



# Pacific Northwest **DISTRICT**

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

## **District President's Report, Winter 2018**

PNW Missionaries' Conference

Hood River, OR

January 29-31, 2018

### **Fellow Called Workers in the PNW:**

Some time ago I read a story that was published by our own WELS Commission on Evangelism. Apparently in the Church of Scotland there is a prestigious position called "the moderator." As a church position, I'm not exactly sure what a moderator is or does. But weeks after an elderly man was elected to this post, his proud little grandson was running around telling all his friends, "My grandfather is the radiator at our church!"

When we hear the word 'radiator' we likely think of two things. Either it's the panel in the front of our car that keeps our engine cool, or it's a part of the heating system in our homes that keeps us warm. (Truth is – while the purpose is different – they both do the same thing. Both "radiate, discharge, release, give off" heat.)

Jesus is "The Radiator" of the world. By his perfect life he satisfied the Father's demand for holiness. By his selfless death he paid for the sins of the world. Jesus tells us, "*I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness*" (John 12:46). He saved us. Through his Word and Sacraments he empowers us, he equips us, he guides us, yes – he radiates his love on and in us. And he radiates his love through us. For this reasons Jesus can rightly tell us, "*You are the light of the world*" (Matthew 5:14).

We dispense the peace of forgiveness to those loaded down with guilt. We let the joy of Jesus' many promises radiate from us. And while all Christians are lights, we pastors (teachers) are called by Jesus to be head-lights, leaders. To borrow the little grandson's phrase, "We called workers are the radiators at our church!" We are asked by Jesus to lead the body of Christ in our own corners of his kingdom. Our attitudes in challenging moments, our faithfulness in service, our character both on and off the clock – these reflect his love, his faithfulness and radiate the comfort we have in Christ.

Jesus is "The Radiator" of the world. And he whispers to each of us, "*Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life*" (John 8:12). What a gift is ours for eternity! What a joy is ours to share! What a privilege is ours to serve as lights, as leaders, as radiators for Jesus Christ. God bless your work, Brothers, as you give your best in service to our Savior!

### **WELS and PNW Notes**

**Congregational Mission Offering (CMO):** Gifts in 2017 totaled \$21.3 million, an increase of about 1% (\$300,000) over the 2016 CMO. May our Lord be praised for the love and generosity he works in the hearts of his people!

**2018 CMO Subscriptions & Statistical Information:** Please note that your CMO Subscriptions ([link](#)) and 2017 Statistical Reports ([link](#)) are both due by **noon (CT) THIS Friday, February 2, 2018**. Both reports can be easily submitted online with NO login information necessary. Pastors, please take the time to submit your information or ask the appropriate councilman to do it. Offer a helping hand where one is needed. Pastor Matt Zimpelmann, our district's MCG coordinator has been in contact with those of you who have yet to report either one. Kindly contact him if you need assistance: [matt.zimpelmann@cocidaho.org](mailto:matt.zimpelmann@cocidaho.org)

**Stewardship Emphasis:** If you haven't already done so, consider making use of the stewardship materials, *Joyful Generosity*, (intended for use in 2017 and/or 2018). The program includes six weeks of worship and Bible study materials as well as 21 personal devotions. You can find these and other materials online at [wels.net/stewardship](http://wels.net/stewardship).

**Guidelines for Divine Pastoral Calls:** The COP continues to be guided by the thought that men who have accepted a call should remain in their field of service for at least four years (48 months) before receiving a call to a new field of service. Similarly, for men who have returned a call, six months should pass before they receive another call. To increase the pool of candidates for pastor calls, the COP has agreed that an individual's name may appear on two separate lists on any given day. This is a subtle change from before. That means that there is a possibility that a man could receive two "new" calls to deliberate in addition to the one that he is currently holding. As with all guidelines, the members of the COP are working together in our attempt to best serve the needs of the church at large. We also bear in mind that our guidelines can be bypassed by the Holy Spirit when and how he wills it.

**Assignment Process:** As soon as congregations or schools know they will request a graduate from MLC or WLS, please notify me. I will then send out information to those pastors and principals. Because the number of available candidates will be relatively low again, congregations and schools are encouraged to formulate a local plan as to how their vacancy will be served should the Assignment Committee be unable to fill your request.

