandments. If children are to be disciplined for, let us say, cursing and swearing, they are not told by the teacher that they shouldn't say such things because it is not nice, and nice boys or girls don't say such things, etc.; but they are told that they should not do it because God has said in the second commandment:

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.”

These are things which make the Christian Day School a great school, and if you will truly consider them you will agree that The Christian Day School is still the prince of all Church schools. Dr. Walther has rightly called it the “Gem of the Lutheran Church.” And it is a gem! If one were to look at the reports of our past Synod meetings, or to page through the old Church papers, he would rightly come to the conclusion that our Synod has been a strong champion of the Christian Day School. But we have nothing of which to boast on this score. It is true that we have spoken much on behalf of the Christian Day School and some fine, stirring speeches have been made on the Synod floor and elsewhere on the virtues and importance of such schools, and the Christian Day School Fund of Synod has always had sufficient funds on hand for its work. But there are some 70 congregations in the Synod and only 11 schools. What kind of record is this? In these 11 schools there are some 200 pupils, and if one should count the number of school children in these congregations with schools, he would find no doubt that less than half of them go to the Christian Day School.

What is the cause of this? Much of the blame can be laid squarely on the shoulders of the pastors. It is the pastor who must take the lead in establishing such schools, and all too often we have been negligent about presenting this important matter to the people. No doubt, many more of our congregations would have schools today if their pastors had only had the energy, the courage, the willingness to “stick their necks out” and plead the cause of this blessed institution. God bless that pastor in our Synod who in trying to begin a school was approached by members who urged him to forget the school, so that the congregation could provide him with a larger living quarters and a bigger salary, but who went right ahead and got the school going! We need more of that spirit.

The pastors are not the only ones to blame for the shortage of schools in our congregations. The members themselves, parents and others, must also shoulder some of the guilt. Too many times we have failed to give our support to the establishment of a Day School, because it costs money to run it. Others may have opposed the opening of these schools because of some foolish notion that they are not American, not patriotic, or because they valued their standing in the community and desired to keep in the good graces of outsiders more than they valued the Christian training which can be given the children of the congregation in the Day School. Parents may have failed to cooperate with a school because they lived a little distance from it, and it meant driving a few miles every day, and it wasn't too handy. The day may come when they drive many miles, spend much money, and go through sleepless nights, trying to care for their wayward child who could have been led close to the Savior in the Day School.

We soon celebrate our Centennial. We have many plans for celebrating. If we would do nothing else for the Centennial than this, that every pastor go home and do everything in his power to start a school in his congregation, present the cause, contact families with children, the other members too, bring it to a vote, even teach it for a while if necessary, so that everyone of us could honestly say that he has done everything in his power, — then that would be a real Centennial Celebration! And the power, the influence of the many schools that would be started would be felt for years to come, yes, even for eternity. Walther not only called the Christian Day School the “gem of the Lutheran Church.” but also added: “For on it depends, humanly speaking, the future of the Lutheran Church.”

Let all of us pastors, delegates, and others, go home to our congregations and plead the cause of the Day School. If we have never approached the people with the idea that we start a school, let us do it now. If we have spoken on the matter but have not been able to get one

started, then let us go home and try again. If we already have a school in our midst, let us go home and go to work and make it a better school, get more children enrolled, and more interest worked up for the school.

If there are congregations which do not have the necessary financial means to get such a school in operation, the Christian Day School Board of the Synod stands ready to consider every request that may come for help financially or otherwise. There is a large balance in the Day School Fund, over \$5,000.00. If congregations are not able to secure a teacher from our school or the schools of sister Synods, or are unable to finance their salary, let the pastor seriously consider teaching

the school himself for a year in order to get it going. If he doesn't have the strength for such labor, let Him ask God for that, and if God wants him to teach in addition to his pastoral duties, He will see that he gets the strength.

Let us build for the future, build wisely and strongly. There is nothing which would make Satan feel "bluer" on our Centennial Celebration than to hear that we had started a great number of new Christian Day Schools. May God grant us the wisdom, strength, and courage to forge ahead in the field of Christian Day Schools!

Theodore Aaberg was president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1976-1978.

