

Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee

Christ's Love, Our Calling: At work through the Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee

Our Calling

The Continuing Education for Called Workers (CECW) Committee coordinates our synod's efforts to assist called workers to grow in faith, knowledge, and skill in order to carry out the unique vocations (callings) God has given to each. Helping them grow in those callings includes not only assisting them toward "professional growth" in their public ministry callings but also encouraging them in their growth in their other God-given vocations (spouse, parent, member of a congregation and synod, etc.).

The CECW also emphasizes why such growth is important and why it is wise for calling bodies to invest in the growth of all their called workers. Growth for our called workers is certainly **not** about self-centered goals (advancing their career, gaining recognition, increasing compensation). Growth for our called workers is about growing in the gospel for themselves and growing in being a clearer glimpse of God's mercy wherever God has called them to represent him (home, church/school, in the community). As our synodical theme reminds us, we are helping them let *Christ's love* be ever more clearly seen is what *their calling* is all about. To that end the CECW also seeks to urge lay leaders to understand that is is equally important for us as a synod to invest in current called workers' growth as it is to invest in producing the next generation of called workers.

The CECW includes representatives from our terminal schools (Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary) as well as those who are part of Congregational Services. By the synod's constitution, our chairman is the first vice president of the synod, and we report to the Conference of Presidents. Our report is divided into the CECW's work for teachers/staff ministers and for pastors.

The Teacher/Staff Minister "Side" of Our Work

Our Current Situation

New Teacher Induction

All beginning teachers in WELS schools are assigned an instructional mentor for their first two-years of teaching. Mentors and new teachers meet weekly to support teacher growth along the WELS Continuum of Teacher Development. The mentors receive training to support this work. Participation in New Teacher Induction has risen over the past three years.

NTI Participation

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Beginning Teachers	132	159	162
Trained Instructional Mentors	101	123	114
Schools	-	125	120

21st Century Lutheran Principal Initiative

The 2017 synod convention endorsed this initiative which helps to address the growing need for school leaders for our schools and involves cohorts of experienced teachers going through three years of Commission on Lutheran Schools and Martin Luther College training. The first cohort of seven men is scheduled to complete their training in 2020. A second cohort of eight men will begin their training in the summer of 2018 with expected completion in 2021. This initiative was established to train teachers prior to their service to the church as school principals.

A Look Ahead

Ministerial Growth and Evaluation Process

A new process of continuous teacher growth focused on student learning along with new tools for supervision of instruction and teacher evaluation will be introduced in the summer of 2018. Presentations at teacher conferences and training modules developed by WELS educators will continue to be offered over the next 18 to 24 months to help equip each teacher with a ministry development plan addressing both spiritual and professional growth. New evaluation tools are designed to provide more consistency in the evaluation of teachers and school leaders. Educators from Martin Luther College, Wisconsin Lutheran College, our directors at the Commission on Lutheran Schools, and experienced WELS teachers at early childhood through high school levels have collaborated to develop the research-based tools which follow best practices and scriptural principles.

The WELS Principal Standards and Continuum

WELS principal standards were developed in 2012 to help Martin Luther College develop a practical administration degree for principals. These standards may also aid current principals in reflective practice and ministry development planning. A continuum, similar to the teacher standards continuum, is being developed to aid in self-reflection. The standards and continuum will likely be released for general use in 2019.

WELS Principal Credential

In 2016, the Conference of Presidents adopted the concept of a WELS Principal Credential to help calling bodies identify individuals possessing the necessary characteristics, knowledge, and skills for a Lutheran school principal role. The credential was further endorsed by the 2017 synod convention as part of the 21st-Century Lutheran Principal Initiative.

The CECW envisions that competence in the WELS Principal Standards may be demonstrated through any of the following:

- Portfolios of successful ministry experience
- Transcripts of appropriate graduate-level coursework
- A graduate-level school administration degree that meets the standards, like MLC's MS in Educational Administration

The goal is to make the credential available in 2019. Current and prospective principals are asked to watch for further details as they become available.

The Pastor "Side" of Our Work

Our Current Situation

Many things reported elsewhere in the *Report to the Twelve Districts*, especially under Congregational Services, provide rich opportunities for pastors to be growing in faith and in their unique vocations. However, a considerable part of that work is entrusted to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) and **Grow in Grace** (the seminary's institute for pastoral growth). Grow in Grace seeks to partner with pastors for growth in all their callings under four main goals. Here is the current situation in pastoral growth under each goal.

EVENTS & COURSES: Grow in Grace seeks to deliver Christ-centered, accessible, and ministry impacting events and courses in the four theological disciplines.

- A revised Master of Sacred Theology (STM) program offers courses to pastors in nine areas of focused study designed to meet a pastor's unique gifts and the unique needs of his calling body.
- To make courses more available, WLS will be encouraging pastors to attend Summer Quarter in Mequon in even numbered years. Then, in odd numbered years, there will be district-wide satellite courses offered in as many districts as possible. Eight are already planned for 2019.

RETREATS & MENTORING: Grow in Grace seeks to provide collaborative opportunities for pastors to learn from one another and to gather with peers celebrating similar ministry milestones.

- **Mentoring: Pastor Partners** mentoring, formally adopted by the synod in 2015, provides new graduates with three years of focused encouragement from a trained pastoral mentor.
- **Retreats:** Each spring, Celebration of Ministry retreats invite pastors and wives to a time of worship, Bible study, and fellowship. There are four retreats offered at key ministry milestones: a year-3 retreat, a year-10 retreat, a year-25 retreat, and a year-35 retreat.

STRENGTHENING MINISTRY: Grow in Grace seeks to deliver gospel-rich resources that assist pastors *to partner* with others in honestly evaluating all their callings and *to plan* for growth with confidence.

- Grow in Grace has produced three essay/workbook resources to help pastors plan for growth. **Guard What Has Been Entrusted to Your Care** encourages pastors to guard the gifts of time, faith, health, and brothers/sisters. **Reclaiming Our Christ-Centered Lutheran Devotional Heritage** helps pastors strengthen their devotional life. **Fan God's Gifts into Flame** helps pastors approach planning for growth from a biblical perspective.

GROWTH RESOURCES: Grow in Grace seeks to deliver informal resources useful for individual or group study that assist pastors to grow in all their callings.

- **The Shepherd's Study** is an online collection of reviews on books in every area of theology.

- **The Four Branches Review** is an e-newsletter shared with all pastors each month that offers a brief article of interest in each of the four areas of theological study.

A Look Ahead

Grow in Grace hopes to spend the next two years solidifying many of the initiatives mentioned above.

- Since Pastor Partners mentoring and the Celebration of Ministry retreats have proved a blessing to hundreds of pastors (and thousands of souls they serve), we will continue to strengthen that support system so that it can continue to be a blessing for many more pastors (and their wives).
- We also will continue to work hard to reach our goal of offering multiple courses each odd numbered year in all 11 districts beyond the Southeastern Wisconsin District, thereby potentially reaching hundreds of pastors with formal course opportunities.
- We also need to investigate how we might better use digital technology to reach more pastors with opportunities and resources for growth.