**Report to the Twelve Districts:** This year only reports requiring action from the districts as well as reports from the major areas of ministry and finance will be included in the printed version of the RTTTD. These and all other reports will be made available in digital format. We will have the following options regarding the printed report. 1) One printed copy mailed to every male called worker; 2) A drop shipment sent to the district convention site; 3) No printed copies (except for retired male called workers and one to each congregation). *(Note – option #3 was unanimously approved by the pastors present at the conference on Jan. 29.)*

**Mission & Ministry Sunday:** The Conference of Presidents is encouraging each congregation in WELS to designate Sunday, October 21, 2018 as WELS Mission & Ministry Sunday (Synod Sunday). WELS Communication Services will provide materials for our use on this Sunday.

**Tax Law Implications:** Beginning in 2018, the qualifying moving expense reimbursement for a called worker is fully taxable. This means that called workers will no longer be able to deduct their moving expenses, nor will their churches be able to reimburse these expenses on a tax-free basis. WELS CFO Todd Poppe and others are studying this matter and will recommend a "best practice" for congregations to follow. In the meantime, it would be wise to let your Councils and Voter Assemblies know this and, for those to whom it applies, plan to provide called workers with additional compensation to help with taxes (i.e. 20% of the moving costs). It would also be good to share this with called workers affected by the changes in the law so they can budget for the additional taxes involved with their move.

**District Convention:** Our PNW presidium is working to organize our District Convention this June 12-13 at ELHS. For all of us – please plan ahead so you, your other male called workers and a lay delegate can be in attendance. Among other work, we will be looking at the issue of turning odd year delegate conferences into continuing education seminars.

**Called Workers, Congregations, Schools in the PNW** - Activity since last report (Fall P/T Conf., Oct. 2017)

**Teachers OUT of the PNW:** (teachers who accept calls during the year, move the following summer)

Mr. Allen Ash to Michigan Lutheran Seminary (accepted a call, November 2017)  
Mr. Jason Kelley to St. Paul, Appleton, WI (accepted a call, November 2017)  
Mrs. Alyssa Kelley to St. Paul, Appleton, WI (accepted a call, November 2017)  
Mrs. Laura Schleef (resignation from Immanuel, Salem, OR, November 2017)  
Miss Leah Snyder (resignation from Faith, Anchorage, AK, serve to June 2018)  
Mrs. Jill Sarro (allowing 1-yr. call to expire at Christ the King, Bremerton, WA, serve to June 2018)

**Teachers INTO the PNW:**

Principal, Mr. Jason Gibson ACCEPTED a call to Holy Trinity in Des Moines, WA (1-14-18, move June 2018)  
Mrs. Nikki Hintz (1-yr. part-time call to Christ the King, Bremerton, WA, January 16, 2018)

**Teachers Retirements:**

Marilyn Baer from Grace, Portland, OR (June 30, 2018)  
JoAnn Cordes from Grace, Portland, OR (June 30, 2018)

**Pastors OUT of the PNW:**

Pastor Matthew Kimmel to St. Luke, New Lisbon, WI (10-15-17)  
Pastor Steven Wall to St. John/St. Peter, Cleveland, WI (10-16-17)

**Pastors INTO the PNW:**

Pastor Jonathan Leach ACCEPTED to Truth in Love Ministries, Nampa, ID (12-21-18, move June 2018)  
Pastor/Missionary Aaron West ACCEPTED to St. Matthew in Spokane, WA (1-15-18, move April 2018)

**Pastors Retirements:**

Pastor Ray Beckmann from South Cle Elum / Ellensburg, WA (June 2018)

