



Pacific Northwest DISTRICT

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

District President's Report

Fall Pastor-Teacher Conferences 2018

Dear Fellow Servants, Called Workers:

(Acts 13:47,48)

Our Savior's wish... is our joy-filled command! Paul, Barnabas said to the believers:

"For this is what the Lord has commanded us:

*'I have made you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'*

*When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored
the word of the Lord..."*

Synod and District Notes

Gospel Opportunity in Vietnam – The Hmong Fellowship Church (HFC), a Christian church body in Vietnam which had been without trained pastors for 50 years, has become an unexpected opportunity for the spread of the gospel. Through WELS Pastor Bounkeo Lor, who traveled to Vietnam at their invitation, over 60 of their leaders have been in training the past several years to learn Biblical truth and the true meaning of the Gospel.

In the meantime, the HFC has swelled from approximately 65,000 to 100,000 members. The construction of a facility to train leaders and instruct them in Scriptural truth is in the planning stages. Construction may begin soon and may be completed in early 2019 at the cost of approximately \$500,000 with an annual budget for training of about the same amount. The Vietnam government has given its approval and support for this training. While we recognize there is a risk to this commitment, there is also agreement that this Gospel opportunity is too good to pass by.

World Mission Milestones – The Ukrainian Church is celebrating its 25th anniversary and the Apache World Mission is celebrating 125 years this year. The Apache Mission consists of eight congregations, one preaching station and two Lutheran elementary schools on the White Mountain Apache Reservation and the San Carlos Apache Reservation in Arizona. History of the missions begins during the closing days of Geronimo with the arrival of WELS missionaries Adascheck and Plocher. You can learn more on their website:

www.nativechristians.org/ The Apache Lutheran churches are currently training future leaders for work as evangelists, teachers, and pastors through the Apache Christian Training School located at the East Fork Mission.

WELS Mission Journeys – Mission Journeys is a program for WELS members over the age of 13. This program is designed for both lay people and called workers, to give all members the opportunity to experience a mission trip. This program for short-term mission trips to WELS mission fields at home and abroad has a link

that answers questions about who, what, where. Applications are also available here. This new effort provides opportunities for members to engage in Christian service. Visit: wels.net/missionjourneys/

WELS Ministerial Ed School Enrollment – Enrollment this year at WELS schools is stable. We note with thanksgiving that 70 students are enrolled in the pastor track at Martin Luther College, the highest enrollment in years.

Year	Vacant Parishes	Total Pastoral Vacancies	Retirements
2013	45	55	33
2014	55	64	30
2015	62	77	42
2016	85	98	43
2017	98	115	47
2018	106	121	31 - YTD

Pastoral Vacancies – You can see the steady increase in pastoral vacancies. The need to encourage our young people to consider the preaching or teaching ministry is evident. Consider the gifts of the young people in your congregations. Just as we encourage Christian education on every level, continue to encourage our grade school and high school students to consider service in the public ministry of the Gospel. Thanks for being an encourager!

WELS District Workers – we are blessed to welcome several new pastors and teachers into our district in the past months:

Pastors

Aaron West	April 2018	St. Matthew LC, Spokane, WA (Inst. 4.22.18)
Nathan Zastrow	April 2018	Grace LC, Yakima, WA (Inst. 4.29.18)
Cale Mead	May 2018 WLS	Christ LC, Juneau, AK (Ord./Inst. 7.12.18)
Benjamin Phelps	May 2018 WLS	Grace LC, Kenai, AK (Ord./Inst. 7.15.18)
Ret. David Neumann	September 2018	Good Hope/Good Faith LC, Ellensburg, S. Cle Elum, WA (Inst. 9.16.18)
Jonathan Leach	July 2018	Truth in Love Ministries, Nampa, ID (Inst. 10.21.18)
Nathan Wagenknecht	October 2018	Faith LC, Anchorage, AK (Inst. 11.4.18)
<i>Thad Bitter</i>	<i>October 7, 2018</i>	<i>Holding a call to Garden Homes, Milwaukee, WI</i>

Vacancies (7)

Grace/Salem/DMB, Seattle, WA	<i>Pastor Kent Reeder is holding this call</i>
Divine Peace LC, Renton, WA	<i>meeting with DMB to study multi-site</i>
Faith LC, Tacoma, WA	<i>planning to call 11-4-18</i>
Gethsemane LC, Tigard, OR	<i>meeting with DMB to consider all options</i>
Cross of Christ LC, Boise, ID	<i>planning to call 11-11-18</i>
Holy Trinity LC, Des Moines, WA	<i>not actively calling at this time</i>
Asia Lutheran Seminary, HK	<i>not actively calling at this time</i>

Teachers

Heidi Kruger	May 2018 MLC	Faith LS, Anchorage, AK (Inst. 7.1.18)
Heidi Moldenhauer	May 2018 MLC	Faith LS, Tacoma, WA (Inst. 8.26.18)
Megan Lemke	May 2018 MLC	Grace LS, Portland, OR (Inst. 7.15.18)
Vincent Hallwas	May 2018 MLC	Christ the King LS, Bremerton, WA (PTP – 3yrs.) (Inst. 7.15.18)
Travis Kretsch	May 2018 MLC	Immanuel LS, Salem, OR (1 yr.) (Inst. 8.5.18)
Elizabeth Henning	May 2018 MLC	Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA (1 yr.) (Inst. 9.9.18)
Jason Gibson	July 2018	Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA (Inst. 9.9.18)

