

Church History-Prof. Korthals
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The Ministry of WELS Planned Giving
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My purpose was to gather some information about the ministry of planned giving. In my interview and research I learned a variety of things about this ministry. The ministry of planned giving was started by synod resolution and its stated purpose is the following: "The ministry of planned giving serves WELS members with the gospel of Jesus Christ, encourages them to excel in the grace of giving and assists them to make planned gifts to their congregations, the synod and the agencies."

What is a planned gift? It is defined as "any gift given for any amount, given for any purpose...operations or endowment...whether for current or deferred use, which requires the assistance of a professional staff person, a qualified volunteer, or the donor's advisors to complete. In addition, it includes any gift which is carefully considered by the donor in light of estate and financial plans."

This ministry was started because of a need felt by the synod to have help for people with large estates or monies who wanted to give planned gifts. The advantage of having men who work only among us in the WELS is to have planned giving advice from a Christian with the same perspective and motives for giving that we have in giving. It also encourages that we be faithful stewards in remembering the Lord and His work.

The number of called workers in this area was more than I originally thought as we have seventeen planned giving counselors that work among the twelve districts. I also found it interesting that the called workers are a diverse group of pastors, teachers and laymen. Another thing that is interesting is how often they get together. They all

meet in Milwaukee every other month. The purpose of this as recorded in the interview is to study the Word, develop their skills and ideas and also for “much needed fellowship”. Just hearing this reminded me of the need and continued encouragement we have to attend pastor’s conferences.

The ministry of planned giving is there to help us and serve us in our needs of being good stewards of all that the Lord has given to us. While doing the research and video over break, I also took the opportunity to have John Scharlemann, one of our planned giving counselors, help my wife and I fill out our will.

This ministry not only helps us plan, but it has brought other blessings as well. Money that has been set up has been used to serve the Lord in numerous areas including missions. We thank the Lord for these great blessings and ask that the Lord continue to give us faithful workers and blessings through this ministry of planned giving.