

WELS Support Committee

2016 Report to the Twelve Districts

Our Calling

“As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Galatians 6:10). As a synod, we take this calling seriously. The WELS Support Committee has been established by the synod to carry out Christ's love for our faithful called workers and/or their spouses who are now retired but do not have the financial resources to meet normal living expenses. The committee works through the district first vice-presidents to identify those individuals who have needs and provide them with the level of financial support that allows them to live with dignity and in reasonable comfort. Requests for support need to be made and approved in order for assistance to be provided. Application forms are used to determine the level of need when requests are made.

The following considerations affect the financial assistance the Support Committee provides.

- The fund is not an entitlement program.
- The fund is not an extension of the synod's pension plan. The financial assistance received is a charitable gift from the synod to called workers and/or their spouses in need.
- The fund is not established to provide temporary assistance for those who resigned from the ministry.
- The fund does not grant financial assistance to those who need assisted living and nursing home care.
- The fund is not intended to be the main source of income. Assets and other means of income are expected to be used first, with Support Committee income supplementing those resources.

Our Current Situation

The committee is composed of five district first vice-presidents of the WELS. The first vice president in every district is the contact person for the Support Committee. The Support Committee looks to local pastors, circuit pastors, and district officers to be alert to possible circumstances of need on the part of retired called workers and their surviving spouses living in their district. These pastors inform the retired called worker/spouse needing help of the possibility of receiving financial assistance from the Support Committee and, if needed, communicate this situation also to the chairman of the Support Committee. In 2017 there were 19 individuals, couples or family units throughout the Synod receiving support. The amount budgeted to provide support for these family units was an expenditure of \$250,000 for the year. Sometimes during the course of a year new requests are made to the support committee. We thank our Lord for enabling our synod to take care of all those who needed assistance in 2018.

A Look Ahead

The Support Committee continues to provide assistance to retired called workers and/or their surviving spouses as long as synod finances make it possible. At the beginning of 2018 there were 18 individuals or couples receiving support, calling for a monthly expenditure of \$14,315 and an annual anticipated expenditure of \$171,780. The Support Committee thanks Northwestern Publishing House for again covering the costs of *Forward in Christ*, *Meditations*, and *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* subscriptions to the recipients of funds in 2018.

Rev. Dennis Klatt
Rev. Joel D. Leyrer
Rev. Joel Nitz
Rev. Glenn Schwanke
Rev. Mark J. Johnston, chairman

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 it 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.

REFORMATION 500 COMMITTEE

Our Calling

President Mark Schroeder appointed the Reformation 500 Committee in 2009 in order to guide the celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. Our goals were to prepare educational materials that helped educate WELS and others on the important truths the Reformation brought to light and to prepare for the celebration without using funds from the WELS ongoing ministry. The Committee has completed its tasks and conclude our service with this final report.

Material Prepared

We created a poster and distributed the poster to all congregations at district meetings, and prepared a website to post Reformation events and information around the country including a daily quote from Luther's writings. We prepared materials to educate the pastors, teachers, laypeople and children. Those materials include:

- a Lenten kit for 2017 with sermons based on a Reformation theme, *Repent! Turn to Jesus!*;
- a Christmas kit, *From Heaven Above to Earth I Come*;
- three series of bulletin inserts;
- *Luther at the Manger*, a translation of some of Luther's Christmas sermons that can be used for devotional purposes;
- a new Reformation history, *Luther's Protest*;
- a book of new essays celebrating the Reformation, *Reformation 500: The Enduring Relevance of the Lutheran Reformation*;
- a translation by John Montgomery of a French work entitled *In Defense of the Lutheran Faith*;
- *The Word Endures*: two studies on Reformation themes
 - Lessons from Luther: Yesterday and Today (kit and download)*
 - Lessons from the Lives of Powerful Politicians (kit and download)*

Northwestern Publishing House also reissued earlier published books that are still important for various audiences. They include:

- *The Life and Faith of Martin Luther* (Fehlauer);
- *Martin Luther, Reformer in the Making* (Scharf);

- *Martin Luther and the Jews* (Tjernagel);
- *Martin Luther and the Long Reformation* (Kiecker);
- *Studies in the Smalcald Articles* (Meyer/Brenner);
- *In Defense of Martin Luther* (Montgomery); and
- Luther's *A Simple Way to Pray*. One version of this included Luther's Small Catechism (Enciridion)

NPH also published two projects that are related to the celebration of the Reformation:

- a new version of the exposition to Martin Luther's Catechism. This new exposition was developed with the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Education Department and includes several new features.
- the Evangelical Heritage Version (EHV) of the New Testament with Psalms.

With the financial help of Thrivent and the creative expertise of Boettcher/Trinklein, the company that does our *WELS Connection* videos, we created a new 105-minute Luther film entitled *A Return to Grace: Luther's Life and Legacy*. The film was shown in Grimma, Germany, at the meeting of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC). It is available for individual purchase through Northwestern Publishing House (NPH).

In September 2017, 360 public television stations have shown a version of the film on a Tuesday night primetime slot. Those stations reached nearly every household in America. The film was also available in Canada and many Caribbean countries the same night. Viewership on PBS doubled the network's usual ratings, and Nielsen ratings reported that more people watched the Luther film that night than watched anything on CBS, NBC, or Fox. PBS stations have been re-airing the film since and will rebroadcast the film over the next 5 years.

Congregations were able to show the film in neighborhood theaters with the help of TUGG. TUGG has placed 500 independent films in theaters and said the Luther film was the most-screened movie of them all. Over 1,000 WELS churches and others around the country hosted screenings in local theaters.

Netflix began streaming a version of the film in January 2018 and will continue to make it available through 2020. Netflix has more than 110 million subscribers in 190 countries. Working with Netflix, subtitles and foreign language dubbing have been added

to ensure maximum viewership. The film has aired in most major European countries including the UK, Germany, Poland, Ireland, and others.

NPH sales of *Return to Grace* are 4,224 DVDs.

Two Bible studies, available through NPH, for congregational use were prepared using video footage from the Luther film.

- The first, *A Return to Grace Bible Study*, a four-lesson Bible study, makes use of 10-minute segments from the Luther film to augment the class discussion.
- The second, *Reformation: Grace, Faith, Scripture*, is a 12-lesson Bible study using 12 short film vignettes (3-4 minutes each) to enhance the lessons. The lessons can be adapted as 15-minute Bible studies or as a longer Bible study.

A children's version of the Luther film, entitled *Luther Then—Lutherans Today*, was created also using video footage from the Luther film. It included a curriculum for children that teaches the meaning of Luther's work for their lives today.

Together with the Commission on Evangelism and Home Missions, material was prepared for four outreach events for congregations. These materials were created to assist congregations to invite their prospects and neighbors to visit and learn the importance of the Bible's teachings. The resources included:

- Special worship liturgies friendly to visitors to our churches
- Sermon studies for these special days
- Promotion, invitation, and follow-up materials with an emphasis on encouraging members to invite their friends and relatives.

Other activities

- Special music was commissioned by the Commission on Worship and presented at the National Conference on Worship Music and the Arts in June 2017. A chart of the commissioned works is at worship.welsrc.net/worship-conference-2017/. Several settings, accessible for congregational use, have been published. Eight settings appear on a double CD, "A Mighty Fortress," available from NPH.
- We encouraged congregations to extend loving and caring hands to those in need. We suggested that congregations pursue food pantries, domestic abuse safe houses, money management seminar, disaster relief, elderly care, prison ministry,

assistance to strangers, parenting seminar and resources, among other things.

We hope that congregational leaders will look for opportunities to show compassion and love to their communities.

- We praise God and remain grateful for all the time and energy that planned and carried out local events in congregations and larger Reformation gatherings across the country. God has richly blessed those who planned and those who participated in all these events.

A Time to Praise and Rejoice

Rejoice and praise God that he has preserved the truth of his Word to us 500 years since Luther sparked the Reformation and brought the church back to grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone, and Christ alone. We had a special historic opportunity to celebrate the blessings God has preserved to us through the Reformation. It was more than the celebration of history. It was even more an opportunity to help the members of our congregations and the communities in which God has placed them to proclaim again of God's grace in Christ.

We note with gratitude the contributions of Professor A. Koelpin, whom the Lord called home shortly after October 31, 2017.

The committee members include: J. Braun (NPH and Chair), C. Jahn (NPH), B. Gerlach (C/W), A. Koelpin (MLC), P. Koelpin (MLC), and J. Korthals (WLS).

Rev. John Braun, reporter

Our calling

WELS Ministry of Christian Giving (MCG) serves on behalf of the Conference of Presidents (COP) to encourage every WELS member to “excel in the grace of giving” through Christ. We consider it a privilege to help God’s people offer gifts to Jesus for his work in their congregations, synod, and other WELS organizations.

MCG assists the COP with their responsibility to fund the Lord’s work through our synod. This funding is provided through Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) as well as direct gifts to WELS from individuals and foundations.

- In the area of CMO, our efforts are focused on supplying congregations with information on ministry opportunities and needs as well as stewardship training resources.
- In the area of direct gifts from individuals, we regularly mail and e-mail appeals that explain our gospel work and encourage support of synodical ministries. We also provide information to donors about Christian estate planning and other planned giving options that allow them to give in a way that is beneficial for them, their families, and the ministries close to their hearts. Also, MCG supports Christian giving counselors (12.9 full time equivalents – some counselors are semi-retired) across all 12 districts of WELS to assist God’s people with gifts of any kind. Their services are free and confidential.
- Gifts from foundations often result from consultation between the MCG director, other synod leaders, and the foundations regarding funding of new ideas and enhancements to ministry.

Our current situation

Review of WELS Ministry of Christian Giving

A special committee appointed by the COP completed its review of the MCG in 2017 saying the MCG is well-positioned to help God’s people positively impact WELS ministry going forward. We encourage you to make use of our free, confidential assistance by contacting us at mcg@wels.net or 800-827-5482.

Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO)

In 2017, MCG and Communication Services helped the COP continue special videos and instruction letters personalized to each district that illustrated the work Jesus does through the areas of ministry supported by our CMO. We thank God and commend our congregations for their steady offerings year after year, which is a thankful response to Christ’s love. CMO for 2017 totaled \$21.4 million, which was 0.7 percent above commitments and 1.4 percent above prior year receipts. We were also pleased that 97 percent of eligible congregations submitted a CMO subscription for 2018. Subscriptions point to a decrease of 0.5 percent from 2017 actual offerings.

Christian giving counselors

Through face-to-face visits and presentations, our Christian giving counselors (CGCs) invite faith-prompted support of WELS ministries. This fiscal year, the CGCs have been distributing information about the “Tomorrow’s Ministry Begins Here” campaign for Michigan Lutheran Seminary (see below),

Congregational Services, Home and World Missions, the ministerial education schools, WELS Church Extension Fund, WELS Foundation, and the WELS endowments.

During each one of the past ten fiscal years (FY08-FY17), the CGCs have averaged (per full-time equivalent [FTE]) 291 meaningful face-to-face donor visits and have nurtured an average (per FTE) of \$497,078 in immediate gifts (ten-year total of \$63.9 million) and \$2,478,114 in deferred expectancies (ten-year total of \$320.6 million). In the first nine months of fiscal year 2017-18, WELS Christian giving counselors (12.5 FTEs) conducted 2,420 free, confidential visits with God's people and 244 presentations (Christian stewardship, Christian estate planning, or WELS Mission and Ministry) that helped facilitate \$4.8 million in gifts received for WELS and \$16.4 million in deferred expectancies for congregations, synod, and other WELS organizations. For the 2017-19 biennium, our church body is annually investing approximately \$1.5 million in our field staff and about \$500,000 in our office staff so we may serve Jesus, his gifted people, and our areas of ministry. In view of the ten-year totals for immediate gifts and deferred expectancies mentioned above, we thank our Lord for the generous return he's given our investment in the Ministry of Christian Giving.

Mr. Carl Leibner fully retired and Rev. Dr. Michael Dietz semi-retired on June 30, 2017, and Rev. Steve Staude fully retired on December 31, 2017. Mr. Scott Wagner accepted the call to serve as deferred CGC in the Dakota-Montana District beginning May 30, 2017. Rev. Phil Gieschen accepted the call to serve as current CGC in the Minnesota and Nebraska Districts beginning July 1, 2017. Mr. Mark Arnold accepted the call to serve as deferred CGC in the South Atlantic District beginning August 1, 2017. Rev. Jerry Ewings accepted the call to serve as current CGC in the Western Wisconsin District beginning January 1, 2018. We thank Carl Leibner and Steve Staude for their service to the Lord and his people and pray for God's blessings on the new counselors.

Our MCG office and Christian giving counselors regularly coordinate donor nurture efforts with Home and World Missions as well as our ministerial education mission advancement (MEMA) offices. One of our CGCs is assigned as our team's liaison to each ministerial education school. In addition to ongoing communication, MCG, MEMA, and Home/World Missions personnel participate in an annual face-to-face conference, and we meet via web conference about four times during the year. Such proactive coordination minimizes the potential for donor fatigue and any possible misunderstanding that our schools and areas of ministry are in competition for God's people's attention and support.

Campaigns to individuals

The WELS Conference of Presidents approves annual campaigns by WELS Christian giving counselors to individual donors. The 2016-17 "Every neighbor, every nation: WELS Missions and you" campaign to fund new missions initiatives involved 1,912 CGC visits resulting in more than 1,500 gifts totaling over \$727,000. Praise God for this generous response!

The 2017-18 campaign is for Michigan Lutheran Seminary, to gather funds for tuition assistance, capital projects, and reserve funds. As of early 2018, WELS Christian giving counselors have made 1,304 visits, including 223 joint visits with President Joel Petermann. Michigan Lutheran Seminary has received 651 immediate gifts totaling \$232,595. We're grateful to the Lord for his rich blessings on this campaign!

Appeals

MCG works closely with our WELS areas of ministry and ministerial education schools to send about 14 mailed appeals and four e-appeals per calendar year. Each of the synod's four main areas of ministry is featured in two of the mailed appeals and one e-appeal. Two of the appeals each year promote charitable gift annuities with WELS Foundation. The appeals coordinate with other WELS media including *WELS Connection* and *WELS Connection Close-up, Forward in Christ*, WELS' websites, and the *Together* e-newsletter. In fiscal year 2016-17, Ministry of Christian Giving mailings helped facilitate \$999,623 in immediate support for WELS with an average cost per dollar received of \$.16.

IRA charitable distribution opportunity

On December 18, 2015, Congress passed legislation to make permanent the giving opportunity known as the IRA qualified charitable distribution. With this type of gift, anybody 70.5 or older can make distributions from his or her IRA to charity tax-free for federal tax purposes. Over the last couple of years, MCG has worked to communicate this opportunity with our fellow saints via postcard mailings and counselor visits. WELS Foundation processed \$987,711 in qualified charitable distributions in 2017.

WELS endowment funds

MCG is working toward building up \$300 million in WELS endowment funds for the benefit of ministerial education and missions. As of early 2017 the WELS endowments had \$24.6 million in immediate gifts with another \$58.2 million expected from deferred gifts arranged by donors working with Christian giving counselors. The 2017 distribution from these endowments totaled \$832,338, including \$459,670 to Missions and \$372,667 to Ministerial Education.

We also encourage gifts to the WELS Operating Endowment Fund, which as of the end of 2017 had a balance of \$1,705,687. In 2017 this fund distributed \$58,146 to WELS.

Marketing of planned giving opportunities

At the suggestion of the WELS Foundation Board and through their generous financial support, WELS hired Sharpe Group to assess our current planned giving marketing efforts and create a five-year planned giving marketing plan to enhance our service to WELS donors and the long-term financial stability of WELS areas of ministry and WELS-affiliated ministries. Goals of the planned giving marketing program include increasing the number of known commitments to WELS ministry as well as seeing a growth in the number of matured (i.e., received) gifts in the coming years. The contents of this marketing plan—when thoroughly implemented—will positively affect the long-term revenues of WELS along with encouraging increased participation in ministry programs. In addition to increasing the number of planned gifts to WELS, Sharpe Group recommends regular nurture of the 3,200+ families who have previously arranged deferred expectancies with the assistance of our Christian giving counselors.

Development counsel to other organizations

We annually offer development training to Christian giving counselors, ministerial education mission advancement staff, and anyone serving a WELS/ELS-affiliated ministry in development. One goal of such

training is to encourage a consistent approach to God's people that's Christ-centered and donor-sensitive, and that minimizes the impression that we're competitors or trying to "get" something from our fellow Christians. Twenty-two individuals participated in our 2018 training.

WELS parasynodical organizations can formally contract with MCG in a part-time "collaborative partnership" where our counselors proactively represent their organizations on visits with members. This allows both WELS and the parasynodicals to share their ministry stories with a broader audience of prospective partners. MCG currently has part-time collaborative partnerships with Arizona Lutheran Academy, Costa Maya Ministries, and Friends of China.

Stewardship resources

MCG encourages biblical stewardship through our e-newsletter *An Encouraging Word* and the latest stewardship program. The latest program was *Joyful Generosity*, a program of worship, Bible study, and personal devotion that will guide followers of Christ through the Bible's clear teachings on the management of our possessions. MCG also makes available to congregations an archive of past stewardship programs on WELS Cloud.

Payment Card Industry compliance

In order to comply with the latest security guidelines, MCG and the WELS Ministerial Education schools stopped collecting credit card information on paper forms in early 2017. Instead people are directed to submit credit card gifts online or to call so that a staff member can submit the gift online on their behalf. Such online entry involves no storage of credit card data and minimizes opportunities for its interception. This transition has gone smoothly.

Ministry of Christian Giving Commission

At the 2017 synod convention, the Constitutional Matters committee retired the MCG Commission since adequate oversight of MCG is provided through the Conference of Presidents. We thank all commission members who have served to help direct the Ministry of Christian Giving.

A look ahead

Following are our goals and plans for 2018 and beyond:

- We will take a similar approach to communicating with congregations regarding 2018 CMO subscription setting, including personalizing a video and letter for each district.
- MCG will once again provide resources for congregations to hold a WELS Mission and Ministry Sunday, scheduled for October 21. The idea is to offer a traditional mission festival enhanced by worship, Bible study, and other materials provided by the synod. It is a chance to recommit ourselves toward the Great Commission locally and through the opportunities God is giving us as a synod. Any special offerings collected can go to the designation chosen by the congregation.
- Christian giving counselor Rev. Dennis Kleist will fully retire at the end of this year. We thank Dennis for his service to Jesus and his people with us! The Conference of Presidents will call

Dennis's successor in October. In addition, the COP called an additional full-time Christian giving counselor—authorized by the 2017 WELS convention—to start his work on July 1.

- WELS Christian giving counselors will conduct focused individual campaigns for Congregational Services in 2018-19 and Martin Luther College in 2019-21.
- We plan to continue encouraging gifts to WELS endowments with an annual appeal and counselor visits and presentations.
- Fully implementing the activities recommended by Sharpe Group will require the hiring of a full-time planned giving marketing coordinator in the MCG office. The planned giving marketing coordinator would be responsible for coordinating new and revised communications as well as targeting specific lists and analyzing results based on different approaches (market research and data analysis). The planned giving marketing coordinator would understand that these messages will be educational and inspirational rather than direct solicitations because those receiving the planned giving communications are already strong supporters of WELS. He or she would also assist with efforts to strengthen the database's capabilities in expectancy reporting and segmented planned giving donor communications, per Sharpe's recommendations.
- Our next WELS Christian Giving training for WELS/ELS advancement personnel will take place Jan. 9-11, 2019. Contact us to register or receive more information.
- WELS Ministry of Christian Giving, WELS Discipleship, and Northwestern Publishing House worked together to prepare and send a survey to parish pastors to learn the needs of congregations related to teaching stewardship. The results of the survey will guide the planning of the next stewardship program in 2019.

WELS Ministry of Christian Giving is privileged to serve God and you by helping to fund the ministries that touch the hearts of WELS members. We are happy that these gifts in response to Christ's love are helping us as a synod to fulfill our calling of proclaiming Jesus' name to more and more people.

Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, reporter



Our calling

Communication Services exists to assist the Conference of Presidents in communicating the mission of WELS to the members of the synod. It is responsible for the clear and consistent communication of the synod's mission from the synod's national office and for exploring, supporting, and expediting innovative media

usage and shared communication for WELS ministries and congregations. It is also responsible for reviewing and authorizing all new communications originating in the synod's national office. The staff consists of five full-time equivalents and one part-time.

Our current situation

The Communication Services staff is focused on working on the synod's major communication initiatives. The most important initiative is to coordinate the various WELS communications platforms so that they have a single, recognizable look and feel. The department's goal is also to layer key communications to address key topics simultaneously across main communication channels. The goal of Communication Services is to work with each area of ministry to identify their priorities—and then to communicate these priorities to laypeople and called workers alike through this cross-promotion, multi-platform strategy.

Forward in Christ, WELS' official monthly magazine with a print run of more than 36,000, provides its readers with inspirational and informative articles focused on God's grace as well devotions, Bible studies, and synod news items. Many of the magazine's stories are posted on the wels.net website and on our social media platforms to reach a broader member and unchurched audience. If you would like to become a subscriber, contact Northwestern Publishing House at 1-800-662-6093, ext. 5613; nphperiodicals@nph.wels.net or order online at nph.net/fic.

WELS Connection, the monthly video viewed in nearly nine hundred congregations, is entering its 31st year of providing stories that highlight the important work happening as a result of our Congregation Mission Offerings. Northwestern Publishing House handles the subscription process and offers two annual subscription rates: \$95 for the downloadable version and \$105 for a DVD that is mailed three times per year. The monthly video is also posted on wels.net and the WELS Facebook page the month after it is viewed by the local congregations, further expanding the audience reached of these stories.

WELS Connection Close-up, the print companion piece to the video presentation, has a print run of 130,000 per month and showcases an area of ministry each month and presents to our members an actionable opportunity and response.

