



Pacific Northwest DISTRICT

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

District President's Summer Update

July 2015

Fellow Called Workers in the PNW:

"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us – so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.

*May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you.
May God bless us still, so that all the ends of the earth will fear him."*

- from Ps. 67

Midway through our summer break we rejoice to see how God continues to bless his people. Here in the great Pacific Northwest, God has blessed us as pastors, teachers and staff ministers with Divine Calls. Let none of us look past this privilege and honor as though it were something mundane or routine. It is a daily joy to PERSONALLY review God's grace in our own lives. It is a regular joy to PROFESSIONALLY share God's grace from our pulpits and classroom lecterns.

It is also a blessing to live in a beautiful part of God's creation where we can find a few days during these summer months to relax, vacation and recharge. May every one of us Called workers be faithful to our Calling while we catch an extra moment or two for family and fun. We hope these summer months and VBS, Soccer Camps, Church Picnics, and special ministry projects give us all a break from scheduled ministries that take place during the other 9-10 months of the year. All the while, we look forward to late August when ministry schedules gear-up and we have the privilege to once again make our Savior's "ways known on earth, his salvation among all nations."

"May the peoples praise you, God" in corporate weekly worship and *bless us still..."* as Baptized sons and daughters thankfully serving him

daily acts of service. *"May God* through the PNW!

Here are just a few updates from around our PNW District...

Called Workers in the PNW

Since our District's Delegate Conference in mid-June, I share these **Called worker updates**:

- Pastor Rob Guenther (Grace, Kenai, AK) returned his Call to be Associate at St. John's, Milwaukee, WI (68th);
- Pastor Jer Schulz (Faith, Tacoma, WA) returned both of his Calls (Abiding Faith, Smyrna, TN; Zion, Monroe, MI);
- Teacher Rachel Taasaas (St. Matthew, Spokane, WA) returned her Call to teach at Bay Pines in Seminole, FL;
- Teacher Ted Klug (Lakeside LHS) accepted his Call to be Principal at Evergreen LHS.

With these decisions made, at the time of this writing, there are currently “0” vacancies in the PNW for all Called positions (pastor, teacher, staff minister). This is a true blessing from God to our corner of his kingdom. Unlike some areas of our Synod, the PNW is not overflowing with retired workers or spouses sitting on the sidelines who can readily serve. The Lord has seen fit to fill all our classrooms and pulpits at this time – and for this we are truly grateful.

This summer, we are blessed to welcome the following **new Called workers** to the PNW:

- Pastor James Getka to Evergreen LHS, Tacoma, WA as Campus Pastor and Spanish Teacher (installation date and time likely to sync with ELHS Opening Service on Aug. 31);
- Pastor Candidate Ben Zuberbier was assigned to Trinity, Eugene, OR; he was married to Hannah Freiberg last month and will be ordained and installed in a special 4PM service in Eugene on Aug. 2;
- Teacher Chris Hintz to Christ the King, Bremerton, WA as Principal, upper gr. teacher; he will be installed at CtK’s 10:45AM service on July 26 with a potluck to follow;
- Teacher Brian Humann to Faith, Tacoma, WA as middle gr. teacher; AND his wife...
- Teacher Amanda Humann to Faith, Tacoma, WA as ECE teacher; both will be installed at Faith this weekend, July 12;
- Teacher Candidate Rebecca Hussman (MLC 2014) was assigned to Grace, Yakima, WA for a 1 yr. Call. Preliminary plans have her installation date set for Aug. 9;
- Teacher Marilee Nolte who finished the school year for Janine Turriff at Grace, Yakima, WA was also Called for one year. She graciously accepted that Call. Preliminary plans have her installation date also set for Aug. 9;
- Teacher Candidate Melissa Mittelstadt (MLC 2015) was assigned to Faith, Anchorage, AK as the ECE Dir./Teacher. Melissa will be installed at Faith on Aug. 9 in conjunction with their 40th Anniversary Celebration for Faith Lutheran School;
- Teacher Ted Klug (formerly teaching at Lakeside LHS) accepted the Principal Call to Evergreen. Together with Pastor Jim Getka, they will be moving to the PNW in the next weeks and their installation dates will likely sync with ELHS Opening Service on Aug. 31. We are thankful to the Lord for officially filling this Call after approx. a 5 yr. vacancy;
- Vicar Philip Janisch, assigned for his vicar year to Immanuel, Salem, OR will arrive in Aug. and be installed then. Please contact Pastor Craig Wasser for more details.