From the Archives

Norwegian culture and tradition are behind this item in the Ottesen Museum. Do you know what it's called, what it's used for, and its history?

Maybe you have a story to share from your family.



Photo by Denice Woller

From the last issue:



For immigrants there were many types of interactions with Native Americans, from helping each other to outright warfare. Earlier histories often gave only one viewpoint. Recent books have tried to give a fuller picture of such events, recognizing good and bad on both sides in such conflicts.

Treasurer, Albin Levorson, retires

Every organization depends on its members and officers. The ELS Historical Society has been blessed with very competent and dedicated members and board members. From the beginning, Albin J. “Red” Levorson, one of our charter members, has served as our treasurer.

Albin has always been very active in his home congregation and other activities in the Iowa-Southern Minnesota Circuit of the ELS.

He is a lifelong member of Somber Evangelical Lutheran Church and has served as vice-president and treasurer of the congregation. For 27 years he served on the Synod Board of Trustees. He has helped with youth camps in the ELS, and also coached Special Olympics at Lake Mills Elementary School and served as a patient advocate at Opportunity Village in Clear Lake.

Albin and his wife Judy still live on the family farm where he was raised in rural Northwood, Iowa. He retired from farming in 1998. Albin and Judy have 3 children: John (deceased), Matt, and Peter. Matt and Peter

are both graduates of Bethany Lutheran College.



Albin has always been very helpful with Historical Society meetings. He was instrumental in coordinating the meeting at Lime Creek in 2002. He put up the sign (above) indicating the tent site of the reorganization meeting in 1918. Albin is second from the right in the picture.

The ELS Historical Society expresses our deep gratitude and appreciation to Albin Levorson for his many years of dedication and service: *Mange tusen takk!* (*Many thousand thanks!*)

Some ELS Publications to Keep in Mind

Available through the Bethany Lutheran College bookstore: www.blc.edu/bookstore

Behold a Greater Than Solomon - Wagner, Alvin
Built on the Rock / 75th Anniversary of the ELS -

Larson / Madson

Child's History of the ELS, A / Coloring Book -
Schmidt

City Set on a Hill, A - History of the ELS - Aaberg,
Theodore

Cling to the Cross: A Devotion Book for Teenagers -
Bartels, Mark

Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary (ELH)

With Hearts and Lips Forever We Shall in God Re-
joice - Marzolf, Dennis

I Believe/Study of 3 Universal or Ecumenical Creed -
Teigen, B. W.

I Believe/Study of Luther's Sm. and Lg. Catechism -
Teigen, B. W.

I Believe/Study of the Augsburg Confession - Teigen,
B. W.

I Believe/Study of the Formula of Concord - Teigen,
B. W.

I Believe/Study of the Smalcald Articles - Teigen, B.
W. -

I Pray the Catechism/Luther's Small Catechism In
Prayer - ELS Bd. Edu/Youth

In Remembrance of His Mercy / Pictorial History of
the ELS

Laache's Book of Family Prayer - Laache

Life of Christ, The - Kessel, William

Living Church, The - (The New Testament) - Kessel,
William

Lutheran Confessions: A Harmony & Resource Book
- Tjernagel, Neelak

Medallion 150th Anniversary/Norwegian Synod -
1853-2003

St. Paul: The Theologian's Prototype - Wagner,
Alvin

This Generation of Grace

We Believe Teach and Confess: Doctrinal Statement

Word of His Grace, The: Sermon Selections - Wal-
ther, C. F. W.

Jerico Lutheran Ladies' Aid — 100th Anniversary 1905-2005

By Marjorie Johnson

ORGANIZATION

In observance of the one hundredth anniversary of the Jerico Lutheran Ladies Aid, the following is a summary of the history of the Aid taken from the secretary and treasurer reports.

On October 18, 1905, the Crane Creek Ladies Aid held their first meeting at the home of Nils Anderson. Before the meetings for the first few years, a complete dinner was served at noon. Reverend Rugland opened the meeting with the singing of a hymn. He then led devotion with Scripture reading. At this meeting they organized the Ladies Aid Society and elected their first slate of officers to carry on and record the business transacted at each meeting.