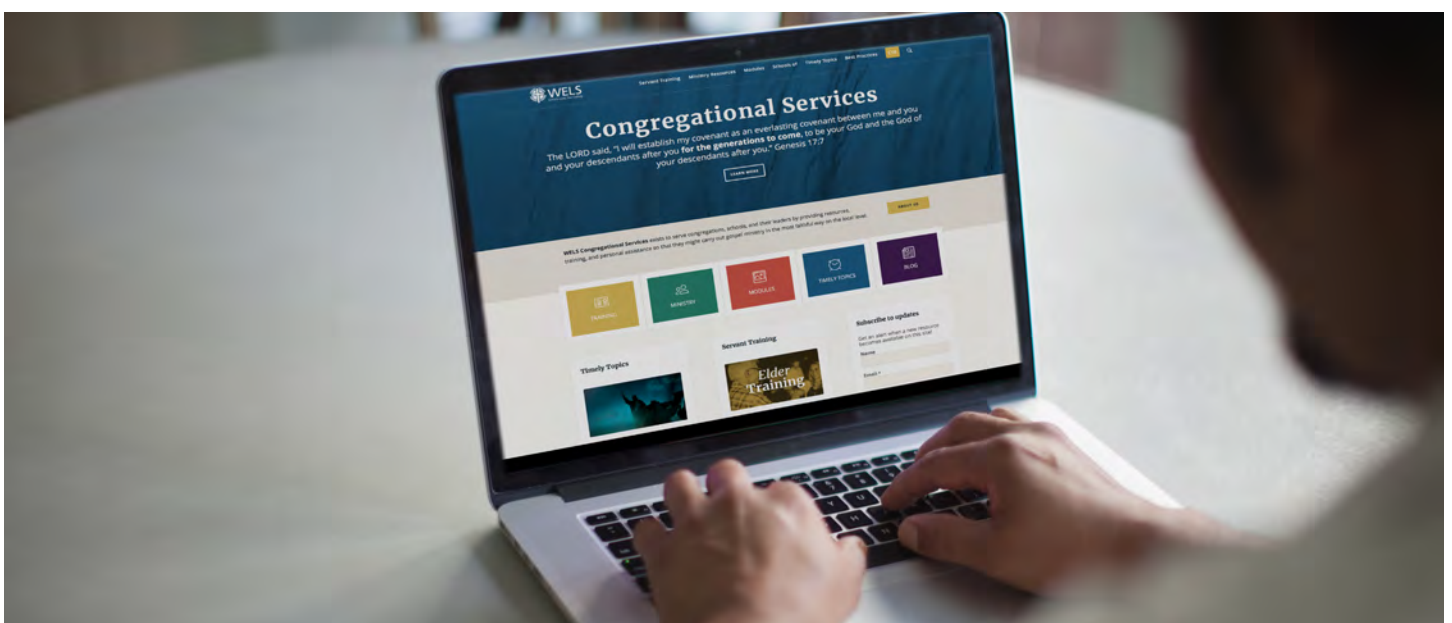
Together, a bi-weekly e-newsletter, is e-mailed to more than 9,000 subscribers the first and third Tuesday of each month. The stories are posted on wels.net and more than three hundred congregations also use the print version as a bulletin insert. This newsletter reports on the news and events within our synod that every WELS member should know. Our *Together* subscribers also receive a bi-weekly *Together* video update. Each video highlights an interesting synod news item that features an interview with a newsmaker.

The synod's official website, **wels.net**, continues to provide timely content for both synod members and non-members who want to learn more about WELS and what we believe as confessional Lutherans. The annual number of page views continues to remain strong at more than 3 million. About 31 percent of users are new visitors, with unique users totaling more than 436,000. One-third access the site via a mobile device and we offer a WELS mobile app which has been downloaded more than 20,000 times.

Communication Services remains committed and able to continue developing content for all other essential internal communication tools, including *Book of Reports and Memorials*, convention delegate's booklet, *Report to the Twelve Districts, Proceedings*—the official record of each synod convention, live streaming major WELS events, and video reporting of synod convention proceedings.

Here is a list of recently completed projects:

- In October, *Forward in Christ* (FIC) magazine created a special Reformation issue featuring a keepsake insert that included a timeline on the development of Lutheranism. We mailed every congregation that is not an FIC subscriber (500+) a complimentary copy with a letter from Rev. John Braun encouraging them to become new FIC subscribers.



- The **WELS Visitor Center** located in the lower level of the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry continues to draw our members to the synod headquarters. During the past 12 months we have conducted 52 tours including more than 1,000 visitors. The visitor center includes a visual timeline of WELS' history as well as informational kiosks on areas of ministry. Guests watch a video highlighting WELS mission and ministry and receive a tour of the Center for Mission and Ministry. This new welcome center allows us to introduce visitors to our synod's history and to educate our members on the important work the Lord allows WELS to accomplish through his grace.
- Last year Communication Services created all promotional print items and did multiple stories in *Together* for the **Church Extension Fund Special Rates campaign** to attract new investors. During a six-month period the campaign added \$18 million in new investments and dozens of new investors.
- **Interactive Faith online Bible studies** are held twice per year. Led by a pastor or professor, these one-hour studies are broadcast live via the WELS Livestream page of wels.net. Many congregations gather as a group for the Wednesday night study; other WELS members connect online as couples or individuals. Postcards, posters, and worship folder inserts are created and mailed to every congregation to promote the Bible studies.
- Communication Services provides monthly digital display graphics for churches and schools to inform members of WELS events and programs supported by their Congregation Mission Offerings. This **Ministry Media Kit** is e-mailed to every congregation the first week of each month.

A look ahead

The synod's long-range plan states:

Worldwide Identity as Confessional Lutherans

As we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 and the 175th anniversary of WELS in 2025, we are engaging Christian leaders around the world to join with confessional Lutherans in North America and beyond so that by 2025 the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) will be more widely known as a confessional Lutheran church body firmly founded on the Holy Scriptures and joyfully partnering to proclaim the saving love of Jesus Christ in Word and sacrament to as many people as possible around the globe.

What you will recognize

- WELS materials will present the gospel with remarkable clarity as an authentic voice of the confessional evangelical Lutheran church.

What may look new

- Existing Christian church bodies around the world will be training their pastors and other called workers with WELS materials and personnel in order to become authentic Lutherans.

To accomplish these goals, the following major initiatives are planned for the next year of the biennium:

- Creative Services Coordinator Briana Lambrecht is designing the new **Congregational Services website** under Rev. Jon Hein's direction. The video content for the new website is in production using the studio in the lower level of the Center for Mission and Ministry and the Boettcher-Trinklein studios in Cedarburg, Wis.

- The **2018 WELS International Youth Rally** will be held this summer at Bowling Green State University in Ohio under the theme Never Alone. Nearly 2,000 young people will gather for workshops on relationships, social networking, dealing with temptations, finding ways to serve at home and abroad, and making decisions beyond high school. Communication Services created a logo for the event along with the layout and design for all print materials including a promotional booklet, poster, and bulletin insert.
 - Thousands of WELS members continue to attend the **WELS Night at Miller Park** baseball game every summer. This annual event is a chance to meet WELS members throughout the Midwest in a casual setting while promoting our synod to the greater Milwaukee area. The date for the 5th annual WELS Night at Miller Park event is Fri., Aug. 3, 2018.
 - Social media is an ever increasing communications platform and tool to reach our members on a consistent almost daily basis. Our Facebook page, [facebook.com/weslutherans](https://www.facebook.com/weslutherans) has experienced a 100% increase in “likes” to our page in the past year with more than 75,000 followers. We post 2-3 content items daily to encourage
- more interaction and sharing from our followers. We also have an Instagram account, [@weslutherans](https://www.instagram.com/weslutherans), with more than 3,000 followers and a Twitter account and Vimeo channel. We use social media as a communications and marketing tool for the all-synod conferences and events. It is a great way for parents, family, and friends of the participants to keep up-to-date on events happening in their synod.
- *Your gifts, God's blessings: An annual report to our members* is distributed to every WELS congregation each January, and a copy was included in the Ministry of Christian Giving annual statement to each synod donor. Free print versions of the report are available from Northwestern Publishing House. You may access the online version at wels.net/annualreport. Christian giving counselors are provided a PowerPoint presentation that summarizes the information in the annual report.
 - Content needed for the next Ministry of Christian Giving annual individual donor campaign featuring Congregational Services is nearing completion. The campaign theme is **“For Generations to Come”** and will be available this fall.





WELS COMMISSION ON CONGREGATIONAL COUNSELING 2018 REPORT TO THE TWELVE DISTRICTS

“Christ’s Love, Our Calling”

Our Calling

The Commission on Congregational Counseling (CCC) assists WELS congregations to assess and evaluate ministry, review biblical teachings and principles that impact ministry, develop plans to adjust and expand ministry in appropriate ways, and carry out their plans over a period of time.

The CCC is one of six commissions within Congregational Services, along with: Discipleship, Evangelism, Lutheran Schools, Special Ministries, and Worship. The CCC’s consultation work with congregations helps to identify common needs. The other commissions then provide resources, training, and personal assistance to help meet those needs.

The CCC serves under the Conference of Presidents (COP), providing a means to offer encouragement and support to their congregations. In that capacity, the CCC also analyzes and quantifies trends within the synod to aid in planning our joint ministry efforts.

Our Current Situation

Leadership changes

Since 2014, Rev. Jonathan Hein had served as an in-parish director, splitting his time between CCC work and his local congregation in Summerville, SC. In April 2017, the COP called Rev. Hein to take up the CCC work full time, asking him to operate the CCC offices out of WELS Center for Mission and Ministry in Pewaukee, WI and to also become the coordinator for Congregational Services. Rev. Hein accepted the call and began in that expanded role in September 2017.

Current programs

The CCC offers three programs to congregations.

SELF-ASSESSMENT AND ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM (SAA)

The SAA program consists of four phases:

1. *Establishment phase* – Here a congregation works through a community profile, a congregational profile, and an electronic pulse survey. This allows both the congregation and their assigned counselor to have a more complete understanding of the congregation’s current ministry context.
2. *Assessment phase* – This is the heart of the SAA program. An assigned CCC counselor is on site. On Saturday, he leads the congregation in a daylong Bible study about various aspects of ministry: worship, outreach, discipleship, youth ministry, fellowship, stewardship, etc. The congregation looks at Biblical principles in each of these areas and then discusses ways to adjust or expand local ministry in the areas.
3. *Adjustment phase* – The counselor produces a detailed report, summarizing important findings from the community and congregational profile, as well as the pulse survey. Most importantly, he makes recommendations based on the congregation members’ proposals to adjust or expand ministry. Those



recommendations will often include using various resources produced by the other commissions within Congregational Services.

4. *Implementation phase* – For up to ten months, the counselor will remain in contact with the congregational leadership, offering ongoing encouragement and advice as the congregation works at implementing the ministry adjustments.

It is important to stress the “S” in the SAA program. Self-analysis. Self-adjustment. The view of the CCC is not that the counselors are outside experts who will tell congregations the right way to do ministry. A CCC counselor cannot understand a congregation or a community as well as the people who have been there for years. Thus, the counselor serves to facilitate healthy discussion among the congregational members about how they might best serve the kingdom. He provides an objective set of eyes and ears as the congregation looks at the situation. He also helps the congregation to find the resources they need to adjust and expand ministry as they themselves determine best.

MINISTRY ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING EVALUATION (MOSE)

The MOSE program is the most comprehensive program offered by the CCC. Over the course of several months, a counselor and congregation work together to do three things.



1. *Evaluate the congregation’s ministry and ministry context.* - This includes doing the community and congregational analysis done in the SAA program. However, it also includes examining (or producing) the congregational strategic planning process: the definition of mission, the clarification of core values, the envisioning of the desired future, and the formation of goals that attempt to move the congregation from the current reality towards that desired future. The end result of this step is a long-range plan for the congregation to utilize moving forward.
2. *Evaluate the congregation’s organization.* - With a long-range plan in hand, the congregation now considers whether they are properly organized to implement that plan. This includes looking at church governance. It includes looking at the processes the congregation uses to convert long-range goals into annual objectives. It includes evaluating the congregation’s current method of maintaining plan performance.
3. *Evaluate the congregation’s staffing.* - This final step evaluates what is needed in the way of human resources to implement the long-range plan. It looks at the volunteerism potential within the congregation and implements programs to increase it. It looks at the skill sets and interests of called workers and hired staff in an effort to aid them in their congregational service and get them the resources they need to carry out their responsibilities well. Finally, this step may include recommendations for staff expansion.

SCHOOL OF STRATEGIC PLANNING (SPP)

The School of Strategic Planning expands the various “schools” offered by WELS Congregational Services, such as the Commission on Evangelism’s *School of Outreach* and the Commission on Worship’s *School of Worship Enrichment*.

The *School of Strategic Planning* brings groups of congregations together—the pastors and the church council—for a weekend. At these workshops learn about the various components of a strategic plan: a mission statement, clarifying core values, appropriate goal setting, producing a ministry plan and subsequent action plan, plan review, setting long range objectives, leadership development, etc. In breakout groups, the presenter(s) works with congregations to actually produce some of these components.



Combined, these three programs have served over 180 congregations. One of the bigger challenges with the programs is demand. For SAA and MOSE, there is typically a waiting period.

Conclusion of the demographic study

In 2015, at the request of the COP, the CCC began a two year study of demographic trends in WELS. The study focused on three things.

1. The overall “greying” of WELS.
2. The ability of WELS to retain or gain members of the millennial generation.
3. The challenges facing our rural congregations.

The study included asking congregations to provide the number of members they have in a number of different age categories. Moving forward, that information will be asked for in every year that is evenly divisible by five.

The study resulted in a comprehensive demographic report that was presented to the synod in convention in 2017. You can find a full copy of the report here - <https://tinyurl.com/welsdemographics>. You can find a video summary of the report here - <https://vimeo.com/228716352>.

MissionInsite: a powerful new tool

The CCC has negotiated a contract with MissionInsite, a company that provides extremely detailed demographic information for religious organizations.

The founder of MissionInsite had previously founded the Percept Group. (Many WELS congregations and district mission boards have ordered “percept studies” in an effort to better understand their community.) MissionInsite’s data is more current, being updated every six months. Moreover, instead of having to pay \$200 for each percept study, the contract with MissionInsite lets any WELS congregation or entity (such as a DMB) run as many reports as they would like.

Congregations are even able to upload a membership roster, which MissionInsite will then plot and use to compare the congregation with the community. Congregations can also use that feature to group members regionally, to find which members are near a new prospect, etc. (That membership data is available *only* to the local congregation.)

If you would like to have a congregation member receive access to MissionInsite, contact Maxine Neumann at maxine.neumann@wels.net. Again, it is entirely free for your congregation to run as many reports as you want. Please note, while very intuitive, it takes some time to learn all the features of MissionInsite. That training is provided through video tutorials offered by MissionInsite.



Shepherd Resources: a way to share

The 2015 synod in convention passed a memorial asking the CCC to produce an “online repository” where pastors could share ministry resources they had produced. That repository has been complete for over a year. It is located at www.shepherdresources.org.

Shepherd Resources requires pastors to store their shared resources in a platform like Google Drive (which is free). The pastors then provide descriptions of the resources and share the links on Shepherd Resources. Those links are “tagged” in a number of ways—by keyword, by user rating, etc.—and those tags are fully searchable.

Shepherd Resources is a way to share anything that might be useful to other pastors, such as Bible studies, worship plans, worship folder templates, evangelism materials, newsletters, devotions, and ministry plans. As more pastors become registered users and upload materials, Shepherd Resources will be even more useful.



A Look Ahead

Online Resource Center

The Congregational Services report in the RTTD highlights the development of an online resource center. The CCC resources you will find there are meant to aid in congregational planning. New resources will be added every six months.

Merging Congregations

One of the biggest CCC projects for 2019 will be producing resources that help congregations work through the possibilities of merging. This is becoming a common consideration, especially in the Midwest, as congregations that are in decline will often consider merging with a sister congregation in an effort to revitalize ministry and operate more cost effectively. However, for a merger to go well, there are a number of preliminary steps that need to take place. The resources produced by the CCC will walk leadership teams from congregations through those steps.

Circuit Pastor Assistance

Currently, the two most common requests the CCC receives for assistance come from congregations that 1) want to work through the Self-Assessment and Adjustment program, or 2) want help in considering how to undergo a merger with another WELS church. When the requests become voluminous, it necessitates a waiting period. To enable us to get help to churches more quickly, in 2019 the CCC will begin to offer training in those two programs to circuit pastors, at the request of the district. Participating circuit pastors would be able to offer a congregation a very abbreviated version of the SAA program, as well as facilitate discussion of how to approach a congregational merger.

National Conference on Lutheran Leadership

The Congregational Services report in the RTTD mentions the national leadership conference that will be held in early 2020, likely in the Chicago area. The CCC is working at securing funding to offset much of the cost of this conference in an effort to make it as affordable as possible for our congregations. Still, it would be wise for congregations to consider budgeting for the conference, which will be valuable for all types of congregational leaders: pastors, lay leaders, principals, etc.

For more information

If you would like more information about the CCC or any of its programs, please contact Jonathan Hein at jonathan.hein@wels.net or 414-256-3227.

Respectfully submitted,
The members of the CCC

Jonathan Hein, director/reporter
David Scharf, chairman
Richard Gurgel
James Huebner, advisory
Adam Mueller
Doug Tomhave

2018 Report to the Twelve Districts – supplemental online report

WELS Commission on Worship

<http://worship.welsrc.net/>

Our Calling

The Commission on Worship (C/W) exists to help parishes in their central activity of worship that glorifies God and strengthens his people. Music and liturgy consume much of the commission's time, but "worship" includes far more: an interest in the style, the forms, and the setting of worship; in preaching; in liturgical orders and rites; in church music for the congregation, choir, soloists, and instruments; in architecture and ecclesiastical arts.

Worship is the heart of all parish life, the time when the greatest number of members gathers to proclaim the gospel and receive God's life-giving power in Word and sacrament.

If you are a delegate and have never explored the work of the Commission on Worship, you can get a good idea of its scope by reviewing content at the new Congregational Services website as well as the older Commission on Worship website (above), which still contains the greatest amount of content.

Excellence in Worship

The Congregational Services report emphasizes the following as one CS goal:

Congregational Services has prioritized programs that have as their goal "opening the front door" (adding new members through outreach) and "shutting the back door" (preventing members from leaving their congregation and synod).

A major component of "member satisfaction" and "visitor impact" is excellence in worship. Excellence does not mean difficulty beyond the reach of average parishes. The following points were made in a welcome letter to attendees at the 2017 WELS national worship conference:

Perhaps for most of us the conference is a triennial battery charge – an inspirational encouragement to return to small and medium and large parishes (a distinct minority) . . . and do our best. As we ponder what "best" means, it's good to remember two points.

Excellence is not elitist. The beautiful tone of children singing on pitch and with beautiful blend is impactful to anyone with ears to hear. The precision of Bach played well or a moving concertato communicates across generations.

Excellence is not difficult. But not everyone can play Bach. So note that some musical selections are actually quite simple (especially in some repertoire sessions). These can be achieved at the piano or with a handful of singers and high school instrumentalists. Excellence is not replicating an orchestra; it's doing the best you can with the resources you have!

May this conference encourage each of you Reformation heirs to return home and proclaim the gospel in word, music, and art to the best of your ability – for the edification of those you serve and for the glory of our saving God!

And WELS President Mark Schroeder, in his conference welcome letter, wrote:

It's been said that one of the main reasons why people are tempted to move away from liturgical worship is because liturgical worship is often done poorly. That happens when

worship takes place with little planning, thought, or creativity. We recognize the value and attractiveness of worship done well. That is why this conference has been planned, and that is why you have taken time from your busy schedule to attend.

Hymnal Project

While there are many ways to encourage and pursue worship excellence, most members of the C/W in recent years have been preoccupied with the forthcoming new WELS hymnal, serving on various hymnal project committees. See a separate online report for hymnal project details. Additional information is here: www.welshymnal.com.

After agreeing with Northwestern Publishing House on an earlier release (Advent 2021 instead of 2024), workflow increased significantly for the Executive Committee and for seven subcommittees. Since May of 2016 when meeting frequency increased, the hymnal project has become the primary focus for the C/W and the Worship office, along with the 2017 national worship conference and various consulting opportunities.

The National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts

With over 1000 attendees, the national worship conference is the largest worship conference among North American Lutheran church bodies (including events sponsored by the pan-Lutheran Association of Lutheran Church Musicians), even though WELS is one of the smaller Lutheran synods. The 2017 triennial conference, with strong emphasis on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, was June 13-16, at Carthage College, Kenosha, Wis.



Worship conference opening concert, high school honor choir in foreground. Additional photos are included at the end of this report.

Worship conferences contribute to WELS efforts at continuing education and pursuit of excellence. Several of the typically 60 presentations relate to the intersection of worship and outreach. Many presentations advance the education and expertise of those who serve us in worship, both called workers and lay leaders. Some topics focus on themes meant to strengthen our unity as expressed in worship. All enable us better to proclaim “Christ’s Love, Our Calling” to both the found and the lost.

Double CD of 2017 worship conference highlights

A double CD of musical highlights is available from Northwestern Publishing House. The title, “A Mighty Fortress,” is no surprise in the year of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The conference featured five settings of the great Reformation hymn. Three are included in the CDs. Selections from the 35 tracks range from soft solo piano to full orchestra, choir, and a “congregation” of 1,400. Included are tracks featuring Canticum Novum, Children’s Choir, High School Honor Choir, Festival Choir, recitals, and newly commissioned selections.

Stock number: 388157 (CW38-8157).

<http://online.nph.net/music-video/cds/wels-worship-conference.html>



This is a limited edition release. Order soon to assure availability. A limited number of CDs from past earlier conferences is also available, most at reduced prices.

Worship conference resources

Those who didn’t attend the conference can still benefit from many of its resources. Various items are available for free download (<https://worship.welsrc.net/worship-conference-2017/>): workshop handouts, service folders, repertoire lists, presentation files (both PowerPoint and PDF versions), and photos.

The plenary address by hymnal project director Michael Schultz was “A Reformation Perspective on Worship.”

2021 Worship Conference

This conference has been held every three years since 1996. But we are skipping 2020 for a variety of reasons, mainly to better take advantage of new hymnal resources and to link the summer conference with the fall release of the new hymnal. In addition, 2021 avoids competition with some other national WELS events in 2020.