Beth Humann	July 2018	Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA (permanent) (Inst. 9.9.18)
Nicole Habeck	July 2018	Faith Preschool, Tacoma, WA (1 yr.) (Inst. 8.26.18)
Nicole Hintz	July 2018	Christ the King Preschool, Bremerton, WA (Inst. 7.15.18)
Terri Morris	July 2018	Immanuel PreK Director, Salem, OR (1 yr.) (Inst. 8.5.18)
Joanna Hafner	August 2018	From LH PreK, Redmond, WA to Grace (lower gr.), Portland, OR (Inst. 9.16.18)
Joe Schmudlach	October 2018	Evergreen LHS, Tacoma, WA (final 3 quarters, 1 yr.) (Inst. 10.23.18)

Teacher Vacancies (?) Requests and Forms – teacher vacancies in the district, like the Synod, are too difficult to tabulate. Current needs are being covered at this time. In some cases, current staffing is temporary. (Considerations that affect vacancies: retirements, part-time service, grade / staff adjustments, 1 yr. call expirations... schools will be studying and determining their local needs over the next months in preparation for the next year 2019-2020) This is a good time to remind church/school leaders that with the upcoming teacher call window opening (Nov. 1, 2018), **requests** for teacher call lists should be submitted online at <http://wels.net/callrequest> and I should be notified ahead of time that you are requesting a list and submitting that form. We would set up a call meeting date at that time. Thanks in advance for that good communication. Finally, this is also a good opportunity to bring to mind the **Self-Assessment Forms**. Our Synod data-base for pastors and teachers serves as one key tool in developing call lists and providing accurate information for calling bodies at call meetings. If you haven't already done so, please update your contact info whenever there is a change (address, phone, birth, etc) and also update your self-evaluation forms annually with review by your Circuit Pastor, Principal or ECE Director. Go to: <http://cloud.wels.net/me>

Mission & Ministry Sunday - Intended to be a celebration of God's blessings to and through his church, and also an opportunity to renew our commitment to "go and make disciples of all nations." *Mission and Ministry Sunday* was recommended for Sunday, October 21, 2018. Of course, it may be held at any time this fall / winter. Resources are available at: mcg.welsrc.net/download-mcg/mission-ministry-general/

Evangelism – New WELS Director of Evangelism, Pastor Eric Roecker, is getting his feet on the ground after being installed in August. He indicates that a focus on personal evangelism is one of his goals for WELS members. He'd like to make sharing the faith and personal invitations to worship or Bible study as natural to our members as attending on Sunday morning and offering our gifts to God.

Calvary Academy – Located near Lakeland, Florida, Calvary Academy was a boarding school for troubled teens. It was a para-synodical ministry, meaning that while its ministry was carried out and supported by WELS members it was not operated by the synod or a part of the synod's ministry or budget. Several months ago, Calvary Academy ceased operations and declared Chapter 128 bankruptcy. A lawyer has been appointed by the court to liquidate assets in order to pay creditors. If you (or someone you know) are currently sending gifts, please *do not send gifts any longer!* The court has indicated that any gifts received will be forwarded to a different organization. Likewise, if you (or someone you know) have included Calvary Academy in an estate plan, we strongly encourage steps to remove Calvary Academy from your will.

Christian Standard Bible (CSB) Review – Translation Review Committee, through more than 100 reviewers (WELS pastors and professors), has concluded its review of CSB. The report indicates that it is a translation that is highly faithful to the original texts and speaks in clear, readable English. While no translation meets every standard, it is clear that the translation team regarded the entire Greek and Hebrew Scriptures as the very words of God and sought to reproduce them in English without letting their personal beliefs and opinions unduly color their work. Chairman Pastor John Vieths: "*We believe we can recommend the Christian Standard Bible for reading, preaching and teaching in our church.*" A full report will be available soon.

ELS / WELS Forum – A forum was held at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry (CMM), October 16-17. The bi-annual forum is intended to offer opportunity for communication between the two church bodies in various areas of ministry, doctrine and church work. Representatives gathered for worship, study and discussion.

Church of the Lutheran Confession - The CLC in convention tabled the statement on fellowship adopted by the WELS and ELS in order to discuss it further at their conferences and circuits.

LCMS – ELS – WELS - A seventh meeting with LC-MS leaders will be held in December. The agenda includes world mission updates. Creation will be discussed. All involved recognize that there is still a very lengthy distance to cover before *any* hope of restored fellowship could be contemplated.

WELS Retirement Program – A committee has been tasked with providing a recommendation on a future benefit retirement program that most effectively serves the synod and its workers. A proposed revision of the current pension plan, which will include both a defined benefit and a defined contribution plan, will be presented to the Synodical Council for reaction and response. Future information based upon that response will be available in the coming year.

Congregation Mission Offering (CMO) – We thank congregations for their generous gifts to support WELS mission and ministry! Please remind your treasurer to send in your congregation's offerings monthly. On October 1, all district pastors received materials for CMO subscription setting, a video, deadline info, forms and contact info to assist with all forms. If you have further questions or need that email resent, please email Pastor Matt Zimpelmann or me. We'd be happy to assist you or forward that information.

Upcoming Events

❖ **Satellite Summer Quarter (SSQ19) – Week of June 10, 2019**

“May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.”

2 Thessalonians 2:16,17

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