The first officers were:

President: Mrs. Louie Grove

Secretary: Miss Anna Ellingson

Treasurer: Mrs. Nils Anderson

Those in attendance at the first meeting were:

Mrs. Louie Grove

Mrs. Andrew Ellingson

Mrs. Rugland

Miss Carrie Slindee

Mrs. Erik Slindee

Mrs. Nils Ellingson

Miss Ida Ellingson

Mrs. E. Attelson (a visitor)

The collection at this meeting was \$1.65.

HISTORY

The Aid met twice a month from 1905 to 1954. The devotions and business were conducted in the Norwegian language until 1934, when it was changed to English.

Their first annual report showed \$83.34 was collected for the year. They purchased a carpet for \$49.68. They also bought a hymn board, curtains, and doorplate. It was voted at

that time to give 40% to missions, which was \$25.00. The balance, 60%, was to be used for home purposes.

In 1909, it was decided to contribute yearly to the **Martin Luther Home for Children**.

Reverend Rugland conducted his final Ladies Aid meeting in September, 1909. On July 10, 1910, Reverend M. K. Bleken began his service to the Aid and was followed by his successors.

From 1905 through the present the aid has held regular meetings. The majority of these meetings have been held in the basement of the church which was built in 1913. The Aid gave \$50.00 to the church building fund at that time and paid \$100.00 for a new carpet. For many years on **Memorial Day**, the Aid held devotional exercises at the church and also did work at the cemetery. This apparently led to the organizing of the **cemetery committee** to care for this work, which was supervised by the Aid for some time. Mrs. Peter Overboe conducted the devotion on Memorial Day the first time this meeting was held.

Rev. M. K. Bleken held his last meeting in June, 1922; and the next minister in charge was Rev. Forseth, who had his first meeting in December, 1922, his last in May, 1923.

In the earlier years, the Aid purchased material for **quilts**, which were made at the meetings and donated to a motherless family and a family whose home has been destroyed by fire. They also gave monetary donations for needy purposes in the congregation.

A **paint and varnish fund** was set up in the 1936 for redecorating the church and painting the basement. The kitchen fund was begun with a donation of \$100.00, which led to the complete renovation of the kitchen.

The Aid received a donation of \$100.00 to start the **Restroom Fund**, which was turned

over to the General Fund at the time the restrooms were installed. In 1958, the interior of the church was redecorated. The Aid purchased the new carpeting, which was also laid in the sacristy and stairway at a total cost of \$1,524.00. Members donated toward this project and James Bethany donated his labor in laying the carpet.

On July 24, 1965, Jerico Lutheran Church celebrated the 60th anniversary of the organization of its Ladies Aid. On the 75th anniversary of the Ladies Aid was celebrated in conjunction with the annual Mission Festival. A booklet was printed for both occasions highlighting the history of the Aid.

The Ladies Aid has supported many **improvements in the church and parsonage** the past 25 years, including new chairs for the church parlors. **Basement carpeting** was installed in 1992 in preparation for the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the church. A **cookbook** was also printed to raise money for the celebration. In 1994 the **sanctuary floor** was sanded and refinished; and a year later red carpet was installed in the church, thanks to generous gifts and donations given as memorial to past members.

In 1998, major remodeling in the **kitchen** to include new countertops, flooring, and a new cupboard on the north wall. Charles Johnson donated his labor for this endeavor. New window treatments, as well as vertical blinds over the serving counter were installed and new stoves were purchased for the kitchen in 2005.

The Ladies Aid has also been active in parsonage projects to include a new stove and microwave/fan for that kitchen. Other **parsonage improvements** have been a refrigerator, drapes, vertical blinds, and paint. The Aid has assisted in remodeling of the parsonage kitchen, the upstairs bathroom and carpeting.

Other **purchases for the Jerico Church** have included carpeting for the outside steps, refrigerators, stoves, a new piano, ceiling fans, a coat rack in the narthex, a planter outside by the church sign, an artificial Christmas tree,

oil altar candles as well as many other items. Many of these items were made possible by generous memorials to deceased members. The Ladies Aid appreciates all the gifts and the many volunteers who have helped to maintain such a lovely dining room and kitchen.