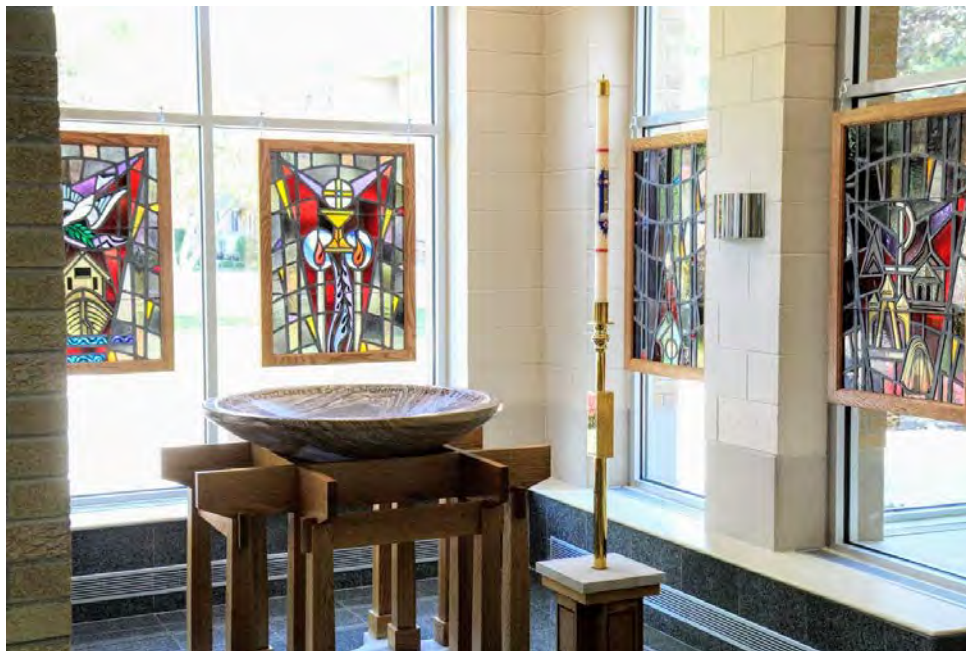
Worship the Lord Series

All back issues from the inception of this publication in 2003 are available online. Many of the topics discussed are timeless – valuable reading for church musicians and pastors, some useful for study by worship committees or boards of elders (those usually charged with responsibility for worship). In addition to PDF copies at the links below, articles since 2015 have been available also in a blog format, welcoming comments, at <https://wels.net/news-media/blogs/worship-blogs/>. Here two themes are highlighted.

Renovations

A nine-part series on renovations in churches large and small concluded in January 2018. While each article deals with specific challenges in specific situations, the general principles are applicable to most any renovation project – as well as new construction.

<https://worship.welsrc.net/download-worship/worship-the-lord-renovation-projects/>



A new baptistry at Luther Preparatory School features stained glass windows rescued from the pre-1995 chapel. See story at the link above. At right: close-up of the font.

See also an 11-part series on church architecture.

<https://worship.welsrc.net/download-worship/wtl-church-architecture/>

Children in worship

A new four-part series begins in the summer of 2018. The author is Pastor Phil Huebner, Campus Pastor at Wisconsin Lutheran High School.



For additional information, contact Rev. Bryan Gerlach,
414-256-3265 or bryan.gerlach@wels.net.

Rev. Bryan Gerlach, reporter

Rev. Jon Zabell, chairman, Green Bay, WI

Rev. Jason Hacker, secretary, Waukesha, WI

Teacher Kevin Bode, Tempe, AZ

Rev. Aaron Christie, Waukesha, WI

Mr. Harvey Dunn, Loveland, CO

Mr. Craig Hirschmann, MLC, New Ulm, MN

Advisory:

Rev. Bryan Gerlach, director

Mr. Jeremy Bakken, Northwestern Publishing House

Prof. Joel Otto, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Rev. Michael Schultz, Hymnal Project Director

*Photos, clockwise from right: Reformation service procession,
Reformation service communion, children's choir and high school
honor choir.*



Hymnal Project

We are privileged and pleased to provide for district convention delegates and others this update on the WELS Hymnal Project.

Committees have been at work since 2013. All of the committee members have come to grips with the fact that the scope of our work is very broad. More and more with every passing month we understand why the hymnal committee that produced *Christian Worship* took eight to ten years to do its work. It matters a great deal that we compile the best worship resources possible. Doing so requires countless hours of research and work and tremendous attention to detail. Our focus continues to be on the scriptural integrity and Christ-centeredness of the resources we are seeking to provide, on both preserving and producing faith-strengthening materials for worshipers today and in generations to come. Our goal continues to be to bring forward texts and music which will serve people of all ages in a broad array of contexts, so that through Scripture and rites and hymns and psalms, God will be glorified and his people edified.

We have established the target date of Advent 2021 for the release of the majority of these resources. According to that timeline, our Executive Committee is planning to review and approve final content for all resources by December 2019. We realize that this is an ambitious schedule, especially since there are currently at least 17 print books that will ultimately be produced as part of our work, plus the digital products. We certainly look to the Lord to strengthen us and enable us to carry out the work according to this timeline.

Prior to the 2016 *Report to the Twelve Districts* we had taken four national surveys as part of our research. Subsequent to that report being given, we have in the past two years been field testing materials from all of the committees responsible for producing content. The Psalmody Committee tested a number of new musical settings of psalms. The Hymnody Committee sent out dozens of musical files that supported half a dozen existing hymns, and later sought reactions to half a dozen new hymns. The Rites Committee tested "The Service," an updated Holy Communion service with two different musical settings. The Scripture Committee completed its extensive, year-long testing of all three of the lectionary years. While these field tests involved a substantial amount of work for committee members, we are at the same time extremely thankful to the pastors and members of congregations who were willing to make the local adjustments and do the work of trying out these materials. Without exception, the feedback we received was informative and helpful.

We have also recently concluded a nine-part series of articles on hymns in *Forward in Christ* magazine. That series was linked to a national survey regarding the "keep/cut" list of existing hymns. Both by the voting and by additional comments written in through the project website (www.welshymnal.com), we received the feedback which will help to ensure that we are not making decisions on our own but are being sensitive to hymns which people treasure. These survey results and comments will be factored into the continuing formulation of the final hymn list.

What follows is a brief update on other details of the work, new since the last report in 2016.

Psalmody Committee (PC) – The PC has compiled a first draft of “hymnal psalms,” those psalms (64 of them) which are appointed in the three-year lectionary and will be printed in the front part of the hymnal. The PC has since moved on to selecting the balance of musical settings for the rest of the 150 psalms. These will appear in a self-standing psalter – a book that contains the full text of all 150 psalms, multiple musical settings of each psalm, as well as a psalm prayer and notes (such as Luther quotes) for each psalm. Psalm settings in both the hymnal and psalter will reflect a broad variety of musical styles in comparison to the single style used in CW.

Hymnody Committee (HC) – Having finished its first pass of reviewing and selecting the existing *Christian Worship* and *CW: Supplement* hymns which will appear in the next book, the HC has been reviewing thousands of new (or “new to us”) hymns, has selected hundreds of hymns for further review, and has processed dozens of hymns through three levels of review for possible inclusion in the new book. This pipeline of new hymns is running each week and will run until approximately the spring of 2019. The last part of the 2

019 calendar year will involve the complex, multi-committee work of balancing the hymns by category and genre and other factors to arrive at a final hymn list. The goal for harmonizations is that the hymnal be a “singers’ book.” This will result, in comparison to CW, in more settings that can be sung in harmony and easier settings. A subcommittee has also drafted a new Hymn of the Day list. This is a pre-selected hymn which congregations may use each week and be confident that it is rich in gospel content and fits well with the readings of the day.

Rites Committee (RC) – Since the liturgical services are used so regularly in many congregations, it is critical that every detail of these services be closely analyzed and carefully crafted. This is another part of the intensive detail of the project. The RC will soon have a first draft of the rites that will appear in the front part of the hymnal. This includes worship services with which WELS members are familiar: three Holy Communion services, Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Prayer at the Close of Day, and various other rites and devotions. Additional musical variety for these services will be available in digital resources. As soon as those services have been finalized, the RC will work on seasonal services (such as Holy Week services) and collections of prayers. The RC found it necessary to start a subcommittee to work on *The Agenda*, the book in which appear special rites such as ordination of a pastor, reception of new members, or a groundbreaking ceremony. The Agenda committee is working side by side with the RC to have all of these rites ready for release in 2021.

Communications Committee (CC) – Some of the work of the CC has been mentioned in various items above such as all the various field testing efforts and the survey regarding the “keep/cut” list of hymns. With the bulk of survey work now complete, the CC will continue to operate the project website, will begin a new series of blog articles, and will continue to coordinate project updates at conferences and conventions. The CC also has a strong desire to stay in touch with schools and with the younger generation, as it has done in the past with the favorite hymn surveys which were taken among schools. To that end, the CC is making plans to have press releases on the *WELS Kids Connection* and through the WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools.

Scripture Committee (SC) – The SC had to do diligent work in the first months and years of the project so that the three-year lectionary could be completed. That allowed for the PC to work on and complete the hymnal psalms which are based on lectionary appointments. It also allowed the HC to work on its Hymn of the Day selections and it will be used to generate the lists of suggested hymns for each Sunday. A major part of worship planning from Sunday to Sunday is dependent on the church calendar and the lectionary, both of which the SC has now completed. The SC will review the language of the creeds and the Lord’s Prayer. The large remaining project for the SC is a series of books called Commentary on the Propers. Pastors familiar with “Planning Christian Worship” will truly appreciate this expanded commentary on the lectionary. It spells out the theme established by the Gospel and lays out the connectedness of the lessons for each Sunday.

Technology Committee (TC) – The three initiatives of the TC are still in place: 1) TC is working to develop a Service Builder product which includes all the digital assets of the hymnal project and allows the user to both plan worship and formulate high quality service folders ready for printing. This is a product which would definitely and dramatically decrease the amount of weekly time needed to generate excellent service folders. 2) Musicians’ Resource is an online e-commerce site for purchasing additional music (lead sheets, alternate accompaniments, descants, brass, etc.) for all of the hymns, psalms, and rites across the entire line of resources. A ten-member committee has just been formed to compile these musical files for the hymns. 3) TC will also be looking at working on a Personal App for phone or tablet. Individuals could use this hymnal resource devotionally to read or play or sing hymns and psalms, to convert hymnal texts into large print, or to preview items scheduled for upcoming worship. The possibilities for such a product, of course, are nearly limitless as technology continues to advance.

As print products move toward finalization and production, the above-mentioned digital products naturally follow behind the print materials. They will be developed closer to the end of the project so as to be sure to make use of the latest and best technology. A subcommittee of the TC is also responsible for the conceptual design and layout of all the print products. We anticipate having an extremely well-designed family of resources, whose legibility and user-friendliness are at the highest levels.

Manuals – Four manuals are being produced. Since these manuals are dependent on finished content which is just beginning to emerge, the work on these books has also just begun. The manuals will be aimed at four audiences: pastors, musicians, parish groups (such as altar guilds, elders, ushers), and lay people (devotions on worship).

Handbook – A hymnal handbook or companion is the volume which provides the background on hymns and the biographical information on authors, translators and composers. The information in *Christian Worship: Handbook* is being updated and will be made available in an online resource.

Hymnal Introduction Program – We are pleased that Rev. Adam Mueller of Redeemer, Tucson, Ariz., has accepted the chairmanship of the Hymnal Introduction Program. The introduction of the new hymnal will take place as a corps of trained presenters gathers with groups of congregations around the country to fully introduce the new hymnal line and the tools which will provide for the most beneficial use of these materials.

Members of the WELS hymnal project are very interested in providing for congregations of our church body a curated set of resources, i.e., materials that have been carefully reviewed for doctrinal soundness and musical excellence, materials which can be trusted and put to beneficial use. We look forward to the day in the not too distant future when a hymnal project update will have become a hymnal introduction program, the day when we will have these materials in hand and digitally available, the day when we can share with WELS members how these materials can serve them well in church, in school, and in the home, for decades to come.

Reporting for the WELS Hymnal Project,
Rev. Michael D. Schultz, director

Rev. Jon Zabell, chairman
Rev. Daniel Sims, secretary
Rev. Caleb Bassett, Technology Committee
Rev. Jonathan Bauer
Rev. Aaron Christie, Hymnody Committee
Rev. Bryan Gerlach, director of the Commission on Worship
Teacher Michael Marquardt, Communications Committee
Rev. Jonathan Micheel, Rites Committee
Rev. Paul Prange, Psalmody Committee
Rev. Jonathan Schroeder, Scripture Committee
Prof. James Tiefel
Rev. Keith Wessel, Agenda Book Committee

WELS Commission on Evangelism

The Commission on Evangelism exists to assist congregations and members to seize every opportunity the Lord provides to evangelize lost souls. Our service to WELS is:

1. To develop and promote evangelism resources which faithfully proclaim the truth of Scripture.
2. To promote evangelism attitudes, structures, and programs consistent with Christian doctrine and the situation into which God has called a church, its called workers, and its people.
3. To promote the "equipping of the saints" for both organized congregational evangelism and individual Christian witness.

School of Outreach

A main objective of the WELS Commission on Evangelism is to assist every WELS congregation with specific and ongoing guidance for evangelism planning, organization, and implementation of outreach strategies. The School of Outreach continues to be an important aspect of our work to help accomplish this objective. Leaders of congregations attend two one-day workshops that are scheduled several months apart. At those workshops they hear presentations on key components of a congregational evangelism program. Additionally, there are breakout sessions at which the presenters work with individual congregations to advise them regarding outreach plans and strategies. In the months following each of the workshops, those advisors are available to offer follow-up assistance specific to the needs of congregations.

New Movie: *To the Ends of the Earth*

The three movies—*Road to Emmaus*, *Come Follow Me*, and *My Son, My Savior*—focused on the life and ministry of Jesus. The final movie of the series will show a dramatic fulfillment of Jesus' command at his ascension to be his witnesses and take the gospel "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The movie will feature the apostle Paul and his mission work in Philippi (Acts 16). After two years of script development and pre-production planning, the six-day movie shoot was completed on February 3, 2018.

The movie will be ready for use initially in connection with the Mission and Ministry Sunday which the Conference of Presidents is encouraging congregations to observe this fall. The date is October 21. With its emphasis on mission work, the movie will serve well to enhance this special Mission and Ministry Sunday. Worship resources and various study materials will be available. They include:

Worship:

- New hymn
- Sermon outline
- Children's song
- Suggestions for using the movie together with the worship service

Adult Study Materials

- Bible study for large groups
- Bible study for small groups
- *Personal Reflections* resource intended for individuals, after watching the movie, to ponder and explore what the message of the movie means for them.

Children:

- Five devotions for school age children
- One Bible lesson for ages 3-5, for grades 1-4, and for grades 5-8

- Devotions for LES and ECM staff

Special:

- World/Home Missions vignettes
- Advent by Candlelight program
- Suggestions for using the movie and materials for outreach

Telling the Next Generation is a program provided by WELS Commission on Evangelism, the Commission on Lutheran Schools, and Early Childhood Ministry to assist congregations with planning, assistance, and resources for implementation of outreach strategies utilizing their Lutheran elementary school and/or early childhood ministry. There is a one-day workshop led by WELS church and school leaders who are experienced with conducting school ministries with an outreach focus. In breakout sessions, the presenters and other advisors work with individual congregations to advise them regarding outreach plans and strategies. In the months following the workshop, those advisors follow-up with congregations in order to answer questions, supply resources, and give advice for fulfilling the goals that were discussed and planned at the workshops. Information at: wels.net/tellingthenextgeneration.

WhatAboutJesus.com, an outreach website produced and maintained by the Commission on Evangelism, continues to reach many people with God’s Word. New articles are posted on a regular basis. **Daily Devotions** appear on the home pages of WELS.net and WhatAboutJesus.com; also on [WELS Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/WELS), reaching thousands of people every day. Additionally, devotions are sent to about 10,500 e-mail subscribers every day.

Evangelism Day at Martin Luther College

The Commission on Evangelism partners with the faculty of Martin Luther College to enhance the evangelism training of students at the College. In January 2018, the thirteenth annual evangelism day was conducted. The day for focusing on personal and congregational evangelism starts with a worship service, includes an evangelism workshop for each class and various “elective” presentations. An added feature this year was a schedule of evening sessions to which members from area congregations were invited to attend.

Online Evangelism Courses are being offered through the Martin Luther College online continuing education program. These courses make up the Evangelism Certificate Program at Martin Luther College. There are three one-credit courses: 1) *The Mission of the Church*, 2) *Practical Evangelism for Congregations*, and 3) *Friendship Evangelism*. Information at: www.wels.net/evangelism.

COE Leadership

Donn Dobberstein accepted the call to serve as the director of the Commission on Discipleship and thus ended his service as the chairman of the Commission on Evangelism since 2009. Douglas Tomhave accepted the appointment from the COP to serve as the new chairman. Michael Hintz retired from the full-time position of the COE director on December 31, 2017, after 15 years of service in this role.

District Evangelism Coordinator

Arizona-California	Paul Mueller
Dakota-Montana	Justin Cloute
Michigan	Norman Burger
Minnesota	Stephen Meyer
North Atlantic	Frederick Guldberg

Nebraska	Timothy Spiegelberg
Northern Wisconsin	Michael Weigand
Pacific Northwest	Benjamin Workentine
South Atlantic	Brian Pechman
South Central	Paul Seager
Southeastern Wisconsin	David Pagel
Western Wisconsin	Joseph Fricke

Commission on Evangelism

Douglas Tomhave, chairman
Michael Geiger
Joseph Fricke
Jay Bickelhaupt

His Hands

2018 Report to the Twelve Districts from the Commission on Special Ministries

In this issue...

Compassion leads to inclusion and outreach

WELS churches are hearing a lot about “compassion ministry.” The Commission on Special Ministries has advocated for compassion ministry since it was founded. Our motto is “Love in Action.” Christian compassion is not new or foreign to the church. The New Testament urges the followers of Christ to serve one another in love: “Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:18).

People who struggle with problems leave the church when no one at church reaches out to help them. We don’t have to have the answers. Maybe we don’t know where to find the answers. But we can say, “I



WELS Special Ministries

Look inside for these articles, addressing areas where Special Ministries seeks to help those who face barriers to regular worship.

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don't know how to help, but I want you to know I'm glad you're here. I'll pray for a solution. How I can help?"

Outreach is harder when people believe that churches are uncaring. Compassion ministry grows strong bonds with members who face challenges. Our concern for people in our community with special needs shows the public that the love of Christ is real.

If you love someone, you listen to them. If you listen to people with special needs, you'll find that they want to participate in the church. Hard of hearing people want to be on the church council. Blind people want other members to talk to them after church.

Love leads to inclusion. God has given all Christians gifts to serve, even if that Christian struggles with an addiction or has a developmental disability. It is well worth the effort to find ways to include people with special needs in serving. People are not defined by what they can't do. Instead, our churches are blessed when people with special needs can serve and not just be served.

Compassion ministry opens church doors to hurting or struggling people in the community. Families with relatives in jail are drawn to churches with active jail ministry. Members will invite families of children with special needs when Sunday School classes are prepared to include such children.

It doesn't happen without conscious effort. Compassion moves the congregation to extend invitations continually and to keep promoting their resources for people who might need them.

Special Ministries has resources and guidance for churches that have compassion on members of the church or of the community. We can help you demonstrate love in action.

Learn more about WELS Special Ministries at wels.net/special-ministries or call 414-256-3241. Find resources, including the His Hands newsletter, at csm.welsrc.net.



Deaf and Hard of Hearing

One size does not fit all

The Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MDHH) helps churches and other ministries serve two very different populations. Even among the deaf and the hard of hearing, a diversity of experience, challenges, and solutions exist. One size does not fit all!

Yet all people with hearing loss need Jesus. That reality unites the MDHH in striving to educate and provide resources for church leaders and members. People with hearing loss can worship and be active in their church.

MDHH can help you solve the "sign language challenge." A deaf visitor to a WELS church said that he learned to love Lutheran worship when he was in college, but he needed an interpreter. The church

Visually Impaired

Who is helping whom?

Technology is helping us to break down many Special Ministries barriers. The Mission for the Visually Impaired (MVI) is a great example. For years, MVI had a printed catalog of resources. Of course, blind people could not read it! We assumed that a family member or friend would help our patrons choose materials.

Christian literature in Braille has always been available through this catalog. MVI also offers large print materials and audio cassette recordings of Christian literature and music.

Today, the MVI committee includes blind members. They use the computer with the assistance of technology called JAWS, which tells them what is on the screen. These leaders are guiding us to make quality spiritual resources available online. Within the next year, we hope to offer an online library of audio books. The resources are also available to anyone who has any disability that prevents them from reading a book. The MVI catalog will soon be revised so that the blind can search for themselves.

Learn more at wels.net/mvi. Find resources at csm.welsrc.net/mvi.



contacted MDHH. The next Sunday the church had an interpreter and even several MDHH members to meet the man and assess his situation! Answering questions about interpreting and helping to locate interpreters are two MDHH services. An online course on American Sign Language and deaf culture is offered annually through Martin Luther College to broaden knowledge and skills among WELS members.

People with mild hearing loss shouldn't miss parts of the sermon. An Assistive Listening Device, such as the Williams Sound System and a headset, can help. For those who wear hearing aids equipped with a T-switch, a hearing loop can greatly improve understanding and participation in worship.

MDHH helps churches understand the importance of including deaf and hard-of-hearing members in worship and other activities, which brings wonderful blessings.

Both the deaf and hard of hearing were created to be part of the Body of Christ. MDHH helps churches understand the importance of including deaf and hard-of-hearing members in worship and other activities, which brings wonderful blessings. Far from needing pity, these brothers and sisters in Christ can bring spiritual perspectives, talents, and experience to the life of the church, usually with just a bit of help from technology. We serve each other with our gifts. That's how Jesus created his church!

Learn more at wels.net/mdhh. Find resources at csm.welsrc.net/mdhh.



Freedom for the Captives

New abuse prevention training resources

How do we protect children from abuse? How can we prevent it entirely, or help a child when abuse is discovered? The mission of Freedom for the Captives (FFTC) is "Equipping the Body of Christ to protect children and empower abuse survivors." FFTC has developed online training and certification for WELS leaders at our churches, schools, and other organizations. The course is called "Standing Up for Children: A Christian Response to Child Abuse and Neglect." Training sessions can be scheduled by contacting Special Ministries (freedom@wels.net or 414-256-3241). Please include your name, phone, email and plan for using the training in your request for access.

Visit the website at freedomforcaptives.com.



Conquerors through Christ

Getting it right about moral issues

Have you ever expressed disapproval of pornography and been met with a blank look? After a generation of industry marketing, many accept porn as a healthy part of sexuality.