Home in Heaven – Lisa Rittierodt (nee Vogel) followed her mother, Judy, home to heaven early Monday afternoon (7/6/15) after a long battle with cancer. Lisa served our PNW District for years as a teacher at Evergreen Lutheran High School and Light of Life Lutheran Pre-School. Her husband Paul and children Melanie, Brian and Noah were blessed to be joined by Lisa’s father, retired Pastor Vaughn Vogel and his wife Miriam. Together they offered comfort to Lisa in her final hours – rejoicing in Jesus’ resurrection victory. Lisa is also survived by her five brothers, Michael and Joel - WELS Pastors; Daniel and Tim - WELS Teachers; and David - an active WELS Layman. The Victory Service will be 6:30PM, Tuesday, July 28 at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Des Moines, WA. The Committal of Lisa’s ashes will be on Thursday, July 30, 10:00AM. Holy Trinity will video record the service and put it online on their website shortly after the service. Further information could also be obtained by emailing Pastor Daniel Lange pastorlange@lightoflife.us

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord...” Rev. 14:13

There have been two **Circuit Pastor appointments** since our Conference June:

- Pastor Thad Bitter has been appointed to be the CP of the Oregon Circuit to finish out the final year of Pastor Jay Blum’s term. Jay will be retiring in the next month.
- Pastor Fred Schleg has been appointed to be the CP of the Geoduck Circuit to finish out the final year of Pastor Todd Goldschmidt’s term. Todd is taking off the CP hat for now because he would like to focus all his energy on his congregation, Living Hope Lutheran.

Both circuits will join all the others in electing their new CP at next June's District Convention. We thank both outgoing CP's for their years of service and pray for God's blessings on Thad and Fred as they take on their new roles in their circuits.

New PNW Called Worker Contact Info – as far as we know them or until they are changed – you can contact the following new workers using these emails for now:

- Pastor James Getka: jngetka@comcast.net
- Pastor Candidate Ben Zuberbier: zuberbib@gmail.com
- Teacher Chris Hintz: chintz@emmauslutheran.com
- Teachers Brian & Amanda Humann: brian.humann@mzls.org
- Teacher Candidate Rebecca Hussman: beccah@bethelwels.com
- Teacher Marilee Nolte: mjnolte@me.com
- Teacher Candidate Melissa Mittelstadt: melissamittelstadt@gmail.com
- Teacher Ted Klug: tklug@llhs.org
- Vicar Philip Janisch: janischp@wls.wels.net

Synod and Other Notes for the PNW

One of the big items of recent weeks has been the **Supreme Court's ruling** regarding rights for same-sex marriages. Rather than restate what has already been well summarized about this statement and our consistent position as Bible-based believers – I would direct you to our Synod website. At www.wels.net you will find a letter written by our WELS President Mark Schroeder. It is a link at the middle left on the homepage. In it, there is also a link to a sample statement that WELS congregations can adopt as their own (also copied at the bottom of this DP Update). Pastors and Councilmen are encouraged to read it all and discuss what action is wise for their church.