A colored **pictorial directory** was done in 2000 with Aid volunteers assisting and the Ladies Aid officers assisted with the church redecorating in 2003.

The Ladies Aid also serves for **special gatherings**. A reception was held in 1985 in honor of Milton Robinson's 50 years as organist as well as Pastor Milton Tweit's 50th anniversary of his ordination. A son of our congregation, Rev. Craig Ferkenstad, was ordained in 1980 and a reception given in his honor. Installation and farewell dinners have been served for the following pastors: Rev. Timothy Erickson, Rev. Glenn Obenberger, Rev. Mark DeGarmeaux, and Rev. Kent Dethlefsen.

TODAY

Ladies Aid meetings today are opened with devotions followed by scripture reading and prayer by the pastor. Various subjects of interest have been used as the basis of the devotion, all of which have strengthened our faith and understanding of our church and teachings.

The business meeting follows devotions. Minutes of the previous meeting are read by the secretary with reports by the treasurer given. Officers are now elected for two-year terms.

The ladies meet the first Thursday afternoon of each month.

Mission dinners are now served alternate years with Saude Lutheran Church. The **Christmas dinner** at Jerico continues to be special with lutefisk, meatballs, lefse, and all the trimmings served on the second Sunday of December. Plans are to continue to serve this festive meal as long as we have a volunteer to cook the lutefisk.

PASTORS

During these one hundred years, the following ministers have served the Ladies Aid.

Rev. John Rugland	1905-1909
Rev. M. K. Bleken	1910-1922
Rev. Peder Forseth (asst.)	1922-1923
Rev. H. M. Tjernagel	1923-1939
Mr. Stubenberger (asst.)	May-June 1940
Rev. N. S. Tjernagel	1940-1945
Rev. C. H. Schroeder (asst.)	1945-1946
Rev. M. H. Otto	1946-1957
Rev. Keith Olmanson (asst.)	1956-1957
Rev. M. E. Tweit	1958-1971
Rev. G. A. R. Gullixson	1972-1979
Rev. Timothy Erickson	1979-1982
Rev. Milton Tweit	1982-1983
Rev. Glenn Obenberger	1983-1988
Rev. Mark DeGarmeaux	1988-1995
Rev. Kent Dethlefsen	1995-2006

To each of these pastors, the Ladies Aid expresses its thanks for diligent leadership, steadfast guidance and devout religious teaching.

THANKS AND APPRECIATION

In conclusion, we would like to reprint the closing remarks of the booklet printed for the 60th anniversary. They are as true today as they were forty years ago.

In celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the founding of our Jerico Ladies Aid, there are two things especially that impress themselves upon our minds. First is the wonderful love and mercy of God to our Aid in that He has given our members the privilege of serving Him in His Kingdom. Almost every year of its existence the Aid has remembered Christian Missions with a gift of money. Secondly, we are impressed with the willingness and the faithfulness of the members in attending meetings and in supporting the work of the Church. Their ready willingness to render service to the work of the Lord serves as a wonderful pattern and example for all of us. For this we are deeply grateful to them. We pray God to continue to grant us His love and mercy, and to continue to grant our Aid members who are willing and faithful in doing His work. May He bless our celebration to His glory and our true welfare.

Marjorie Johnson is a member of Jerico Lutheran Church, rural New Hampton, IA.



Jerico Lutheran Church
1913

Oak Leaves
ELS Historical Society
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001

Renew your membership!

ELS Historical Society

Name: _____

Address: _____

Send completed form and check (see box below right
for type of membership and correct amount) to:

ELS Historical Society

6 Browns Court — Mankato, MN 56001

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Oak Leaves welcomes articles of both Synodical and local significance
for publication. Articles maybe edited for style, clarity, or length to al-
low for publication. Submitted manuscripts will be deposited in the
archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

MEMBERSHIP

All membership
renewals are due **June 1**

Voting Membership:

\$10/year: individual
\$15/year: husband & wife

Associate Membership:

\$15/year: individual
\$25/year: institutional
\$5/year: student

Lifetime Membership:

\$200