So Christians may be relieved that the dangers of pornography are receiving greater scrutiny and awareness. Recent criticism has focused on its connection with the devastation of sex trafficking, or the impact of sexual addiction.

The topic absent from the public forum is sin. Using porn has a corrosive effect. It not only harms a marriage, but our relationship with God. Even if no sex trafficking is involved and no addiction occurs, something is dying in the human heart. The prayer, "Create in me a pure heart, O God," can become empty words. Guilt and shame take over.

Conquerors through Christ continues to prepare resources to help Christians reject, resist, and recover from porn. An excellent Bible study, "Bought at a Price," and e-books for parenting are available on their website. New materials for high school students are in production.

It's not enough to say that porn is wrong. God has provided a path to return to him through forgiveness in Christ and the power of his Spirit. Let's get the message out!

Visit the website at conquerorsthroughchrist.net.



Parish Nursing

Personalizing our church family's love

What congregation doesn't need people with gifts of teaching and administration? Many tasks require someone who is good at interacting with people, quick with Christian insight and encouragement, and being generally helpful.

Did you think "parish nurse" when you read the description above? Maybe you've never had such a position and think it an unnecessary addition to the church worker list. But WELS churches with an active parish nurse program will strongly recommend it. "Church family" evokes an image of caring for each other, and parish nursing personalizes that love.

A WELS parish nurse is a currently licensed Registered Nurse (RN) who promotes both physical and spiritual wellness in the congregation. The parish nurse conducts a wellness-based and non-invasive practice, and the ministry is performed according to the congregation's mission statement and under the direction of the pastor.

Christ Lutheran Church, Eden Prairie, Minn., summarizes the work this way: "The primary purpose of the congregation is to spread the Gospel of Salvation in Jesus Christ. In addition, a congregation serves as a 'home' and a 'family' to its members who have not only spiritual needs but also physical, emotional, and psychological needs . . . The Ministry . . . is one way to encourage this sharing of God's love and the growth of faith among those with special needs related to health."

Well-trained parish nurses can be a great blessing to your family of faith.

Well-trained parish nurses can be a great blessing to your family of faith. Pastor Mike Woldt of David's Star Lutheran Church, Jackson, Wis., lists these advantages:

- Good training will help parish nurses share the law and gospel message of Scripture with the people they serve.
- Good training will help parish nurses function within the framework of the congregation and in partnership with the called leaders of the church.
- Good training will help parish nurses recognize opportunities for serving God's people with the abilities they possess and the skills they have cultivated as practicing nurses.

Learn more at the Parish Nursing area of welsnurses.net, the website of WELS Nurses Association.



Support Groups

Help for the hurting

Mutual support and Christian encouragement can turn a crisis or a burden into spiritual growth and a deeper relationship with Christ. That's why churches are turning to support groups to serve their members and the community.



Addiction support groups are not new. WELS Special Ministries, along with WLCFS—Christian Family Solutions, promote Christian spiritual components missing from the standard twelve-step program.

Believers faced with a variety of challenges can benefit from support groups. For example, Samaritan Partners is a Special Ministries program to help caregivers. A Christian who provides care for a parent, spouse, or child shoulders heavy responsibilities and can easily feel isolated. A regular gathering of caregivers can bless church members with fellowship and encouragement. As a bonus, it can serve as an outreach to the community.

We want to develop resources for grief support groups. If you have skills or interest in this area, please contact Special Ministries (specialministries@wels.net or 414-256-3241).

Do you know hurting people in your congregation or community that could benefit from a support group? Our resources and experts can help you avoid common pitfalls in getting a gathering going.

Contact Special Ministries at 414-256-3241 or specialministries@wels.net.



Prison Ministry

Remembering those behind bars

Many would be surprised to learn that the early Christian church needed to do prison ministry. Yes, needed. John the Baptizer and Jesus were incarcerated, of course. The Book of Acts relates several instances of the apostles being jailed. Many followers of Jesus were locked up for the “crime” of being a Christian.

That’s why the New Testament instructs: “Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.” (Hebrews 13:3)

Prison Ministry was organized to provide WELS seniors a way to “remember those in prison” in a distinctly gospel-based structure for volunteering. From the start, pen pal opportunities and Bible study correspondence focused on sharing the gospel. The original structure was well thought out, and today is no longer limited to senior involvement.

Our ministry to men and women behind bars has grown and been refined as we understand more about the experience of incarceration and how much impact Bible study can have. The central office and our volunteers respond quickly to letters and correspondence course tests, recognizing the isolation of those who are doing time. We continually bring Christ and His salvation into our communication, understanding that everyone needs to know about their Savior, including those who struggle with their guilt alone in a prison cell.

Prison Ministry also trains WELS and ELS laypeople to serve inmates in local jails through Jail Ministry Team Training (JMTT), in keeping with our emphasis on empowering face-to-face ministry.

For more information on volunteering or receiving training, call 507-354-3130 or e-mail prisonministry@wels.net.

Learn more at wels.net/pm. Find resources at csm.welsrc.net/pm.

To add an inmate to the mailing list, go to wels.net/refer.



Military Services

Guarding the faith of our faithful guardians

Military men and women defend us. They willingly serve our country. Their training prepares them to be leaders, achievers, warriors. We might think that these people don’t need a thing, except maybe a call from home or a package of items that are hard to get when you’re far away.

Few people consider the spiritual needs of our military men and women. Yet during those years in service, they may face life-or-death situations. They encounter pressures that civilians would never guess come with military life. They may feel they are sinning when they use violence against the enemy, not understanding the role that God has for them.

This is why we need you to provide WELS Military Services with contact information for members in the military. Our 125 Military Contact Pastors, our National Civilian Chaplain Paul Ziemer, and European Civilian Chaplain Don Stuppy understand the issues. If our service members connect with God’s Word, then instead of drifting away from their faith, they often gain a new appreciation for the Lord and his Word. Please go to wels.net/refer for the sake of the spiritual needs of those who serve us!

Learn more at wels.net/military. Find resources at csm.welsrc.net/military.

To add a service member to the mailing list, go to wels.net/refer.



Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Inclusion can be the key

C.S. Lewis once pointed out that “membership” came into common language through Paul’s writing about the “Body of Christ.” He said that the world wants to define a “member” in terms of how all members are alike.

In the Body of Christ, the members are not the same, but they belong to each other. Family members (mother, father, child, grandparent) are also very different. They use their position to love and help each other. Members are not alike and don’t have to be the same in order to serve God’s purpose.

How many members of your church can you identify as intellectually or developmentally disabled? Statistically, one in six children have one or more developmental disabilities! Many of these do not remain members of the church when they grow up. Yet God created them to be members of his body.

WELS Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Ministry (IDDM) seeks to help congregations share the gospel with those who have

WELS Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Ministry (IDDM) seeks to help congregations share the gospel with those who have special education needs.

special education needs. We are also passionate about helping churches to be a Christian network for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities and their families. Our partner, Jesus Cares Ministry, is a prime supplier of Christian education materials to conquer this barrier. IDDM’s resources help churches to include special needs families in worship, fellowship, and serving.

Inclusion of adults and children with these challenges will flow from our faith that Christ died for all, and all people need to hear that. Jesus calls us to love and serve one another. We want each person, regardless of ability, to see their place as a member of the Body of Christ. When we strive to be inclusive, challenges will lead to joys. Let IDDM help your church, or connect your family to others who can help. We belong to each other!

Learn more at wels.net/liddm. Find resources at csm.welsrc.net/liddm.

To add a special needs individual to the mailing list, go to wels.net/refer.



Chaplain Certification

Going outside the walls

In case it escaped your notice, people are not generally breaking down the doors of our churches, asking us to serve their spiritual needs. There is usually plenty of room in our pews.

But outside the walls, an enormous mission field awaits. Some of those souls are unable to attend regular worship, while others are simply ignorant of their greatest need. Even if they have questions about God, they may not know whom to trust for reliable answers.

So we need to go outside the walls, and chaplaincy is an excellent way to do that. Chaplains seek to bring the comfort of a compassionate, listening heart to hurting souls. So they go to meet people where they are, sometimes in a time of tragedy or great loss, and bring with them a human, caring presence. In some cases, that compassion will open a door to direct—or redirect—a lost sheep to the Good Shepherd.

There are opportunities for chaplaincy in many areas: in hospitals and care facilities, in jails and prisons, in police and fire agencies, on

There are opportunities for chaplaincy in many areas: in hospitals and care facilities, in jails and prisons, in police and fire agencies, on campuses and in locker rooms, at everyday workplaces and at once-in-a-lifetime disasters.

campuses and in locker rooms, at everyday workplaces and at once-in-a-lifetime disasters. And if someone is going to be there, don't we want it be someone who can properly apply law and gospel?

Chaplain Certification classes, offered online through Martin



Luther College, demonstrate to public institutions that a chaplain has completed a certain level of spiritual guidance training appropriate to serve those within that institution. Required courses include Communicating Forgiveness, A Spiritual Approach to Addiction Counseling, and Chaplaincy Issues and Fieldwork.

Earning a Chaplain Certificate does not, by itself, qualify one for a call into the public ministry, but it surely makes the student more qualified to minister to souls.

Learn more at mlc-wels.edu/continuing-education/wels-chaplain-certificate, or contact Rev. Robert Dick, chairman of the Chaplain Certification Committee, at chaplaincert@wels.net.



Care Committee for Called Workers

Keep your staff happy

The Care Committee for Called Workers (CCCW) exists to provide assistance to WELS calling bodies, their called workers, and other staff. Every calling body can benefit from having a committee focused on supporting and encouraging its workers. The CCCW has resources that can help you establish a new care committee or improve one that is already in place.

Calling bodies can support their called workers in several areas:

- **Spiritual support** can involve encouraging personal prayer and Bible study, staff Bible study, and other opportunities for the strengthening and expression of faith.
- **Physical needs** begin when a called worker accepts a call. The new worker may need assistance securing housing, locating doctors, dentists, banks, auto repair shops, etc. Ongoing discussions may involve salary and benefits, vacation policy,

Christian Therapists Network

Online course on Scriptural counseling

The WELS/ELS Christian Therapists Network initially focused on finding counselors who are members of our churches. Now the Network is launching an online class for masters-level therapists. "Acting on Hope I: Peace, Comfort, and Hope in Christ Crucified and Arisen" (PSY9501) will be offered through Martin Luther College.

"Acting on Hope I" is the basic course in the Acting on Hope/Bible-Based Counseling Curriculum. As students learn from each other, the teacher, and the textbook, they will develop their own way of using Scripture in counseling sessions that will best honor the Word of God, best help their clients, and that will respect and use evidence-based counseling best practices and methods.

The one-credit course is worth 25 clock hours and lasts for ten weeks. Tuition is \$310. The instructor is Rev. Alan Siggelkow, LCSW, a former parish pastor who taught pastoral counseling at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary for 20 years.

Learn more at mlc-wels.edu/continuing-education/registration/new-student-registration or contact Alan Siggelkow at ahsiggelkow@gmail.com.

home repair and improvement, tax preparation, and providing support in emergency situations.



- Support for **intellectual needs** means encouraging called workers to continue their education. The calling body is encouraged to subsidize the cost of continuing education, including travel and child care expenses.
- **Emotional support** includes offering assistance to alleviate stress or deal with workplace conflicts. This is especially important when personal or family counseling may be needed. You can show appreciation by recognizing personal and professional anniversaries with gifts, providing a meal during busy times, arranging child care for an evening out, or inviting the called worker over for dinner.
- **Retirement planning** and investing should be addressed as early as possible in a worker's career. It is important to understand the WELS pension plan, Social Security, and personal investing such as the WELS Shepherd Plan. By using the available tools and resources, each worker can become financially literate and develop a long-term plan for a comfortable retirement. Calling bodies are encouraged to help build their workers' retirement accounts either through matching contributions or a lump sum contribution.

The synodical CCCW serves local committees and workers by producing user-friendly resources, such as a how-to video for starting a local care committee and retirement planning tools.

Learn more at wels.net/ccw. Find resources at csm.welsrc.net/ccw.

Hand in Hand with WELS Special Ministries

To learn more about WELS Special Ministries, visit wels.net/special-ministries.

To subscribe to the e-mail version of *His Hands*, visit wels.net/subscribe.

To refer military personnel, prisoners, or people with developmental disabilities for Special Ministries resources, visit wels.net/refer.

To support WELS Special Ministries, visit wels.net/support-special-ministries.

For assistance in making a gift to Special Ministries, contact the Ministry of Christian Giving, **800-827-5482**.



Commission on Discipleship

Our calling

“But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.”

(Luther’s explanation to the 3rd Article)

God has called us to be his own and to live under him in his kingdom. “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17). With God, the Christian life has purpose though a disinterested world and our sluggish flesh work to weaken our daily following of Christ.

Our WELS Commission on Discipleship exists to assist congregations, called workers, and individuals with gospel-centered resources, encouragement, and training to strengthen and connect every stage of life to the grace of God in Christ.

A look back

For the better part of the past decade, WELS Adult Discipleship and Youth & Family Ministry have lacked synod directors. The blessing is that it led to more grass-roots activity. The results are evident: continuation of biennial international youth rallies, Interactive Faith Bible studies, WELS Women’s Ministry, marriage enrichment, “TRANSFORMED” teen resources, *Kids Connection*, etc. Many thanks to hardworking commission chairmen, members, district coordinators, and their teams who continued to encourage and equip the faith of believers and congregations.

Our current situation

In 2017, the Conference of Presidents began to call for a director of discipleship. Pastor Donn Dobberstein accepted the call and assumed the position toward the end of the year. In early 2018, the Conference of Presidents approved the consolidation of two commissions (Adult Discipleship and Youth & Family Ministry) into one commission with a single mission:

“Our WELS Commission on Discipleship provides resources, encouragement, and training to assist congregations as they seek to strengthen individuals and families in their connection to Christ and their ongoing walk of faith.”

As this new commission is formed, the members will work together with district coordinators to learn, prioritize, and develop a cohesive plan and strategy incorporating resources and training for small-group Bible studies, apologetics, men and women's ministry, congregational youth ministry, college-age and young adults, parents and family life, Sunday School, and marriage ministry.

At the present

- **2018 International Youth Rally**

The youth rally exists to provide youth and youth leaders from across the synod a large-scale worship, education, fellowship, recreation, and service opportunity that deepens commitment to Christ and his church.

Online registration began April 1 for this summer's rally hosted by Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio. Keynote presentations will focus on the rally theme, "Never Alone" (Matthew 28:20). Printed registration booklets were mailed to churches and contact youth leaders and are also available online at www.wels.net/2018youthrally.

- ***Kids Connection* video**

Planning is in process for the 24th season of this children's video with monthly episodes. In the present 2017-18 school year, 291 of 1,281 congregations connect kids to *Kids Connection* with the majority being churches with a Lutheran elementary school.

To broaden awareness of this excellent monthly children's resource, the Commission on Discipleship is discussing "bundling" it with its parent video, *WELS Connection*, as well as encouraging congregations to use it as a monthly supplement for their Sunday school or youth programs.

- **WELS Women's Ministry /Men's Ministry**

A fourth edition of "Heirs Together" was completed and is available from Northwestern Publishing House. The eight-lesson study encourages and equips women to use their gifts for God's glory and for God's kingdom. Highly successful the past year were Bible studies on Facebook that gathered almost a thousand women, many of whom may not have been able to meet otherwise due to distance or schedules (women may join at [facebook.com/groups/WMStudyGSLCR](https://www.facebook.com/groups/WMStudyGSLCR)). Planning has begun for a 2019 Women's Ministry Conference that brings and builds Christian women together in Christ, offers mutual support, and looks for ways that women can be of greater service within their congregations.

Regional mens' retreats and workshops are conducted under various local names. The Commission on Discipleship is interested in raising a higher awareness of mens' ministry events and resources throughout the districts of our synod.

- **Marriage Enrichment Weekends 2018-19**

Below is the following schedule of upcoming marriage enrichment weekends being promoted and hosted throughout the synod:

NE District	Oct. 5-7	Breckenridge, CO
PNW District	Nov. 16-18	Hood River, OR
MN District	Jan. 11-13	Chaska, MN
SA District	Jan. 25-27	Chattanooga, TN
AZ-CA District	Feb. 9-11	Napa Valley, CA
Canada	March (<i>tbd</i>)	Toronto, Ontario
PNW	April (<i>tbd</i>)	Anchorage, AK

A look ahead

As part of Congregational Services' five-year plan to prioritize the goals of "*opening the front door*" (adding new members through outreach) and "*shutting the back door*" (preventing members from leaving their congregation and synod), the Commission on Discipleship is working to provide a quality repository of resources via an online Congregational Services Resource Center.

Modules being developed:

- **"Key Mission & Ministry Challenges in the Church"** (study resources for personal, congregational, called workers, & future leaders).
- **Stewardship**
- **"Growth Group" Resources**
 - a. Organizational models to utilize groups for study, social, or service opportunities
 - b. Spiritual focus ideas
 - c. Recruiting & training
- **"Interactive Faith" Bible studies** (*videos & study guides on Elijah, Jonah, Joseph, Judges, "Our Calling", and "I Would Like to Read My Bible, BUT ..."*)

District presidents and discipleship coordinators have identified important areas of ongoing, future ministry challenges many of their congregations are facing for any number of reasons. For example:

- **ASSIMILATION** (not just of "new" members, but the integration of transfers, longtime members, or those who just aren't "connected" with their fellow church body members)
- **BIBLE CLASS ATTENDANCE** (Approximately 10% of a congregation's communicant membership attend worship and some sort of spiritual growth activity within their church. What is a congregation's ministry plan for spiritual growth to gain traction with the other 90%? What resources and ideas can be shared to encourage more participation?)
- **YOUTH** (According to the 2017 WELS statistical report, there was a 10% decline in Sunday School attendance this past year. Why? Is it time to relook or rethink the philosophy of the traditional Sunday School? What does youth ministry look like when you only have a couple kids? What's a youth ministry look like that focuses less on attendance and more on spiritual growth? How do we lead our children to

take ownership of their faith? What can we do to better bridge the 0-18 year old age group into the 18-25 year old age group knowing there is a sharp drop-off between the two? How better can kids connect with their parents and with their church in faith development and ministry service?)

- **PARENTS** (what resources do parents need to equip and encourage them to be Christian parents?)
- **APOLOGETICS RESOURCES** (interestingly, all age groups want them: middle school, high school, college, young adults, parents)
- **BIBLE INFORMATION CLASS & CATECHISM Resource-Sharing** (identify ministry brothers with good models, practices, and materials).

The Commission on Discipleship's goal is to engage all circuits and their congregations into having an intentional conversation on their discipleship ministry and what it looks like in each of their unique ministry settings. We are confident that God will bless the time and effort spent together with blessing an annual strategic discipleship plan that takes discipleship discussion and moves it into actual activity.

Rev. Donn Dobberstein, *director*

Rev. John Boggs, *chairman*

Rev. Gary Pufahl, *vice-chairman*

Commission on Lutheran Schools

Our Calling

God's command to us as Christians is clear: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Luke 18:16). The mission statement of the Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS) is also clear: "to guide and assist congregations in advancing the gospel of Jesus by providing resources, training, and personal assistance for starting and strengthening Lutheran schools." It is with these two statements in mind that the CLS works to assist our synod's early childhood ministries (384), Lutheran elementary schools (298), area Lutheran high schools (27), and preparatory schools (2). The CLS assists our congregations and schools who daily share the precious gospel message with nearly 42,000 children in 33 states and 3 Caribbean island nations.

Our Current Situation

The CLS provides resources, training, and personal assistance in a wide variety of ways:

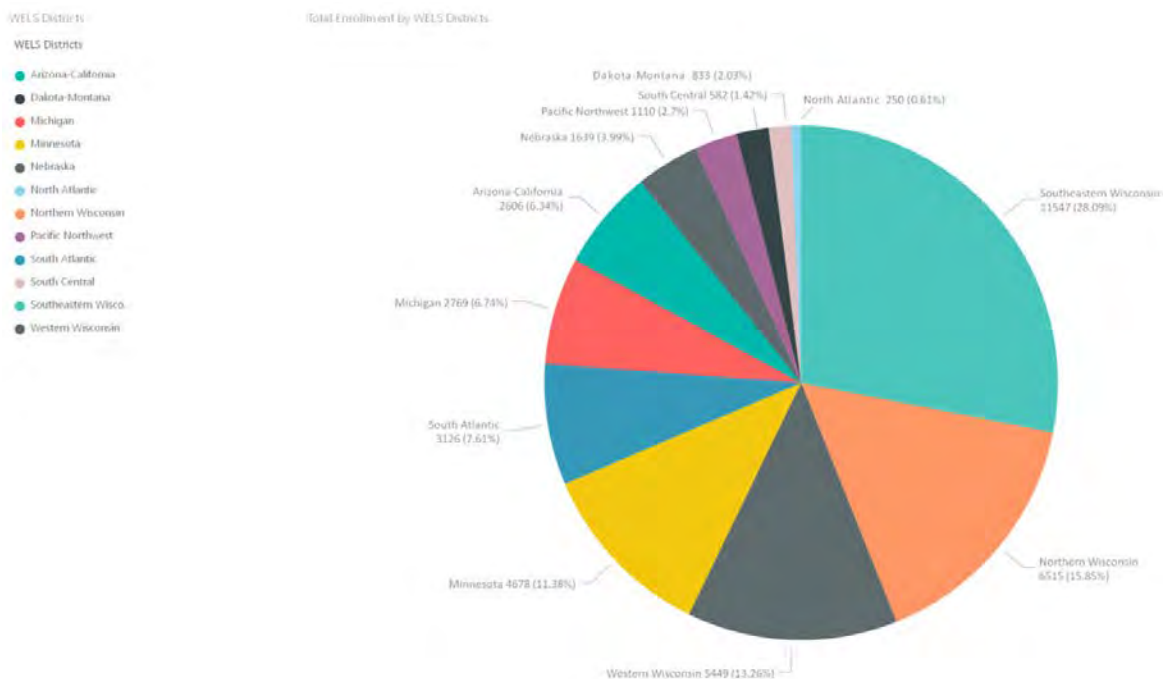
- Supporting the 12 district presidents in providing over 600 teacher call lists per year and assisting them in addressing school-related blessings, challenges, and opportunities
- Maintaining teacher and school statistical data
- Consulting with pastors, principals, directors, teachers, and school and congregational leaders
- Attending teachers' conferences and conducting school visits throughout the synod
- Publishing a weekly Early Childhood Ministries devotion, a weekly electronic news bulletin – the CLS e-News, and The Lutheran School Leader six times yearly for principals and early childhood directors
- Providing support and mentoring programs for newly assigned and aspiring principals and early childhood directors.
- Training consultants to support congregations with or considering children's ministries
- Coordinating cost effective options for formative and summative testing products to assess our students' progress and provide tools for modifying instruction to improve learning
- Representing WELS schools to the public through interaction with the National Council on Private School Accreditation, the Council for American Private Education, the United States Department of Non-Public Education, and various other state and national education agencies and organizations
- Developing and maintaining partnerships with the District Schools Coordinators, Early Childhood District Coordinators, Northwestern Publishing House, Martin Luther College, and many others to provide resources to strengthen the instruction, materials, and curriculum within our schools (a list of resource partners is on the CLS website)

Lutheran School Enrollment Trends

Enrollment Growth/Decline 5 years

	2013 2014	2014 2015	2015 2016	2016 2017	2017 2018
ECM	10,694	10,595	10,911	10,754	11,126
LES	24,425	24,453	24,410	24,335	24,485
LHS	5,141	5,093	5,174	5,320	5,493
Prep Schools	682	675	643	645	616

The past five years have continued to see enrollment growth in early childhood ministries and Lutheran high schools. Lutheran elementary school enrollment has been steady over the five-year period, and our prep school enrollment has decreased. The following chart provides a breakdown of total preschool through high school enrollment by district.