We also pray for our **PNW delegates to our Synod Convention** who will be traveling to Saginaw, MI in 2 ½ weeks. We ask God to give them all safe passage to and from and to bless their work for our larger church. We also ask God's wisdom and love for all our WELS delegates as they work together to lead us in making his **"...salvation known among all nations."**

*Serving our Savior Together,
Pastor John W. Steinbrenner
PNW District President*

Upcoming Dates

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| July 27-30 | Synod Convention (MLS Saginaw, MI) |
| August 31 | ELHS Opening Service |
| October 12-15 | COP Meeting at CMM |
| October 14-16 | Fall Pastor / Teacher Conference in Leavenworth, WA |

PNW REPS at SYNOD CONVENTION

PASTOR DELEGATES: Tom Gumm – Grace, Seattle, WA / Salem, Edmonds, WA
Gary Kraklow – Peace, Vancouver, WA
Fred Voss – Shepherd of the Hills, Anchorage, AK
Dan Kramer – Peace in Jesus, Boise, ID

TEACHER / STAFF MINISTER DELEGATES:

Allen Ash – Evergreen Lutheran High School, Tacoma, WA
David Malnes – Truth in Love Ministries, Nampa, ID

LAY-LEADER DELEGATES:

James Bennington – Calvary, Bellevue, WA
Harold Wellnitz – Grace, Kenai, AK
Brian Saatkamp – Grace, Portland, OR
Lance Barton – Holy Trinity, Des Moines, WA
Earl Lackey – King of Kings, Wasilla, AK
David Stuhlmiller – Our Savior, E. Wenatchee, WA
Kim Starling – Salem, Edmonds, WA

District Web: welspnw.weebly.com Distr. Communications: Deb Arstein secretary@cocboise.org

SAMPLE:**Statement on Marriage and Marriage Policies for WELS Congregations**

With the rapid changes in society regarding views on marriage, it is a virtual certainty that the congregations of our synod will face situations and challenges that they have not faced before. Some in our society are attempting (and, sadly, succeeding in their effort) to change the biblical definition of marriage. As a result, cultural views are shifting rapidly and the legality and acceptance of same-sex marriages is becoming increasingly widespread. In that context our called workers and members will need to be ready to give a clear and bold confession regarding the biblical teachings about marriage and homosexuality.

In addition, one would safely assume that there will be those who will challenge our synod's position and practice in court, as has already been done with governmental and business entities. Since our synod's teaching on marriage and its practices regarding marriage are clear and consistent, congregations would do well to adopt a written policy that articulates our long-held doctrine as well as how that doctrine is applied in our congregations.

After consultation with the synod's legal counsel, the following document was crafted as a sample of such a statement that can be adopted by congregations. There is no need to incorporate this policy into congregational bylaws; it can stand alone as a separate congregational policy.

Doctrine and Policy Regarding Marriage
(Congregation's name) Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Bible teaches that marriage was established and given by God at the time of creation. As he designed and instituted it, marriage is the life-long union of one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6). It is a relationship that is to be honored and kept pure (Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 5:22-33). As a man and woman promise life-long faithfulness to each other as husband and wife, God himself joins them as one. Marriage is not simply a contract between two consenting individuals, nor is it merely a creation of human society, culture, or tradition. God himself instituted marriage at the time of creation, and God himself joins a man and woman in marriage today.

The biblical teaching on marriage emphasizes the blessings God intends to convey to those joined together in the marital relationship. Through marriage God provides partners well suited and complementary to one

another. In marriage, God provides a partner who will provide encouragement and support. Marriage is also to be the God-ordained means to procreate and to establish a stable environment in which children can be nurtured both physically and spiritually. Marriage is the one context God intended for the use of the blessing of sexual intimacy, where the sexual union of one man and woman is an expression of love and oneness rather than a sinful satisfaction of lust. Finally, since we live in a fallen world, in marriage God provides a restraint for selfishness and sin as each partner strives to live the pure life that God intends for his people (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8).

This is the Bible's teaching about the origin, definition, and nature of marriage. For that reason it is also the doctrine of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Every congregation and called worker accepts the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice. That marriage is the God-ordained union of one man and one woman is the clear teaching of the Bible, and therefore is the teaching and confession of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

The policy and practice of (Congregation's name), a member congregation of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, is consistent with the synod's beliefs and teachings regarding marriage. We believe that marriage is the sacred, life-long union between one man and one woman. Therefore, our pastors will not officiate in any marriage ceremony or celebration and our church sanctuary may not be used for any activities related to a marriage ceremony or celebration that is inconsistent with these beliefs.