**All Recent Call Activity in the PNW:**

Pastor Kevin Schnake RETURNED the Call to St. Paul in Grant Park, IL (10-29-17)  
Pastor Dan Solofra RETURNED the Call to Truth in Love Ministry, Nampa, ID (11-6-17)  
Pastor Chris Ewings RETURNED the Call to Divine Savior in Doral, FL (11-7-17)  
Pastor Daniel Lange RETURNED the Call Crown of Life in Corona, CA (11-15-17)  
Pastor Tim Flunker RETURNED the Call to Grace in Yakima, WA (11-17-17)  
Pastor Tom Voss RETURNED the Call to Mt. Lebanon in Milwaukee, WI (11-18-17)  
Miss Katy Rath RETURNED the Call to Divine Savior Lutheran Academy in Doral, FL (11-27-17)  
Pastor Tom Voss RETURNED the Call to Zion in Toledo, OH (12-5-17)  
Pastor Jeremiah Gumm RETURNED the Call to St. Matthew in Spokane, WA (12-7-17)  
Pastor Daniel Sargent RETURNED the Call to Christ in Juneau, AK (12-27-18)  
Mrs. Kayla Fry RETURNED the Call to Faith in Anchorage, AK (1-23-18)  
Pastor Thomas Zimdars RETURNED the Call to Grace in Yakima, WA (1-28-18)

***Mr. Eric Wolf HOLDING the Call to Grace in Portland, OR (1-21-18)***

***Mrs. Jill Wolf HOLDING the Call to Grace in Portland, OR (1-21-18)***

***Pastor Joel Spaude HOLDING the Call to Christ in Juneau, AK (1-28-18)***

***Miss Jennifer Keller (Peace, Eagle R., AK) HOLDING the Call to Samuel LS in Marshall, MN (1-28-18)***

**Congregations:**

Trinity in Coos Bay, OR is closing. The Decommissioning Service is set for Feb. 4, 2018

Reformation in Hillsboro, OR (ELS) and Pastor Steven Brockdorf are in fellowship. Rev. Steven Brockdorf completed a colloquy in the ELS which also brought along with him the Reformation congregation. About ten years prior, the congregation had gone out of the ELS. Although I failed to report this, it took place in 2017 and was conveyed by ELS President John Moldstad several months ago.

**Teachers Recertifying:**

PNW District Teachers who are in the process of WELS recertification are Naomi Getka, Sharon Holter, Lacey Sorn, Carrie Steinbrenner.

**PNW Vacancies: (10)**

For pastor-trained – 5 (Holy Trinity, Des Moines, WA; Faith, Anchorage, AK; Grace, Yakima, WA; Christ, Juneau, AK; Grace/Salem, Seattle, WA)

For teacher-trained – 5 (2 @ Grace, Portland, OR; Holy Trinity, Des Moines, WA; Faith, Anchorage, AK; ELHS, Tacoma, WA)

**Synod Vacancies:** Throughout WELS there are currently 117 pastoral vacancies (97 parishes). Unofficially, there were 71 vacancies at this time in 2016 and 103 in 2017. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary will graduate ~26 in May 2018. As always, the teacher vacancy number at this time of year is too unclear to report, but the classroom vacancies are consistent with the high need for pastors.

District Admin Ass't, Deb Arstein's email address – [deb.arstein@cocboise.org](mailto:deb.arstein@cocboise.org)

District Web: [welspnw.weebly.com](http://welspnw.weebly.com)

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

**Upcoming WELS and PNW Schedules**

Jan. 29-31, 2018	Missionaries' Conf., Hood River, OR
Feb. 15-16, 2018	Cascades Teachers' Conf., Lakewood, WA
Apr. 4-6, 2018	COP Spring Meetings
Apr. 27-29, 2018	Men's Retreat, Camp Casey, Whidbey Island, WA
May 10-12, 2018	MLC Assignment Meetings and Graduation Service / Call Service
May 22, 2018	WLS Vicar Call Service
May 23-24, 2018	WLS Assignment Meetings and Call Service
May 25, 2018	WLS Graduation Service
June 9, 2018	Evergreen Luth. HS Graduation Service
June 12-13, 2018	District Convention, ELHS
Oct. 2-5, 2018	COP Fall Meetings
Oct. 17-19, 2018	P/T Conference, Cascades Conf., Great Wolf Lodge, Centralia, WA
Nov. 1-2, 2018	ACPAT, Alaskan Conf., Grace, Kenai, AK