Early Childhood Ministries: “We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power and the wonders he has done” (Psalm 78:4). This verse reminds us so clearly of the mission of WELS' early childhood. As over 11,000 children are entrusted to our care, we seek to share the precious gospel with each of them and their families. The Commission on Lutheran Schools provides support and resources for congregations either considering an early childhood ministry or ones who have an existing ministry. Through the renewed efforts to train additional consultants, the number of congregations provided onsite support continues to grow. To support those who serve as directors, teachers, and aides, resources continue to be updated or developed. These include weekly online devotions for those who serve in early childhood ministries, support for newly assigned directors through the Director Apprentice mentoring program, the Emerging Leader

Cohort, documents that include outreach and harvest strategies, and promotion of *Building Blocks: A Handbook for Beginning and Operating a Christian Early Childhood Ministry*. Early Childhood District coordinators continue to develop and share resources and provide consultation and support for congregations and early childhood ministries in each of the districts.

Telling the Next Generation: Utilizing Our Schools for Outreach: The commissions on Evangelism and Lutheran Schools continue to jointly offer a one-day seminar focused on effective outreach practices for WELS schools. This seminar comes at a time when nationwide 11% of Lutheran elementary school children and nearly 25% of our early childhood ministry children live in homes that report having no church membership. It is a tremendous blessing to have this mission field attending our schools. The six-hour seminar is designed for pastors, principals, early childhood directors, teachers, and church and school lay leaders of the congregation to gather for interactive presentations on maintaining a Christ-centered mission, the critical role of relationships, and a planned and effective harvest strategy. Each ministry team is also provided with an advisor to consult with in the months following the seminar. To date, 1,225 individuals from 165 congregations have attended workshops hosted in 11 of the 12 WELS districts. For more information or to schedule an area seminar, contact either lutheranschools@wels.net or evangelism@wels.net.

A Critical Need for School Leaders - Double digit vacancies for both principals and early childhood directors in each of the past few years has CLS supporting options to provide training for new or future leaders. Martin Luther College provides excellent training for our newly called teachers. Unfortunately, many of the trained teachers are assigned to principal or director positions for which they have had limited or no training. What follows is a description of current and future programs and plans for preparing school leaders.

- **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.
- **Principal Apprenticeship and Director Apprenticeship Mentoring** is designed to support those new teachers who are also assigned without any formal training to the position of principal or early childhood director. The assigned new teacher is considered an apprentice and is mentored and provided some training by the CLS for the first two years of ministry. Congregations are assessed \$1,000 per year for this service. We are thankful for the grants that have provided for a great deal of the funding of this program as costs are close to double what is charged congregations.
- **Principal Training Program** is in its fourth year. The program pairs a Martin Luther College graduate with an on-site principal at a WELS school who mentors the graduate for two years as a teacher while also providing leadership instruction. The graduate assumes greater leadership during the third year and is mentored by the on-site principal as a principal-in-training. Following the third year, the graduate returns to the assignment

committee to potentially be assigned as a principal, with his mentor principal mentoring him during the first year at the new assignment. Currently four men are in the program, and one has completed the program and was assigned as a school principal. The CLS identifies schools and on-site mentor principals, while MLC identifies candidates and provides mentor training for the host principals. This program, funded by the CLS, provides some training for a new principal prior to assignment, and provides on the job experiences.

- **Early Childhood Emerging Leader Cohort** is a redesign of the Leadership Candidate Program for potential early childhood directors. This year-long cohort includes professional development, a year-long project in their current ministry applying leadership skills, support from an experienced early childhood director as their mentor, and monthly teleconferences covering practical topics related to the role of early childhood director. The 2018-19 cohort has six individuals who have applied and been accepted into the program which begins in June.

WELS School Accreditation (WELSSA) There are currently 129 schools accredited with WELSSA, and this number continues to grow each year. During the 2017-18 school year, twenty schools hosted a site visit. Of those twenty schools, three were accredited for the first time. Plans are already underway to secure site teams for visits to forty-two schools during the 2018-19 school year. Nine of the schools being visited in 2018-19 will be accredited for the first time. Elementary schools also maintaining a preschool may include their preschools in the accreditation process by including the 3K/4K addendum standards in their self-study. The addendum process allows the K-8 accreditation to be expanded to 3K-8 or 4K-8 accreditation status. WELSSA continues to expand the use of electronic standard tracking tools, which have allowed for many of the reaccreditation visits to be completed over a two to three-day period. Over 100 site team captains, team members, and consultants are available to assist schools seeking to make use of this ministry tool for school evaluation and self-improvement. WELSSA currently has accredited schools in fourteen states across the nation. More than 16,000 students attend schools accredited by WELSSA. Teacher Tom Plitzuweit serves as the executive director of WELSSA. Rachel DiGiorgio serves part-time as the WELSSA executive assistant.

School Consulting Services The CLS has trained over 50 consultants who are available to assist congregations that are seeking to start or expand a children's ministry, experiencing struggles in their current school or early childhood center, or desiring CLS support as a complement to a Commission on Congregational Counseling visit. There are trained consultants available in each district or region to provide timely, effective, and affordable support. Congregations needing school consulting services can contact CLS to set up an initial meeting and discuss which consultation service is best for their ministry.

A Look Ahead

#EdTechLead 2019 The Commission on Lutheran Schools and WELS Technology have joined forces to host a WELS Education, Technology, and Leadership Summit which will be held at Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells, Wis., from June 25-27, 2019. This summit is designed for teachers and called and lay church and school leaders. Please save the date and join up to 500 fellow WELS members for this conference. Interested presenters are invited to submit presentation topics that conference attendees might find interesting. The conference planning committee is looking for presenters with a variety of focuses including: administration, Bible study, communication, curriculum and instruction, early childhood, education, health, leadership, ministry, outreach,

productivity, security, school leadership, technology, and vocation. Submission deadline is May 31, 2018. Visit welsedtechlead.com for more details and to submit your presentation. While you're there join our mailing list to receive #EdTechLead updates sent straight to your inbox.

WELS Ministerial Growth and Evaluation Process will be introduced over the next 18-24 months. It replaces the current Team Ministry Process and focuses on continuous teacher learning for student growth. Final touches are being completed this spring on new tools for supervision of teacher instruction, ministry development plans, and teacher evaluation tools. Train-the-trainer events are scheduled for this summer. The Lutheran Schools office can connect you with speakers for upcoming teachers' conferences on each of the topics in this new process. Presentations could range from a one-hour keynote to 14 hours of modules. Watch for further information on this new process and implementation during the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years. Questions or requests for a presenter can be directed to lutheranschools@wels.net

Teacher Jim Rademan, reporter

Teacher James Sievert, chairman

Rev. Matt Brown, secretary

Rev. Jonathan Brohn

Teacher Shawn Herkstroeter

Teacher Ryan Wiechman

Mr. Ronald Conradt

Mr. Jim Sexton

Advisory:

Teacher Jim Rademan, director

Teacher Tom Plitzuweit , associate director

Teacher Cindi Holman, national coordinator of ECM

Dr. Robert Klindworth, Martin Luther College

Prof. Joel Otto, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Accounting Oversight Committee

Our Calling

The Accounting Oversight Committee (AOC) serves the synod, its schools, its subsidiaries, and its affiliates that are under the oversight of the Synodical Council (SC). The committee serves the SC by assisting management with ensuring appropriate accounting policies and internal controls are established and financial systems are efficient and effective; retaining external auditors; assisting in assuring that financial personnel have the requisite skills; and assisting in assuring that financial reports are prepared timely, accurately, and in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles. The committee keeps the SC informed of its actions through the SC's appointed member of the committee and schools, subsidiaries and affiliate boards, commissions and committees through the synod's chief financial officer.

Our Current Situation

The committee engaged the independent audit firm of Baker Tilly, LLC to conduct the annual audits of the consolidated financial statements of WELS, its schools, and its support services subsidiaries for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2017. All audits were completed within five months of year end and all entities received an unmodified opinion, the best you can get, on the financial statements' compliance with generally accepted accounting principles. In addition, the auditors did not identify any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal controls. Copies of the annual financial statements, quarterly consolidated financial statements, and quarterly budget reports are available by request.

In addition to the annual WELS financial statement audits, the committee engaged Clifton Larson Allen CLA to audit the WELS VEBA Group Health Plan, WELS Pension Plan, and WELS Shepherd Plan for calendar year 2016. These financial statements also received unmodified opinions for 2016 and the auditors did not identify any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal controls.

A Look Ahead

During 2018, the committee will continue to work with Financial Services on succession planning and monitoring WELS risk management and insurance programs.

Mr. Bill Schultz, chairman
Mr. Todd Backus
Mr. Jim Freer
Mr. Barry Haller
Mr. Daniel Riebe
Mr. Paul Holzhueter, Synodical Council Liaison

Advisory:

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, WELS chief financial officer and treasurer

WELS Archives

Preserving your congregation's history

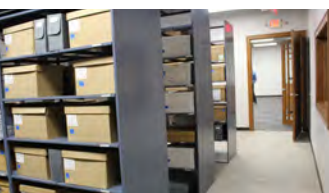


The synod archive is here to support your congregation by preserving and maintaining not only the synod history, but also the history of our WELS congregations. This is possible with the help of your donated materials including:

- Church histories
- Bulletins: from anniversary, installations, dedication, and other specials event.
- Church constitutions, bylaws, and other charter documents
- Book of Sacred Acts
- Photographs, scrapbooks, and other visuals of your congregation's history
- Other materials related to your congregation's history

The landscape of our synod is always changing and your congregation may be experiencing milestones and changes. To help future generations understand the church's history please contact the synod archivist concerning the materials your church can donate to preserve the congregation's history.

For more information about materials to donate please go to wels.net/archives.



Learning your synod's history

Interested in the synod or your congregation's history? Our archives and Visitors' Center offer opportunities to learn more about the history of the Wisconsin Synod and its congregations.

To schedule a tour of our archives and visitors center contact CMMtours@wels.net or call 414-256-3200. Tours are available Monday through Friday during normal business hours.

Looking for research help? Visit wels.net/archives to view our research room hours, contact our archivist with questions, and access our online catalog to view available collections.

REPORT TO THE TWELVE DISTRICTS – WELS TECHNOLOGY 2018

Our Calling

WELS Technology exists to support the work of the synod by providing a capable and secure technical infrastructure, facilitating digital communications, assisting congregations and called workers to better leverage technology, and coordinating technology initiatives that can't be done at smaller organizational levels. Together the dedicated men and women that make up the WELS Technology team seek to help the spread of the gospel with technology tools the Lord continues to make available in the 21st century.

WELS Technology divides its work into ten service areas: 1) IT administration, 2) workstations and peripherals, 3) project management, 4) disaster recovery, 5) servers and storage, 6) documentation and training, 7) end-user support, 8) network and telephony, 9) application and web development, and 10) application and web maintenance.

One of the challenges of providing the appropriate technology to meet ministry needs is determining the best choice among many that are both cost effective and future-proof. It is difficult to predict if a technology chosen today will be obsolete or even “gone” tomorrow. Strategic planning is essential to being good stewards and to still meet changing needs.

It should come as no surprise that security demands much of our attention these days. While appropriate steps have always been taken to keep the synods digital assets secure, they are at even greater risk today given the current climate and prevalence of hacking, phishing, ransomware, and identity theft. More and more time and budget are spent in securing the data entrusted to the synod by churches, schools, called workers, volunteers, and donors.

Perhaps our primary calling is connecting gospel-sharers with the available technologies that can better assist in the spread of that gospel. As a result, time and resources are set aside to help with the process of making technologies available to those who would like to share the good news by “any means possible.” “Our calling” is to **find those intersections between technology and ministry.**

Our Current Situation

This year WELS Technology continued the gradual migration of the longstanding synod database called “Progress” to a newer platform called WELSource based on more modern web technologies. Thousands of hours have been spent planning and architecting a solution that will provide accurate data about our called workers, churches, schools, performance evaluations, self-assessments, pension benefits, biography printing, statistics reporting, and the calling process. This past summer Phase 3 was launched which included a new call list creation tool, the launch of a number of electronic forms including 1) Monthly Mission Reports – allows home mission sites to provide the synod with monthly status reports, 2) Campus Ministry forms –

allows students to sign up for mailings, get connected with a campus ministry and campus ministers to follow up with incoming students, and 3) Vicar in Mission Settings request forms.

Over the past year, several new websites were either launched or enhanced. An evangelism-focused website for Urdu speakers in Pakistan was completed and turned over to a national team for use and ongoing maintenance. This site increases our foreign language site launches to three (Spanish, Japanese, Urdu). A



significant amount of work has also been dedicated to a site for China outreach.

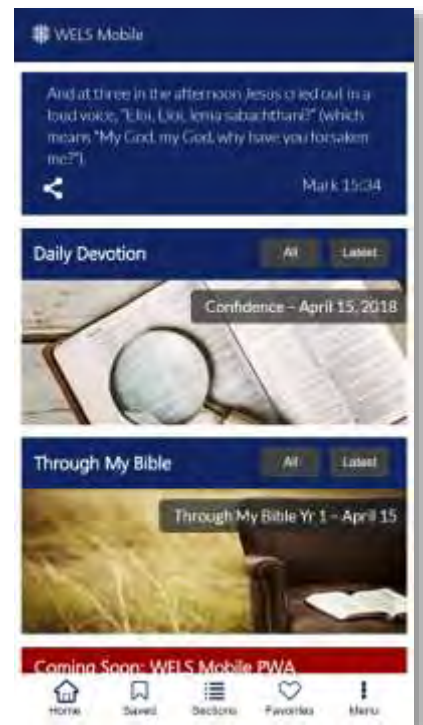
Another exciting addition is the availability of two websites for Congregational Services. The first is a master resource site that provides training materials to help congregations and schools improve their ministries, develop strategic plans and advance their work in the areas of Youth and Family Ministry, Adult Discipleship, Special Ministries, Lutheran School, Worship and Outreach. Additionally, a resource center for the visually impaired was made

available with audio-narrated content from many devotional sources. This service allows for copyrighted material to be playable or downloadable free of charge. The implementation of recent technology from Amazon makes this narration possible. We are looking for other uses of the same technology to make more and more content accessible and usable to wider audiences.

WELS Mobile was relaunched as a “progressive web application” or PWA. A progressive web app is a website that acts very much like a mobile application on a smartphone. It offers real time updates, notifications, and works better on a wider variety of smart devices (phones, tablets, e-readers, etc.) than would be possible with an app downloaded from a store like those offered by Google or Apple. You can try out WELS Mobile by visiting <https://m.wels.net> on a smartphone or tablet.

WELSTech, a weekly audio/video podcast about technology and ministry, celebrated its 500th show in 2018. The podcast continues each week with guest interviews, timely tech-in-ministry topics, tips and tools, and great feedback from the show listeners. To listen or view the show visit the show notes page for the podcast at <http://welstech.wels.net>.

The synod’s donor and financial management systems have both been “upgraded” to the latest cloud-based infrastructure. This move



makes them more usable to the financial services offices at the CMM and schools, as well as the Advancement and Christian Giving offices. In addition, since they are cloud based this insures that in the event of local digital or physical disaster, these assets and services will remain safe, accessible, and operational. Martin Luther College was not able to migrate their financial systems at this time due to dependencies on systems that are not yet compatible. Plans will be put in place to move them as soon as practical. A companion project saw the deep customizations made to the donor management package removed or recoded, so the entire application is more economically maintained.



Much work is being done to safeguard the synod's digital assets, as well as comply with national and international security and privacy laws. A full security audit is completed each year to ensure that websites that provide ecommerce functionality are secure, and appropriate policies and procedures are in place and in compliance with Payment Card Industry (PCI) standards. A relatively new compliance concern is the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) by the European Union (EU). A number of gaps were identified and have now been addressed or plans in place to comply in 2018. Remote device management and disk encryption were put in place to safeguard data. More frequent and aggressive attacks on our systems have been observed, but no violations to date. Security audits will continue and also be coordinated with other synod institutions, especially our four synod schools, subsidiaries (Church Extension Fund, WELS Investment Funds, WELS Foundation, and WELS VEBA), and Northwestern Publishing House.

Information about past, current, and future WELS Technology projects is available in real time at our Trello board: <https://cloud.wels.net/techprojects>.

Our Future

In the coming year WELS Technology will have two primary areas of focus: 1) Continue work on WELSource, the synod's primary database and associated digital forms, and 2) Continue work in hardening our security practices and infrastructure, while providing guidance to churches and schools on the same.

The WELSource project will finally sunset the old "Progress" database. This phase will see the migration of Campus Ministry data, yearbook data, and other event data into the new system. Alongside the WELSource project will continue the steady migration of paper to digital forms. Numerous forms (both paper and simple PDFs) still remain to be recreated/enhanced in the synod's forms tool. All of these efforts together will save

thousands of man hours each year in data entry and management. Many of these improvements will benefit called workers, churches, and schools as they have greater visibility into synod data that affects them and allows an easy way to keep that data up-to-date. Call lists will be more accurate, reports timelier, and access to the right forms and people more likely without assistance.

Security, resource availability, and disaster recovery will again be a priority in the year ahead. It is a goal to provide continuing services to synod workers by making available virtual resources that can be accessed from any computer or device. This will also require even better security of portable computing equipment (laptops, tablets, and phones). In addition, a comprehensive Security Awareness program will be launched to ensure that all synod workers understand the importance of protecting synod data and a better awareness of some of the tactics hackers use.

Plans are underway for a WELS Education, Technology, and Leadership Summit in 2019 to be held at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells, Wis. The date of the summit will be June 25-27 and include keynotes and workshops focuses on those three disciplines. The summit is a joint effort between WELS Technology and the Lutheran Schools office. To learn more visit <http://www.welsedtechlead.com>.



The WELS Technology team looks forward to opportunities for service. As God has allowed new technologies available for our use, we strive to be good stewards of them and enable our synod's ministries to use them to spread the precious news of Jesus Christ death and resurrection. To Him be the glory.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin Spriggs
WELS Chief Technology Officer

Financial Services

Our Calling

Financial Services prepares and provides accounting and financial information and services that support and serve WELS ministries. This is done by providing timely, accurate, and complete financial statements, reports, and analyses. These reports facilitate ministry by providing God-pleasing, efficient, and effective financial services and operations in accordance with policies, procedures, and regulations. Financial Services also designs, implements, and maintains internal control systems that safeguard the assets God has provided.

Financial Services provides financial planning and forecasts, accounting, audit, and financial statement preparation, gift processing, accounts payable, accounts receivable, unclaimed property, special funds accounting, payroll, risk management, insurance, records retention, banking, cash management, investments, contract review, corporate credit card and rental vehicle programs, trust administration, tax advisory services, and legal services coordination. These services are provided to WELS, WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF), WELS Foundation (Foundation), WELS Investment Funds (WIF), WELS Retirement Plans, WELS Voluntary Employee Benefits Association (VEBA) as well as serving as consultants for these services to Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) and the WELS' four ministerial education schools.

Human Resources and Facility Services also report to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The CFO is the WELS Treasurer and an advisor to the Synodical Council, Board for Ministerial Education and Accounting Oversight, Compensation Review and Human Resource Advisory Committees. In addition, the CFO serves on the Capital Projects Committee and as an ex-officio member of the board of directors of NPH, CEF, Foundation, WIF, and the WELS Retirement Plans and VEBA Commissions.

Our Current Situation

Financial Services is blessed with a dedicated, talented staff with complementary education, training, and work experiences. Financial Services will continue to identify, investigate, and implement strategies that improve effectiveness and reduce costs within the area and across WELS.

In 2017-18, Financial Services has again identified and implemented strategies that reduced staff while meeting service expectations. While staffing vacancies and the latest reduction have provided challenges, we remain confident they can be worked through and we thank God for providing staff with hearts for serving WELS ministries.

Recently, the following occurred:

- Acclimation of new employees and employees with new responsibilities
- Completed all audits within four months of year end and the auditor's opinions were unmodified (the best you can get)

- Collaborated with Technology and Ministry of Christian Giving on the evaluation of donor relationship management and accounting software
- Implemented the WELS Group Insurance Program with our insurance provider Church Mutual Insurance
- Completed a legal services request for proposals project that resulted in the selection of new law firm to guide WELS when legal issues arise
- Developed the planning calendar, assumptions, and processes that guide the construction of a balanced ministry financial plan (budget) for the 2019–21 biennium
- Worked with the Capital Projects Committee to clarify approval and promotion requirements for capital projects
- Use of corporate credit cards is at its highest level which has resulted in a cash back award and has saved tens of thousands of dollars annually through its provision of insurance on rental cars

A Look Ahead

Even with significantly fewer staff than several years ago, Financial Services is focusing on maintaining day-to-day operations, reducing costs, and improving effectiveness. We are confident that controls will not be weakened and are fully committed to ensuring that services will not deteriorate because of the staff reduction. However, our abilities to react to new service requests may be limited. We will continue to seek out and implement changes that reduce costs, increase effectiveness, and/or strengthen internal controls.

Looking ahead, our plans include the following:

- Implementation and training associated with transition to a cloud-based donor relationship management and accounting software
- Collaborate with the schools on investigation of paperless accounts payable and credit card processing alternatives
- Review and revision of corporate WELS policies
- Cross training of employees to ensure service continuity during vacancies and extended absences

In summary, the Financial Services team is honored to serve and is prepared to use the available resources and their God-given skills and abilities to support the ministries of WELS.

Mr. Todd J. Poppe, reporter

HUMAN RESOURCES

Our Calling

The synod's Human Resources (HR) Department oversees the personnel functions for synod workers, including development, communication and implementation of personnel policies, recruitment, compensation, benefits, performance management, and employee relations. HR provides support to the Center for Mission and Ministry (CMM) leaders and employees, as well as the WELS synodical entities. HR also provides advice to supervisors on matters ranging from federal and state legal requirements to recruiting and developing the members of their teams.

Human Resources also serves as a resource to WELS congregations and to affiliated groups and entities on the matters mentioned above as well as for risk management and federal and state legal requirements related to personnel matters. Further, in addition to legally mandated reporting to authorities, any charge, report, or allegation of sexual misconduct or physical abuse that has been made of an incident involving pastors, teachers, vicars, full- or part-time employees, and volunteers in any capacity must be reported to the synod president, director of Lutheran Schools, or director of Human Resources.

Our Current Situation

Beyond day to day human resource management activities, there are a few key activities/accomplishments that deserve special attention:

- Creation of a wels.net resource center HR site to assist WELS workers and members with various WELS HR needs. Currently dedicated to compensation administration to assist in understanding changes adopted by the synod in convention on August 3, 2017.
- Staffed the following positions within the last 12 months at the synod office:
 - Director, Africa Mission Operations, Missions
 - Mission Journey's Coordinator, Missions
 - Administrative Assistant, Commission on Evangelism
 - Administrative Assistant, Christian Aid and Relief
 - Technical Support Specialist, Technology
 - Accountant, Financial Services
 - Missions Liaison, Promotions/Campus Ministry, Missions
 - Missions Production Manager, Missions
 - Missions Advancement Coordinator, Missions
- HR due diligence—HR continues to perform due diligence on the vendors and systems in place within the HR structure. This has been, and will continue to be, an important step to ensure that both the outcomes provided, as well as the costs, are appropriate and expected.
- Synod Board/Committee Nominee Vetting - HR aids in process of filling board/committee openings for Synodical Council appointed positions, mainly with vetting of nominees to establish willingness to serve, procuring resume and/or bio forms, and creation of a central database to maintain all nominee data and vacancy records.
- Updated human resource materials on the existing HR Cloud site for WELS organizations to provide compensation, benefit, and policy information for called workers.
- ACA Reporting & Compliance – Per Affordable Care Act compliance requirements, large employers must file annual reports and monitor measurement periods to comply with the ACA's employer mandate. HR manages process for the CMM and the five synodical entities.
- HR continues to work with congregations and COP members related to personnel matters and general compensation issues.

A Look Ahead

Key area of focus will be to review current operations and identify where process improvements can be implemented. Over the next biennium HR will, with God's guidance and blessings:

- Develop compensation guidelines, matrices, and models for the 2019–21 biennium.
- Expand wels.net resource center HR site to further assist WELS workers and members with HR needs beyond the current emphasis on understanding called worker compensation.
- Provide continued training with synod leaders to continue to reinforce and develop the supervisory skills required.
- Continue to work with all synod entities to identify areas that can be developed, improved, or modified to create better efficiency and effectiveness.
- Assist members from both an informative as well as practical aspect.
- Update and maintain both the wels.net resource center HR site and WELS HR Cloud site to ensure information and details provided assist members from both an informational as well as practical aspect.
- Full utilization of the ADP HR & payroll software modules and support for the CMM and the subsidiary schools.

The Human Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC) is in place and operating to assist the HR function as needed in ensuring policies and procedures are established and applied across all synodical entities. Further, the HRAC ensures that these systems are efficient and effective, that HR is staffed appropriately to include the requisite training and experience, and to investigate and review any issue related to HR when called upon. The committee's focus has changed from assistance and direction for day-to-day operational HR issues to assistance when requested with strategic human resources areas such as compensation/benefit design, succession planning, and organization architecture/design.

Questions can be directed to hro@wels.net or by calling (414) 256-3268.

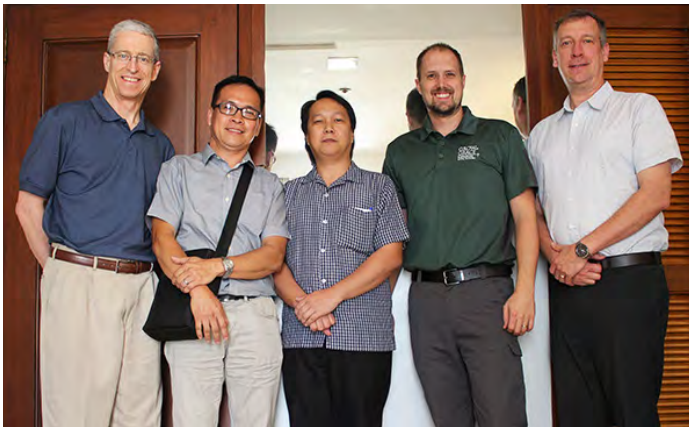
Mr. Dennis Maurer, reporter

SPRING 2018

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY SPOTLIGHT

PSI UPDATE : PHILIPPINES

In February, Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) team members, World Mission Seminary Professor Bradley Wordell and International Recruitment Director Jon Bare, joined Rev. Robb Raasch, the chairman of the Asia Pacific Rim Administrative Committee, on a trip to the Philippines. The purpose of the trip was to work with Rev. Alvien De Guzman of Law and Gospel Lutheran Church in Manilla on a plan for a pastoral training program.



A year ago, De Guzman didn't see the potential of needing a pastoral training program for the near future. But just in the past few months, three men, who like De Guzman had left another church body for doctrinal reasons, contacted De Guzman, wondering if they might join his congregation. He discovered that all three had begun pastoral training in their original church but left when they became convinced by Scripture that they were not receiving the truth of God's Word. Each of the men has a group in front of them ready to be led, but the men need pastoral training to be prepared to serve them.

That began a conversation with World Missions and the PSI team, leading to this visit. "It was a privilege to meet these three men and to hear their stories," says Wordell.

"Their patience and determination are inspiring. They have been waiting to see what the Lord's plan is for them, and each of them has a strong desire to serve among Christ's people."

The training program will be specifically designed to meet the needs for pastoring churches in the Philippines. "Our goal is to provide the training that these men need in their own culture and context," says Bare. "This visit allowed us to work with Pastor De Guzman to design the best program for this growing church in the Philippines."

The courses will be offered in a variety of methods. De Guzman will teach some courses on the ground. Others will be conducted online or through intensive courses offered on short-term visits.

WELS first got involved with De Guzman in 2014, when De Guzman contacted WELS World Missions looking for help after he discovered WELS online. In early 2015, WELS determined that De Guzman was in doctrinal fellowship. His congregation is using videos and printed materials from Multi-Language Publications to reach out to the unchurched in its community.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Apr 13: Prof Kock and Prof Wordell 25th Anniversary Service

Apr 28: Seminary Scurry

Apr 29: Legacy Society Dinner

May 11: No School - MLC Graduation

May 24: Call Day and Graduation Concert

May 25: Graduation

June 1-2: Ministerial Education Faculty Conference

June 18-29: Summer Quarter

MISSION AND MINISTRY HELD

From Feb. 6–8, presenters with experience in mission work in North America and around the world spoke at Mission and Ministry, an annual three-day event that introduces seminary students to the worldwide work of WELS.

Under the theme “Building on the Rock,” participants heard from world and home missionaries as well as congregational leaders. Topics included beginning a mission church, evangelism for the busy pastor, using teens in outreach, compassion ministry, getting involved in their community, and multi-language publications.

“Mission and Ministry is important because it connects students training to be pastors with the work that is being done throughout their synod,” says Senior Noah Willitz, one of the event organizers.

Not only does Mission and Ministry help students learn more about their synod, the organizers learned personal lessons that will carry into their ministry. “Mission and Ministry is like a light at the end of the tunnel. It’s good to hear presentations and rub shoulders with pastors doing some great evangelism,” says Thomas Gorzalski, another senior and organizer. “It is a good reminder that every church is a mission church. No matter where I am sent in a few months, I know evangelism will be a priority.”

Seminary students are not the only ones who benefit from the event. On Tuesday, the junior class of pastor track students at Martin Luther College attended presentations and the entire student body of Bethany Evangelical Theological Seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) attended sessions on Wednesday and Thursday. In all, almost 200 students, professors, and guests participated.

PROFESSOR WENDLAND INSTALLED

Professor Robert Wendland was installed as Professor of Church History and Homiletics on January 31.

Prof. Wendland was born and raised in Lusaka where his father served on the faculty of the seminary of the Lutheran Church in Central Africa. He attended the International School of Lusaka and was confirmed in the Lutheran faith at Good Shepherd Church in Lusaka. He graduated from Northwestern College in 1994. After serving as a vicar at Christ, Eagle River, Wisconsin, and St. John, Phelps, Wisconsin, he graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1998. He was assigned to Redemption, Milwaukee, where he served until 2003 when he accepted a call as a missionary in Blantyre, Malawi. He served as the circuit-riding pastor for up to 14 rural congregations and also as the chairman of the Board of Control for the Lutheran Bible Institute.

He and his wife Rebecca have four children. Hannah, 18, and Nathanael, 15, both attend Luther Preparatory School in Watertown. Caleb, 12, and Bethany, 8, are at Christ Alone Lutheran School in Thiensville.



GROW IN GRACE: THE INSTITUTE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

FUTURE SUMMER QUARTER PLANS

In recent years, satellite courses—or on-location courses—have become a popular alternative for pastors’ continuing education. So often pastors remark that they are interested in participating in continuing education but taking time to travel to Mequon can present a challenge. As a response, Grow in Grace is finding ways to bring more continuing education classes to pastors in their area.

Beginning in the summer of 2019, Summer Quarter will travel to outlying synodical districts in alternating years. On-campus Summer Quarter will be held in Mequon in even-numbered years. The goal of the traveling Summer Quarter is to make a variety of courses accessible to pastors across the country while still including the intensity and variety of the on-campus experience. As the planning for traveling summer quarter gets underway, we still anticipate a successful on-campus Summer Quarter this year. Multiple new courses will be offered both on-campus and online. We pray God will increase Summer Quarter enrollment both in 2018 and as we take Summer Quarter on the road.



IN FOCUS

MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE

Dear friends and fellow believers,

The apostle Paul makes Easter Sunday intimately personal for each believer. He writes to the church in Ephesus about an amazing reality we sinners sometimes forget. *I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know . . . his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms* (Ephesians 1:18-20).

For Christ's sake, the Father unleashes resurrection power in your heart and mine. Awesome power. Power that covered sin, defeated the devil, and destroyed death! The Spirit of wisdom and revelation unleashes that same power upon us. In Christ's resurrection we have power to crucify the sinful nature with its passions and desires. We have power to endure hardship like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. We have power to give an answer to everyone who asks us about the hope we have.

The reason is Easter: Christ's victory power is in our hearts and in our lives. And it becomes evident to all—and especially self—that when I am weak, then he is strong.

May we continue to proclaim to ourselves and others: He is risen! He is risen indeed! And may our Lord Jesus and his Spirit guide our conventions, providing wisdom and power for the gospel efforts in each of our 12 districts.



In Christ,
Rev. Mark Zarling

**Check Out
Your District on Pages 4-15**

FOCUS on FACULTY

Retiring summer 2018



Prof. Lance Hartzell
DMLC '71

Professor of education & art
DMLC 1993-1995;
MLC 1995-2018



**Instructor
Jeneane Thiesfeldt**
DMLC '74

Piano & organ instructor
MLC 2001-2018

Celebrating ministry anniversaries

- **Prof. Ron Ohm DMLC '78:**
40 years
- **Prof. Cindy Whaley DMLC '76:**
40 years
- **Prof. Larry Lotito:** 25 years

Joining our faculty in 2018-19

- **Darrell Berg DMLC '88**
(education & art)
- **Catherine St. John '13**
(lead preschool teacher)
- **Alan Uher DMLC '87** (education)

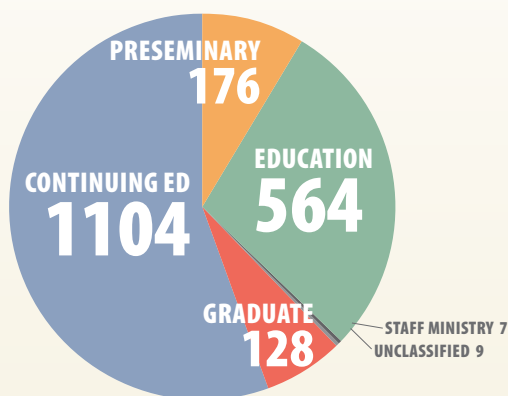
Calls yet to be filled for 2018-19

- Professor of special education
- Professor of theology and foreign language
- Professor of theology

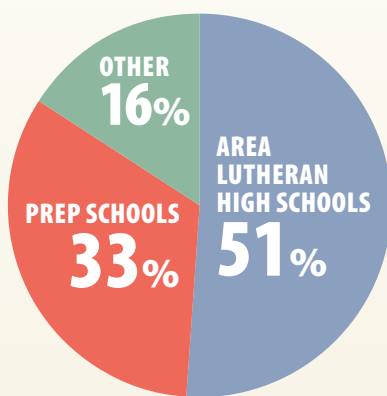
In memoriam

- **Prof. Howard Wessel 1933-2017**
- **Prof. Theodore Hartwig 1921-2017**
- **Prof. Arnold Koelpin 1931-2017**
- **Prof. Alan Spurgin 1949-2018**

ENROLLMENT: 1988



UNDERGRAD STUDENTS BY HIGH SCHOOL



OUR FIRST-YEARS

40 High Schools
21 States
4 Countries

3.46 Average HS GPA
24.3 Average ACT



TUITION, ROOM & BOARD

2016 Tuition \$13,980
2017 Room & Board \$5,510
2017 Total \$19,490

2017 Tuition \$14,680
2018 Room & Board \$5,790
2018 Total \$20,470

2018 Tuition \$15,410
2019 Room & Board \$6,080
2019 Total \$21,490



ATHLETICS

1/3 Play NCAA D3 athletics
3/5 Play intramurals

9 of 16

D3 UMAC sports where MLC led in team GPA

- 3.82** women's volleyball
- 3.78** women's cross country
- 3.76** women's tennis
- 3.73** women's soccer
- 3.69** women's softball
- 3.57** women's basketball
- 3.36** men's tennis
- 3.35** men's soccer
- 3.08** men's baseball

EMERGENCY TEACHERS

6 Seniors filled emergency calls

MUSIC

1/2 Students took piano or organ lessons



1/20 Played in wind symphony

1/3 Sang in a choir

1/7 Participated in fall musical

FINANCIAL AID

\$2.2 Million institutional aid given



95% Students received scholarships, grants, loans, and/or work-study funds from MLC



RESIDENTIAL LIFE

4 Residence halls **98%** Students live on campus

35+ Students compelled to live in New Ulm homes next year due to campus housing shortage

VISITING LUTHER LANDS



96 Alumni tour participants

RECRUITMENT

ON CAMPUS

730 HS students attended Focus on Ministry weekends on campus

OFF CAMPUS

1,000s HS students visited by admissions counselors

CONGREGATIONAL PARTNER GRANT PROGRAM

\$400,000 Awarded

242 Students receiving grants

146 Participating congregations

NOON, & KNIGHT

GRADUATES

DEC 2017 **13** Education

MAY 2018 **109** Education

36 Preseminary

30 Master of Science

Note: **23 graduates (14 education & 9 preseminary)** have opted to teach abroad following graduation

STAFF MINISTRY

25 25-Year anniversary of program

NCAA SPOTLIGHT

1 2018 UMAC Female Scholar-Athlete Leadership Award – given to MLC volleyball player **Kira Grev**

4 Seasons Kira won First Team All-UMAC and Academic All-UMAC honors

1,000+ Kills and hits by Kira



DAYLIGHT USA MINISTRY ASSISTANCE

81 Students participated

38 Congregations received assistance

17 States & territories served



Strategic Plan Goal:

100% MLC student participation in Daylight USA

CONTINUING ED

1104 Students (mostly called workers) served

114 Courses (on campus, online, and on location)

GRADUATE STUDIES

13 Years in existence

3 Degrees offered

- MS-Education (instruction, leadership, special ed, and ed tech emphases)
- MS-Educational Administration (principal & EC director tracks)
- MA-Theological Studies

115 Degrees granted

128 Students

40 Courses

41 Professors (10 MLC & 31 adjunct)



MLC 2017-18 "BEST COLLEGE FOR YOUR MONEY"

BACHELOR OF ART & SCIENCE

#1 in Minnesota Best College for Your Money



#3 in America Best Value



MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION

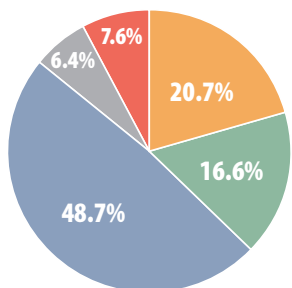
#1 in America Best Value



#3 in America Most Affordable



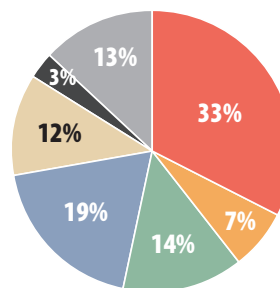
WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?



FY 2016-2017*

Synod support (WELS/MLC)	20.7%
Gifts and bequests	16.6%
Tuition	48.7%
Government student aid	6.4%
Other	7.6%

WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?



FY 2016-2017*

Instruction	33%
Instructional Support	7%
Student Services	14%
Environmental Services	19%
General and Administrative	12%
Mission Advancement	3%
Auxiliary Enterprises	13%

TOTAL BUDGET = \$20 MILLION

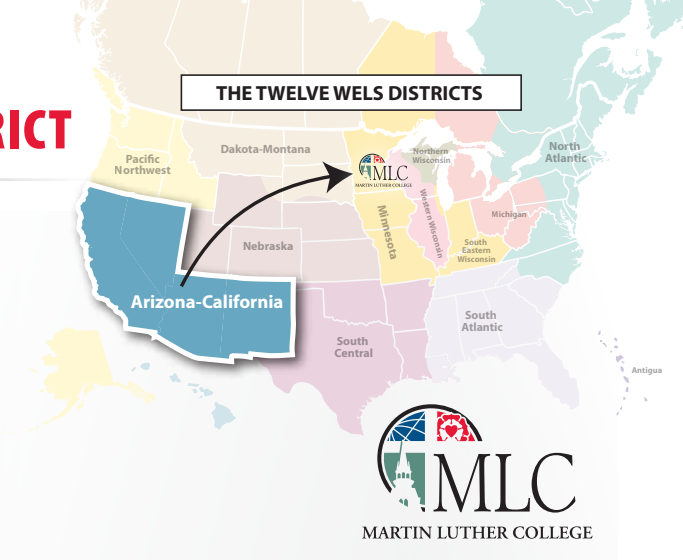
*2017-2018 Figures not yet available.

FOCUS on ARIZONA-CALIFORNIA DISTRICT

First-Year Academic Standout



Sara Wentzel
(Arizona Lutheran Academy)
HS Valedictorian



YOUR MAY 2018 GRADUATES

- 4 Education
- 3 Preseminary

HS VISITORS TO MLC

- California LHS: 10
- Arizona Lutheran Academy: 4

CONGREGATIONS SERVED BY MLC'S DAYLIGHT USA

- Beautiful Savior-Carlsbad CA
- Beautiful Savior-Las Vegas
- Gloria Dei-Belmont CA
- Peace-Queen Creek AZ
- River of Life-Goodyear AZ
- St. Mark-Citrus Heights CA
- St. Peter-Modesto CA

YOUR MLC GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER

- Steven Rosenbaum DMLC '86



New Campaign: With the permission of WELS Conference of Presidents, we will conduct a two-year capital campaign in conjunction with the 2020 silver anniversary of MLC. The title, "Equipping Christian Witnesses," not only reflects the mission of our institution—to train a corps of Christian witnesses to meet WELS ministry needs—but also the pillars of this campaign:

- **Recruitment:** Pray for more pastors, teachers, and staff ministers, and purposefully identify and encourage young Christians who could serve in these roles.
- **Financial aid:** Support the Congregational Partner Grant Program (CPGP), through which MLC matches congregations' gifts for their enrolled students, dollar for dollar, up to \$1,000 per student every year.
- **Facilities:** Repair and augment campus spaces for ministry training: academics, student life, athletics, and the arts. With the help of two consulting firms, we are prioritizing our facility needs.

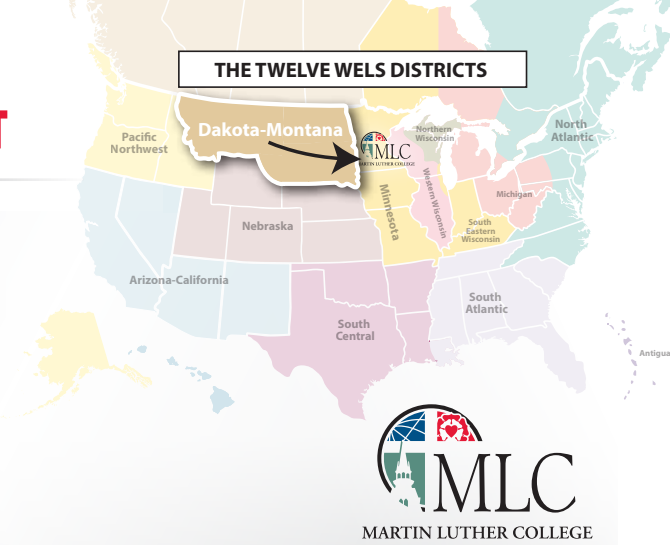
Endless Opportunities: Our Savior Jesus is *not* willing that any should perish. Never before in our synod's history have we seen so many mission opportunities. Hundreds of people all over the world are approaching WELS for scriptural instruction and evangelism assistance. Technology is enabling us to reach countless homes in many different countries with the gospel. And today's young Christians are travelers, eager to take the gospel anywhere in the world.

Deep Needs: We need more workers—not only to fill our vacancies, but also to grasp these new opportunities, to seize the day the Lord has provided us to impact the world with his Word.

Bold Prayers: "Equipping Christian Witnesses" is a celebration of God's goodness—not only for 25 years of MLC ministry, but for more than 150 years of the unconditional gospel in our midst. Pray boldly that we use this celebration to recruit with rigor countless Christian witnesses . . . to increase our financial support of our students . . . and to provide the necessary facilities to equip our students for their future ministries.

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Your May 2018 Graduates



Annalies Brander

Early Childhood Ed & Special Ed



Joshua Busch

Preseminary Studies



Zachary Peterson

Elementary Ed & Secondary PE

HS VISITORS TO MLC

- Great Plains LHS: 9



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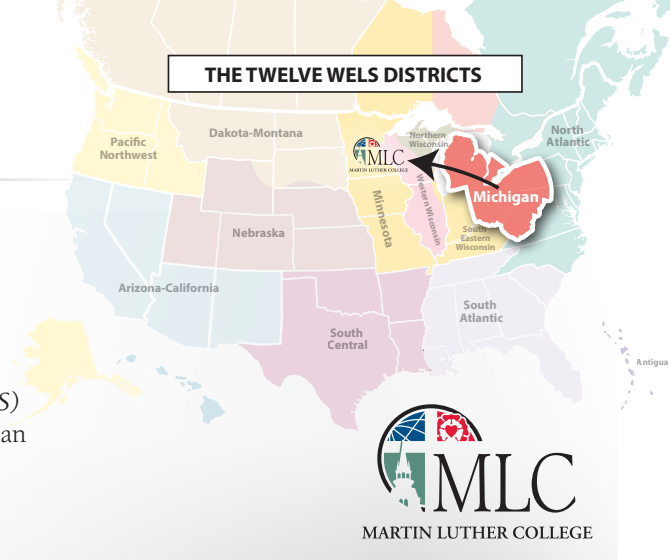
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First-Year Academic Standouts



Courtney Ritter

(Michigan LHS)
National Merit Finalist



Julia Kubath

(Michigan LHS)
HS Valedictorian

YOUR MAY 2018 GRADUATES

- 11 Education
- 3 Preseminary

HS VISITORS TO MLC

- Michigan Lutheran Seminary: 64
- Huron Valley LHS: 11
- Michigan LHS: 0

CONGREGATIONS SERVED BY MLC'S DAYLIGHT USA

- Zion-Toledo OH

YOUR MLC GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER

- Michael Krueger



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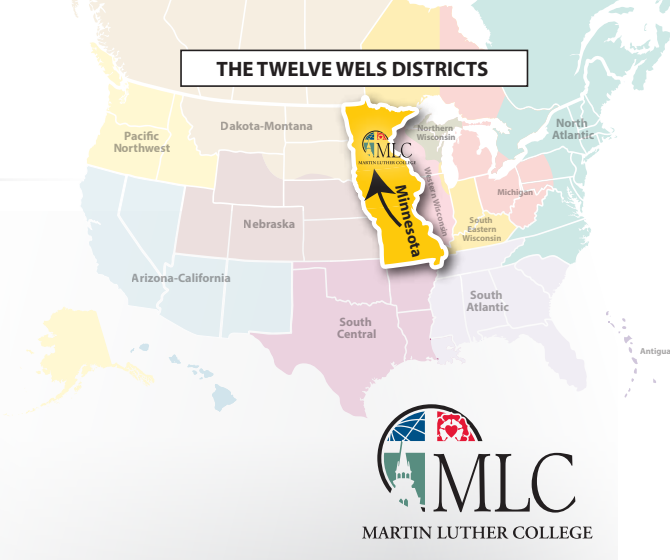
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First-Year Academic Standout



Joel Koelpin

(Minnesota Valley LHS)
HS Valedictorian

YOUR MAY 2018 GRADUATES

- 14 Education
- 4 Preseminary

HS VISITORS TO MLC

- St. Croix Lutheran Academy: 55
- Minnesota Valley LHS: 42
- West LHS: 28

CONGREGATIONS SERVED BY MLC'S DAYLIGHT USA

- Brooklyn-Brooklyn Park MN
- Pilgrim-Minneapolis
- True North Campus Ministry-Minneapolis
- WELS Kingdom Workers-New Ulm MN

YOUR MLC GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

- Jonathan Brohn WLS '96
- Charles Degner WLS '79 (MN District president)
- Michael Valleau
- Mark Zarling WLS '80 (MLC president)



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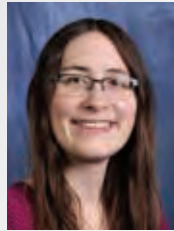
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Your May 2018 Graduates



**Sam
Lor**

Preseminary Studies



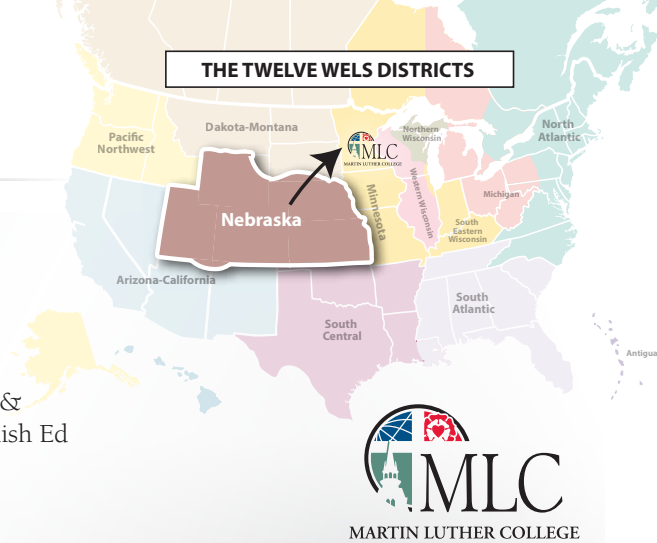
**Cortney
Manning**

Elementary Ed &
Secondary English Ed



**Nicole
Wood**

Secondary Spanish Ed



HS VISITORS TO MLC

- Nebraska LHS: 32
- Rocky Mountain LHS: 19

CONGREGATIONS SERVED BY MLC'S DAYLIGHT USA

- Christ-Denver
- Living Word-Montrose CO



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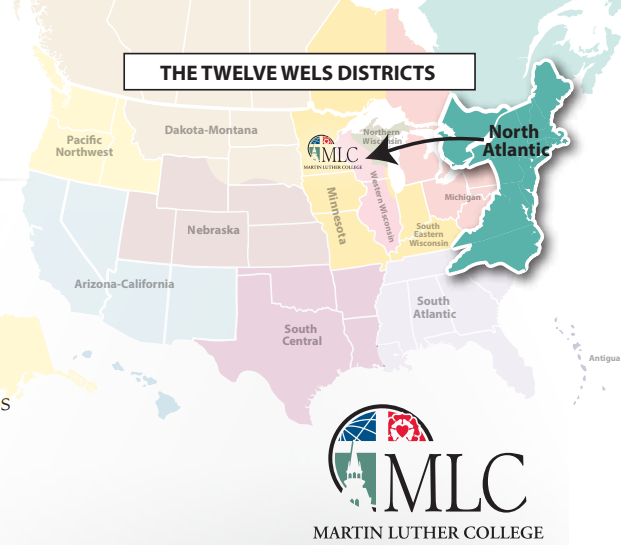
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Your May 2018 Graduates



**Sarah
Couture**

Secondary Chemistry
& Life Science Ed



**Carolyn
Hunt**

Educational Studies



**Zachary
Satorius**

Preseminary
Studies



**Justin
Wilkens**

Preseminary
Studies



CONGREGATIONS SERVED BY MLC'S DAYLIGHT USA

- Grace-Charlotte NC
- Grace-Falls Church VA
- Sure Foundation-Queens

YOUR MLC GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER

- Michael Siefert WLS '03 (*vice chair*)



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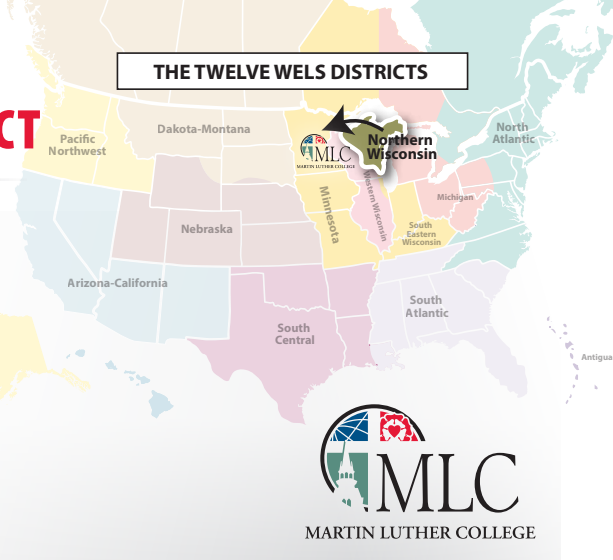
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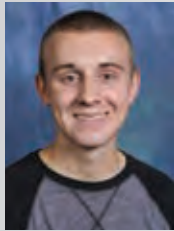
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First-Year Academic Standout



**Noah
Melso**

(Manitowoc LHS)
HS Valedictorian

YOUR MAY 2018 GRADUATES

- 20 Education
- 7 Preseminary

HS VISITORS TO MLC

- Fox Valley LHS: 34
- Winnebago Lutheran Academy: 29
- Manitowoc LHS: 27

CONGREGATIONS SERVED BY MLC'S DAYLIGHT USA

- St. John-Sturgeon Bay WI
- St. Paul-Algoma WI

YOUR MLC GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

- David Uhlhorn '99
- Dale Krause



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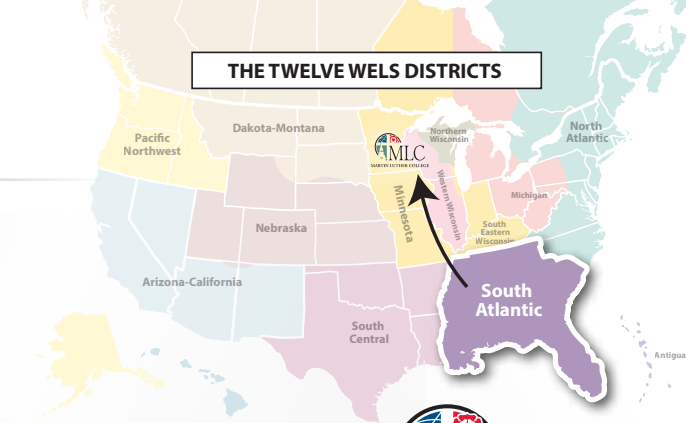
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THE TWELVE WELS DISTRICTS

Your May 2018 Graduates



Tassia-Channel Clement

Elementary Ed



Joseph Kasper

Preseminary Studies



Caroline Madson

Elementary Ed



Thomas Welch

Preseminary Studies

First-Year Academic Standout



Sofia Spieglberg

(Luther Preparatory School)
HS Valedictorian



HS VISITORS TO MLC

- Divine Savior Academy: 6

CONGREGATIONS SERVED BY MLC'S DAYLIGHT USA:

- Abiding Faith-Smyrna TN
- Abiding Grace-Covington GA
- Christ Our Savior-Columbia TN
- Hope-Irmo SC
- Intown-Atlanta
- Living Word-Gray TN
- Mi Dios Verdadero-San Juan, Puerto Rico
- New Mission-Ooltewah TN
- Risen Savior-Lakewood Ranch FL
- St. Paul-Beverly Hills FL



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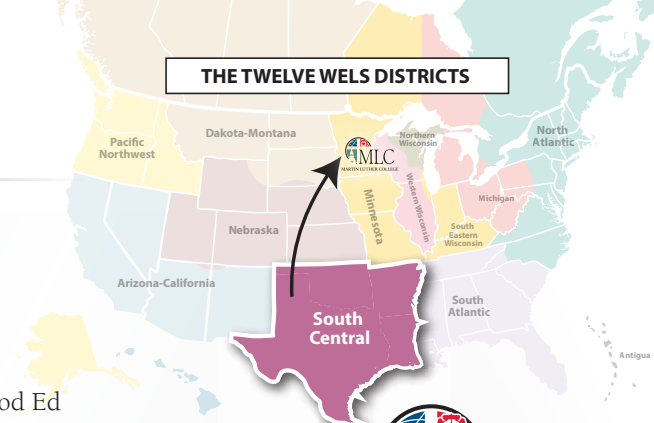
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THE TWELVE WELS DISTRICTS

Your May 2018 Graduates



Andrew Carter
Staff Ministry



Megan Fury
Early Childhood Ed



Marah Schneider
Elementary Ed



Justin Steinke
Preseminary Studies



Joshua VonDeylen
Elementary Ed



CONGREGATIONS SERVED BY MLC'S DAYLIGHT USA

- Beautiful Savior-College Station TX

YOUR MLC GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER:

- Andrew Van Weele '04



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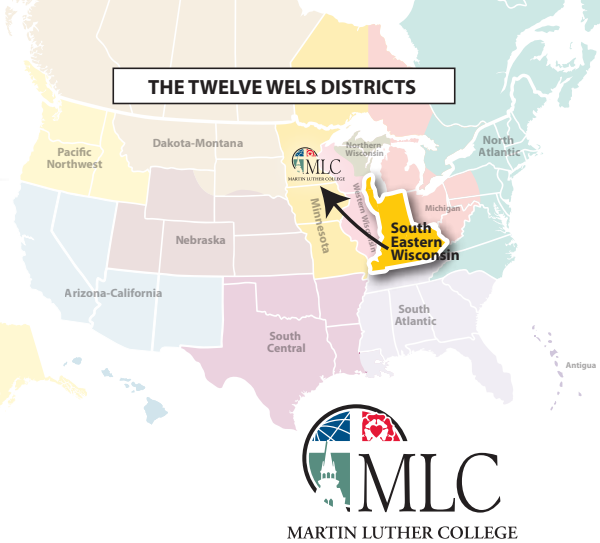
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YOUR MAY 2018 GRADUATES

- 17 Education
- 9 Preseminary

HS VISITORS TO MLC

- Wisconsin LHS: 64
- Kettle Moraine LHS: 33 (pictured)
- Illinois LHS: 22
- Shoreland LHS: 21

CONGREGATIONS SERVED BY MLC'S DAYLIGHT USA

- School Chaplaincy-Milwaukee
- Living Word-Waukesha WI

YOUR MLC GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

- Joe Archer DMLC '78
- Daniel Leyrer WLS '89
- Randy Matter (*advisory*)
- Paul Prange WLS '88 (*Ministerial Ed administrator*)
- Michael Woldt WLS '81 *chair*



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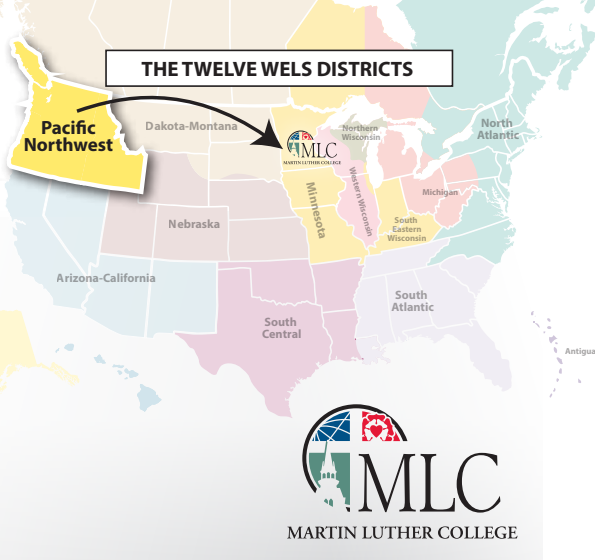
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Your May 2018 Graduates



John Henning
Secondary PE



Erin Plocher
Elementary Ed

HS VISITORS TO MLC

- Evergreen LHS: 36 (pictured)

CONGREGATIONS SERVED BY MLC'S DAYLIGHT USA

- Messiah-Nampa ID



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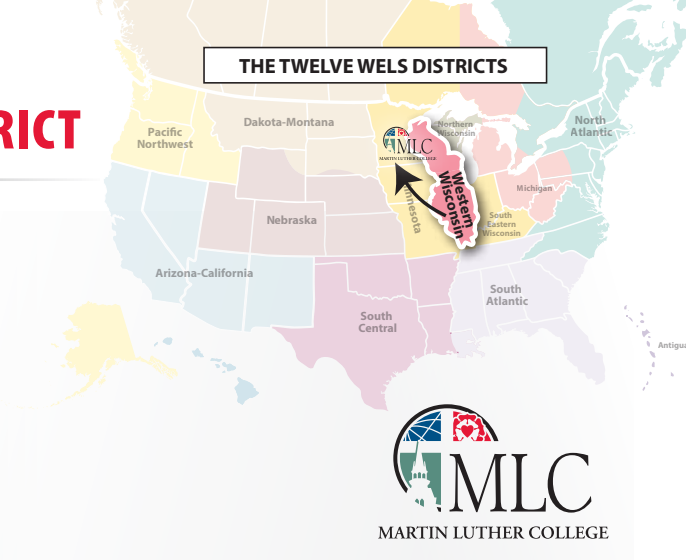
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First-Year Academic Standouts



Christopher Walther

(Luther Preparatory School)
HS Valedictorian

YOUR MAY 2018 GRADUATES

- 23 Education
- 3 Preseminary

HS VISITORS TO MLC

- Luther Preparatory School: 102
- Lakeside LHS: 34
- Northland LHS: 31
- Luther HS: 26

CONGREGATIONS SERVED BY MLC'S DAYLIGHT USA

- Bethany-Fort Atkinson WI
- Divine Word-Plover WI
- St. John-Hillpoint WI

YOUR MLC GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

- Michael Lindemann WLS '91
- Timothy Petermann
- Mark Schroeder WLS '81 (WELS president)



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Luther Preparatory School

Our calling

Luther Preparatory School (LPS), Watertown, Wis., has a single mission: To encourage and prepare young people for a lifetime of service in the public ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

LPS is owned and operated by WELS. The synod has given LPS the privilege and responsibility to carry out this important work. The LPS Governing Board is grateful to our church body, which supports the work of LPS with its prayers and gifts.

Historically, 55 percent of LPS graduates have enrolled at Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn., (our synod's college of ministry) since LPS was formed in 1995. Over the past 14 years, 37 percent of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) graduates were once LPS students.

78 (71 percent) of the 109 graduates from the LPS class of 2018 will enroll at MLC this fall. That is our highest percentage ever. In the prep department's 153 years of existence on our synod's Watertown campus, only one time have more than 30 graduates continued their preparations for the pastoral ministry either at the former Northwestern College or present day MLC; two times since 1995 Luther Prep has sent on 27 graduates for pastoral studies. Thirty-five graduates definitely plan to enter the MLC pastor track in fall. And there might be a few more in the wings.

Our current situation

Enrollment has remained steady the past few years. LPS opened school year 2017-18 with an enrollment of 416. We are expecting a similar or slightly higher enrollment next fall.

Our students hail from 25 states, 8 foreign countries, 183 congregations, and all 12 WELS districts. More than two-thirds of our students come from lay families.

Recruitment to LPS, with an eye on future full-time gospel ministry, remains a top priority. We always invite and welcome all WELS upper-grade students to visit our campus, "shadow" a prep student, and spend a night in one of the dormitories to get a feel for prep life. Every school year we host "Phoenix For A Day," a fall play, a musical, children's theater, grade school basketball tournaments, etc. These events bring more than two thousand WELS grade school students on our campus. Over the summer we offer several basketball, volleyball, and soccer camps, which afford hundreds of WELS grade school students and their parents an opportunity to take a close look at their synod school.

The LPS curriculum is designed to prepare students to meet or exceed the requirements of MLC. LPS recognizes the need and desire for future musicians in our Lutheran congregations and classrooms. More than 90% of our students take piano lessons, with several of them advancing to take organ lessons. Many are involved in the string, brass, and wind ensembles. Because the biblical languages are critical for the work of future pastors and in order to prepare all students for language studies, all freshmen take first year Latin and all students take at least three years of Latin, German, or Spanish.

LPS has received accreditation from both WELSSA (Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod School Accreditation) and AdvanceED-NCA. LPS will continue to meet the standards set forth in the accreditation process to maintain our accredited status.

Because we are a mission-driven school for gospel proclamation, LPS offers age-appropriate experiences in speaking the gospel. All of our seniors take part in our Taste of Ministry program, in which prospective pastor students spend two days with an area WELS pastor and our prospective teacher students spend two days in a classroom with an area elementary school teacher. Project Timothy is a program designed to provide mission, ministry, and cross-cultural experiences to LPS students. 60 students will assist with outreach and education programs of mission congregations this summer in Antigua, St. Lucia, Georgia, Tennessee, Florida, Texas, California, Virginia, Canada, Nicaragua, and Germany. Also, senior boys are given the opportunity to prepare and speak an evening devotion to the student body.

Each year the entire junior class visits Martin Luther College. By the time our students graduate, each one will have met at least four times with an MLC recruiter. An array of missionaries, professors, teachers, pastors, and MLC and WLS students present topical ministry workshops at our annual Ministry Day. The entire student body takes part in Ministry Day. Sophomores also take an annual trip to the seminary. And seniors in the LPS pastor track visit the seminary each fall for worship, class visitation, and a tour. A gospel ministry atmosphere permeates campus life.

The Word is central in all we do. Worship services are held twice daily; all classes are taught from a scriptural perspective; and students are encouraged in their personal devotional lives. The Holy Spirit working through the means of grace continues to encourage and prepare our young people for lives of gospel ministry and service.

For the past six years Luther Prep has been able to livestream its morning chapel services, concerts, football, baseball, and soccer games, and many athletic events held in the gymnasium. Family members and friends—the vast majority living a distance away from Watertown—have greatly appreciated this service. The quality of livestreaming has improved immensely in recent years.

Technology use in the classroom also increased in recent years as each LPS student is given a Chromebook, which is used for 1:1 computing in several classes.

Luther Prep also participated in the Racine, Milwaukee, and Wisconsin Parental Choice Programs offered by the State of Wisconsin. In these Parental Choice Programs, parents receive a voucher from the state that pays the cost of education (tuition only) at participating private and religious schools.

The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) is for families residing in the city of Milwaukee. The Racine Parental Choice Program (RPCP) is for families living in the Racine Unified School District. To be eligible to apply for MPCP and RPCP, families must have an annual income at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level.

The Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) is for families living throughout the state of Wisconsin. To be eligible to apply for WPCP, families must have an annual income at or below 220% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Thirty-five families made use of these programs this past school year. We are pleased to report that all who participated last year and those who will participate this coming year are WELS members.

The governing board has voted to continue with the programs for next school year. The governing board will continue to evaluate prep's participation every year. If a condition is attached by the state which would force LPS to join hands in false doctrine (sin), then LPS would exit the choice programs immediately. If a challenge arises which negatively impacts the purpose of LPS, then LPS would also exit the choice programs. The governing board has exit strategies in place.

Having served Jesus as a tutor at Michigan Lutheran Seminary; a teacher at Atonement Lutheran School in Milwaukee, Wis.; and a professor, coach, and athletic director at LPS for the past 36 years, Coach Paul Bertolus will be retiring at the end of this school year. We thank him for his faithful service to Jesus and the gospel ministry.

Through the generous gifts from the people of our church body totaling just shy of \$1 million, Luther Prep was able to refurbish its chapel and enhance the organ two years ago. The LPS Governing Board considered such an expense to be worthwhile because 1) the chapel (worship) is the heartbeat of Luther Prep's life, 2) the organ remains the chief instrument in Lutheran worship, 3) this ministerial education campus has enjoyed the blessing of an organ for more than fifty years, 4) an appreciation for Lutheran worship is instilled in our students, and 5) Luther Prep produces more organists for service in the church than perhaps any other high school in America.

A look ahead

After being in hiatus for several years, Luther Prep will reinstate its wrestling program this coming school year.

Two years ago the WELS Capital Projects Committee asked all schools to provide a master site plan. Zimmerman Architectural Studio recognized \$12.5 million in conceptual costs that could be done on the synod's Watertown campus, the majority of which was for a new music auditorium to replace the existing 106-year-old auditorium. In the coming biennium, Luther Prep plans to obtain concepts and estimated costs for a future music auditorium. The old auditorium would be repurposed to its original use as a gymnasium, which would be used as a secondary gymnasium for lower-level teams and intramurals.

We rejoice that our synod, under the hand of a loving, saving, guiding God, plans to open several home missions each year for the foreseeable future. World mission opportunities continue to knock on the door of WELS. WELS has also witnessed an increase in the need for WELS trained teachers inside and outside of America. It naturally follows: The more congregations we start and the more schools of varying types open, the more called workers we need.

We are delighted, humbled, and grateful for Luther Prep's role in our synod's gospel work. We are thankful for all the people in our church body who continually support our ministerial purpose in so many ways. We ask and pray that the members of our church body continue to identify grade school boys and girls who might someday with appropriate encouragement and preparation become "beautiful feet who bring good news and proclaim salvation" (Isaiah 52:7). Above all, we rejoice in the Holy Spirit touching the lives of all of our students through the life-giving gospel. This same Spirit will use our students' future service to bring the gospel to the elderly, the middle-aged, their contemporaries, the young, those yet to be born . . . ALL!

Pres. Matthew Crass, reporter

Rev. Kenneth Brokmeier, chairman
Rev. Timothy Spaude, vice chairman
Doctor John Meyer, secretary
Rev. Stephen Hein
Principal Adam Glodowski
Mr. Martin Madson
Mr. Joel Scott
Rev. Kevin Westra

Advisory:

Pres. Matthew Crass, Luther Preparatory School
Rev. Michael Jensen, president of the Western Wisconsin District
Rev. Paul Prange, administrator of WELS Board for Ministerial Education
Rev. Duane Rodewald, chairman of WELS Board for Ministerial Education
Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president

2018 MLS Report to the WELS District Conventions

Please take a minute to watch a Special Convention Video



Click to watch video

MLS ended the 2016-2017 school year with 216 Students. 52 seniors graduated and of those 26 applied to MLC (50%).

MLS began the 2017-2018 school year with 200 students. There are 48 students who will graduate at the end of May. Of those we are anticipating 17-20 will enroll at MLC in the fall (42%). There are about 7 that will enroll in the pastor track for next year.

The decline in students between these two school years was due in part to a smaller than expected freshmen class which began at 41 students. For the 2018-2019 school year MLS currently has 55 applications in hand and is anticipating a slightly larger class. This would mostly replace the seniors graduating so the enrollment should remain stable for the next school year.

MLS has been blessed the past year with 29 faculty members (23 full-time and 6 part-time) and 28 staff members (15 full-time). This past year has been a very volatile one for MLS staffing. At the beginning of the year MLS was calling for five faculty members. Four of those calls were filled. However, during the year, two more faculty members accepted divine calls and at the end of this year two other faculty members will be retiring. One position that needed to be filled was the office of president. The Lord blessed MLS so that there will be no vacancy in this office, since Pastor Mark Luetzow accepted the call to be president in March and is beginning his duties in May. The office of vice president and athletic director were also vacated. Thankfully, MLS also had another person accept a call who is capable of filling the vice president position. The Athletic Director position will be filled through adjustments in faculty responsibilities. MLS is also covering two faculty positions with temporary manpower until next year to give the new president time to evaluate needs.

MLS embarked on two campus improvement projects this past year. One was a consolidation project which moved administrative offices into a common area in the front of the building. This has created efficiencies in communication and utilization of support personnel. The other improvement was the replacement of the visitor bleachers on the football field which had deteriorated to the point of being dangerous. We are thankful to the MLS Foundation for helping to fund both of these projects.

REPORT TO THE TWELVE DISTRICTS SUBMISSION

WELS HISTORICAL INSTITUTE**Our calling**

The WELS Historical Institute had its first meeting on October 28, 1981 at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. The initial idea of an organization of WELS Lutherans dedicated to preserving and relating the history of our synod goes back to a bibliographic conference in 1978 at what was then Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota. The Institute's constitution mandates its efforts involve *promoting* interest in North American Lutheranism, especially the history of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod, *publishing* the results of research into Lutheran history, and *preserving* significant artifacts relating to the history of the synod.

Our current situation

The Institute—like many historical societies of a similar nature—is experiencing a gradual erosion of its membership base. In the second issue of the *WELS Historical Institute Journal* (Fall 1983), the Institute's then president, Rev. Roland Cap Elke, reported: "The Institute's charter membership stands at almost 600. This represents numerous lay people as well as pastors and teachers." Thirty-five years later, the current president regrets to report to the twelve districts that membership in the WELS Historical Institute has declined to less than 250 members. The major reason for this membership erosion is simple demographics. Many of the Institute's founders and charter members have gone to be with the Lord in heaven and they have not been significantly replaced with a new, younger membership base. Generation X and Millennials are not nearly as inclined to join a historical organization as their grandparents or parents have done in the past. This reality represents a long-term and potentially serious problem for the sustainability of the WELS Historical Institute. The Institute's board of directors is acutely aware of this situation and are working to develop plans for the long-term health and viability of the organization.

Despite the ongoing challenges of maintaining a sustainable membership base, the Institute in 2017 experienced one of its most productive years in recent memory. The highlight of the year was the refurbishing, painting, and stenciling of both of the sidewalls of Salem Lutheran Landmark Church. This expensive project was paid for by generous individuals who believe the history of the WELS needs to be preserved and financially supported. This building has served as the official WELS Museum for over a generation. The WELS had its first and its constituting convention in what was then Granville, Wisconsin on May 26, 1850, marking the birth of the synod. The first synod convention took place in a log church, which was Salem's place of worship before the current Landmark Church was constructed in 1863, near the location of the log church. The WELS Historical Institute has made the preservation and restoration of Salem Lutheran Landmark Church on Milwaukee's northwest side one of its ongoing endeavors.

There were many other highlights of our work in 2017. Once again, the Institute hosted a bus tour of significant sites of Milwaukee-area Lutheranism this past August. The bus tour began an informative day of WELS history at David's Star, Jackson, toured the WELS archives and the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry, Waukesha, enjoyed lunch at Wisconsin Lutheran College, and finished the day by touring St. Lucas, Bayview and St. Marcus, Milwaukee. The next bus tour is tentatively scheduled for the summer of 2020, with visits to WELS sites in the Watertown area.

Each year around a dozen different groups of various sizes come to tour the Landmark Church, view the historical exhibits, and walk the grounds where the synod was founded. These groups represent a cross section of WELS congregations, schools, organizations, and individuals.

Twice a year, under the editorship of Prof. John Brenner of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, the *WELS Historical Institute Journal* is published, which features scholarly articles on various persons, places, and events connected with WELS history and American Lutheranism. Past issues of the *Journal* up to 2015 are available online from the synod website under WELS Historical Institute. In addition to the *Journal*, a semi-annual newsletter is also published, informing Institute members of happenings and upcoming events of interest.

Since its founding, the WELS Historical Institute has endeavored to offer annual lectures and presentations which are of interest to WELS members and the general public. This past year, Mr. James Moeller hosted another informative tour of West Granville Cemetery, across the road from Salem on 107th Street, the burial place of many of Salem's original members. The Institute, together with members of the current Salem Ev. Lutheran Church, opened the Landmark Church for the popular "Doors Open Milwaukee" event, which attracts numerous visitors from the general public to Salem. At the Institute's annual meeting on Sunday, October 22, 2017, held at WELS CMM, Prof. Brenner gave the presentation, "From Federation to Final Amalgamation: The Birth of the Wisconsin Synod as We Know It Today."

The WELS Historical Institute wishes to honor the memory and service of our late former president, Prof. Robert Bock, who was called to his eternal home in heaven on September 26, 2017. In addition to a long and distinguished teaching career in WELS schools, the last forty as a professor at Northwestern and Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Bob served for many years on the WELS Historical Institute board and as its president. We, along with his family and friends, mourn his passing but rejoice that Bob's soul is safely with the Lord in heaven. Blessed be his memory.

Finally, the board of directors also wishes to acknowledge Mr. Ken Artlip's service to the board and the organization. Ken helped conduct numerous tours of Salem and is retiring due to health concerns. We thank him for his contributions to the Institute.

A look ahead

The WELS Historical Institute continues to assume responsibility of the upkeep and maintenance of Salem Lutheran Landmark Church. There is still much work that needs to be done to fulfill the Institute's goal of restoring the building to its original 1863 appearance. The next major project which has to be addressed is re-roofing the church building. Generous donations have already been given for this project but significant funds still need to be raised.

New for 2018 is that the WELS Historical Institute website has ended its independent existence and has been incorporated into the WELS website. This will enable the Institute to update its information in a timelier manner to better serve its constituency.

The board of directors of the WELS Historical Institute meets four times a year to oversee the work of the Institute and to provide general governance. Board meetings are normally held in February, April, September, and October, immediately after the annual meeting. The annual meeting the past several years has been held in late October at the WELS CMM and always features a presentation on some aspect of WELS history. Reports from various board committees and elections are also held.

WELS congregations, schools, organizations, and individuals have a standing invitation from the Institute to tour the Landmark Church and its grounds. Normally tours are conducted from April through

October, although special arrangements can be made for out-of-town guests. To arrange a tour, contact the tour coordinator, Dr. Joel Pless, at 414-443-8930 (office), 262-677-2109 (home) or joel.pless@wlc.edu.

The finances of the WELS Historical Institute remains solvent, but the Institute always welcomes donations to fund its general operations and special projects. New members of the Institute are always welcome and they are genuinely needed for the important work of the Institute to continue. For information in becoming a member of the WELS Historical Institute and participating in its historical preservation work, visit www.wels.net, and click on WELS Historical Institute.

Joel Pless, reporter

Dr. Joel Pless, president

Mr. Daniel Nommensen, vice-president

Mrs. Naomi Plocher, secretary

Mr. Ryan Haines, treasurer

Rev. David Dolan

Mr. Duane Kuehl

Mr. Steve Miller

Mr. Carl Nolte

Prof. Joel Otto

Rev. Benjamin Schaefer

Rev. William Schaefer

Advisory:

Prof. John Brenner

Ms. Charlotte Sampe

Mrs. Susan Willems, WELS archivist



WELS Church Extension Fund

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod



Highlights | 2018

"So the churches were strengthened
in the faith and grew daily
in numbers."

Acts 16:5

Where investing in your future builds churches.

Our calling

WELS Church Extension Fund, Inc. (CEF) is a self-supporting, not-for-profit, wholly owned subsidiary corporation of the WELS. Its primary purpose is to provide loans and grants for mission congregation projects under the direction of the Board for

Home Missions and loans to mission-minded self-supporting congregations so that they can acquire parsonages, land, and facilities as tools for gospel outreach.

Our current situation

CEF funding to carry out our mission comes primarily from three sources: member investments, operating revenue, and gifts and bequests. Individual members, congregations and affiliates of WELS may invest in CEF certificates and savings accounts. As of March 2018, 3,338 investors have entrusted CEF with over \$106.9 million. Total investment dollars grew by nearly 21% this past year. These member investments provide funds for the Loan Program. Net revenues from operations and gifts and bequests made to CEF provide funding for the congregation Grant Program.

Loan Program

The CEF loan portfolio continues to grow and is now at 211 loans with dollars outstanding of \$155.9 million, a growth of more than 5% since 2017. Currently our “pipeline” of new loan originations for the remainder of fiscal year 2018 is 12 new loans for roughly \$14.8 million. In 2017 CEF put lending to “mission minded Self-Supporting” WELS congregations on hold for roughly 9 months while we focused on new investments. Our investment rate “special” in 2017 restocked CEF’s funds availability for the Loan program and we

resumed lending activities to “mission minded Self-Supporting” congregations in the fall of 2017. CEF’s lending rate structure is published annually in our Offering Circular – presently, our lending rate for new loans is 4.55%. “Mission” status congregations receive a 0.25% reduction of the lending rate for their initial 5-year note.

Grant Program

CEF provides matching grants to eligible mission congregations after they have provided a minimum 10% down payment for their initial land purchases, exiting facility purchase, or new facility construction projects. A congregation’s down payment combined with a CEF matching grant allows the mission congregation to move forward with a more manageable loan payment. \$1,667,584 has been approved for matching grants through February of fiscal year 2018. We anticipate up to \$.877 million of additional grant approvals to 3 congregations by the end of the fiscal year. Since 1993, more than \$35.1 million in CEF matching grants have been approved for mission congregations across North America and the West Indies.

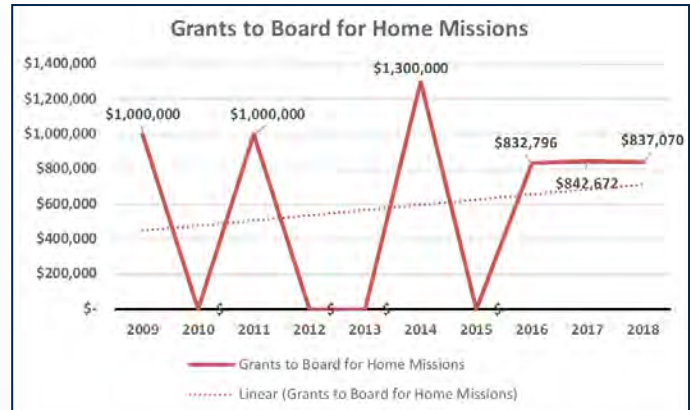
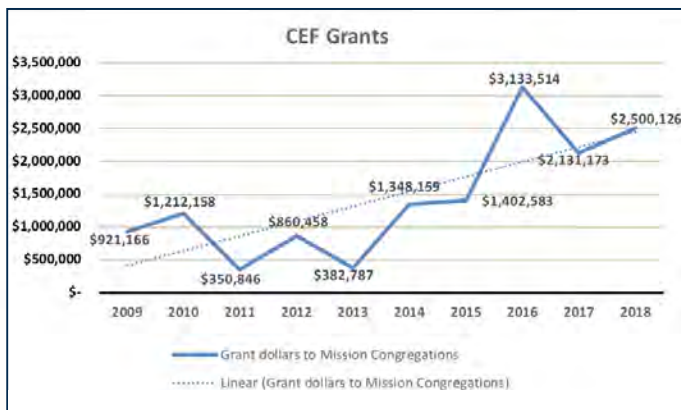
Where investing in your future builds churches.



Special grant to Home Missions

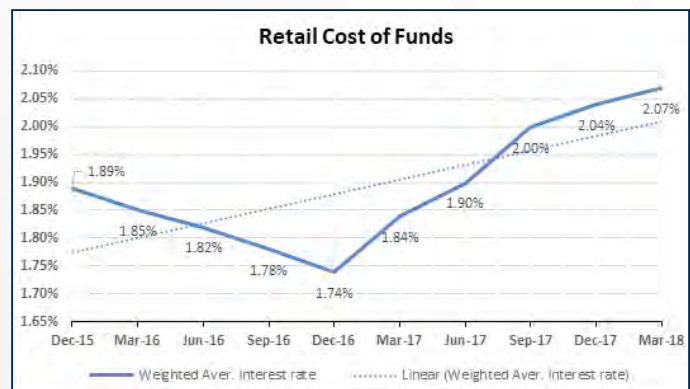
WELS CEF has distributed over \$5.8 million to the Board for Home Missions in the past 9 fiscal years

through special grants (\$3.3 Million 2009 – 2014) and through CEF’s endowment funds (\$2.5 million) since 2015.



WELS CEF Grants consist of matching down payments dollars at 4:1 for Land and 2:1 on Facility projects to reduce debt service on Mission status initial purchase/construction transactions. (2018 estimated)

In 2015, the WELS CEF Board of Directors established an annual grant program to the Board for Home Missions from its endowment to fund the BHM grant. (2018 actual)



WELS Congregations with either a "mission" or "self-supporting" status are eligible for CEF financing. (2018 estimated)

Retail investment cost of funds is the basis for CEF Lending interest rates. The rising interest rate environment has increased interest cost to borrowing congregations.



A look ahead

We pray by God's grace CEF will continue to benefit from positive operational results and be able to continue to provide loans and special grants over and above our matching grant programs to assist more mission congregations and Home Missions through endowment fund.

We anticipate that our loan portfolio will see significant growth in FY 2018 (on pace for \$23.5 Million) and into the future if we can continue to maintain a healthy and disciplined approach regarding operations and a fair and competitive interest rate environment for Investors and Borrowers.

We continue to encourage individual WELS members, congregations, and affiliated organizations to consider investing in CEF loan, savings, and retirement / IRA certificates and to consider gifts and bequests to CEF to help support our mission and close partnership with Home Missions.

Please feel free to contact CEF at 1-866-511-7793 or by email at: cef@wels.net. Visit our website at: wels.net/cef.



WELS Church Extension Fund

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

WELS Church Extension Fund, Inc. · N16W23377 Stone Ridge Drive Waukesha, WI 53188-1108

wels.net/cef · cef@wels.net · 866-511-7793

PUBLICATION COORDINATING COMMISSION

Our Calling

The Publication Coordinating Commission (PCC) has the task of coordinating and prioritizing the publishing and media production of the synod's boards and commissions and NPH in order to avoid duplication of effort. In the past we have solicited publishing proposals for material that are not funded by the budgets of WELS boards and commissions or would not recover the cost of production. When these projects are deemed to be important, their production costs are evaluated. We have also evaluated publishing proposals of NPH which were deemed valuable but could not recover the cost of production. We reviewed and evaluated those proposals and awarded funds from the Publication Fund to those projects we considered vital.

Our Current Situation

President Schroeder appointed new members to the PCC in order to facilitate new projects and approved projects to move forward. After those appointments the Commission reviewed the philosophy and priority guidelines. Two significant new projects were also discussed: the new catechism and the new hymnal. In both cases, the development costs for all the components of each proposal exceeded the resources of NPH and the PCC. NPH agreed to continue funding development of the core projects for each but additional funds were needed for auxiliary projects. These included curriculum for the catechism and for the hymnal project's various print products (pastor's companion, psalter, manuals) and digital products: a "service builder" computer program, a "musicians' resource" (a powerful tool that allows musicians to print scores for a wide variety of instruments), and a personal digital edition of the hymnal (an app for tablet or smartphone).

The PCC adopted a proposal to request \$400,000 from the Synodical Council (SC) for the auxiliary hymnal projects, but chose not to request additional funds for the catechism projects. In addition the PCC requested the SC continue to place the Publication Fund of the PCC on the Unfunded Projects Priority List. Since that time the SC approved \$400,000 from undesignated funds for the hymnal project and that it

be administered by the Hymnal Committee in cooperation with NPH. Subsequently, the SC also granted \$50,000 for the Publication Fund of the PCC.

The Commission also adopted a resolution to follow the previous model of funding large future projects. That older model was a cooperative funding model that provided funds from NPH and WELS, rather than depending on NPH to fund large synodwide projects. The rationale was to protect the future financial viability of the publishing house by expecting it to fund projects that could not recover development and production costs in the future.

The following projects in production or development have been approved for publication and subsidized from PCC funds:

- Thessalonians
- Mental Illness 2
- Scroll of Isaiah
- Collected Essays on the Role of Man and Woman
- Christian Leadership
- Wauwatosa Theology Essays IV
- Come Worship Christ
- Koehler Commentary on John

At the present time the PCC Publication Fund has \$70,845.65. In the current world of digital publication, discussion of digital projects confronts high development costs, the PCC is currently unable to fund such projects.

A Look Ahead

The WELS convention in 2017 resolved to adjust references to the PCC in the constitution. We await the implication of those changes. Although the Commission lacks sufficient funds for publication of many projects, we still believe that publishing plans of the boards and committees of the synod should be channeled through the Publication Coordinating Commission in order to maintain some coordination and consistency. Yet we understand the difficulty of implementing that concept when boards and committees are able to find funding from other sources. Publishing today involves digital formats and technological innovations which are expensive and time

consuming to create. We also face challenges in reaching a new generation of digitally savvy readers. Sadly we have limited resources to pursue these opportunities. While the future may not be clear at this point, we simply rely on the Lord's blessing so that we can continue to proclaim his gospel with quality materials that reflect our Scriptural and confessional standards.

Commission Members include: J. Braun (NPH and Chair), C. Jahn (NPH), B. Gerlach (CS), B. McKenney (Parish Pastor), J. Werre (BHM), T. Plitzuweit (CLS), T. Kock (BME), and N. Seiltz (MLP).

Rev. John Braun, reporter
