



# Pacific Northwest DISTRICT

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

## District President's Report, Fall 2019

Cascades and Alaskan Conference of Pastors and Teachers

Held at Cannon Beach, October 16-18, 2019 and at Faith LC, Anchorage, AK, October 28-29, 2019

## Wisc. Ev. Luth. Synod and PNW District Notes

### Vacancies

One important aspect of the work of the district president is to assist our congregations and schools in supplying candidates for vacant pastor and teacher positions. We are blessed to have only the following vacancies at this time:

1. Gethsemane, Tigard, OR (S. Portland mission restart) – Pastor Derek Bartelt HOLDING (10.13.19)
2. Trinity, Eugene, OR – Missionary John Holtz HOLDING (10.13.19)
3. TILM – ?
4. Good Hope/Good Faith, Ellensburg/S. Cle Elum, WA; Semi-Retired Pastor, be vacant Dec. 1, 2019
5. Divine Peace, Renton, WA – ? *(not actively calling)*
6. Holy Trinity, Des Moines, WA; Associate Pastor – ? *(not actively calling)*
7. Faith, Tacoma, WA; Principal, 7-8 Teacher – Josh Roth HOLDING (10.15.19)
8. Evergreen LHS, Tacoma, WA; Principal – Jay Wendland RETURNED (10.26.19) Call again Nov. 12, 2019

Leading into last week, ~75 call lists were requested for the first 8 days of the teacher calling period. Notably, ~25 of those call requests are for principal positions, and ~15 for area Lutheran High School teachers.

Something for our prayer lists... ~100 of the ~320 principals (Area Lutheran High School and LES) who were leading schools in October of 2017 are no longer leading that school. ~40 are serving in a principalship at another WELS school, and ~60 of them are no longer serving in a WELS principal role (in other words, ~60 WELS principals left the principalship in the last two years). WELS has 284 LES, 4 closed last year.

As previously shared, the Conference of Presidents has approved the recommendation of CLS to change the calling window from Nov. 1 through the first Sunday in June to Oct. 15 through April 15. The hope is that, congregational plans will be in place earlier to go to Assignment Day at MLC and/or to cover teaching needs by the end of the school year. This allows schools to move into summer with a plan and it alleviates others from having to worry about their teacher accepting a call mid-summer, leaving them scrambling in July for the upcoming year. Through it all, the DPs' teammates at CLS will have more time to figure out how to help schools deal with vacancies. This change will be reassessed after 2 years.

During this shortage, God has blessed us with increasing numbers of former Lutheran Elementary School teachers who are seeking to re-enter the classroom, as well as some teachers not in our WELS system who are seeking “ministry certification.” We have sought to streamline the process for both situations by giving the district presidents more leeway in helping former WELS teachers receive “call eligibility” (formerly called “synod recertification”). There are ~350 non-WELS certified teachers in our system, about 50% of those are currently working toward recertification.

PASTORS Year	Vacant Parishes	Total Pastoral Vacancies
2013	45	55
2014	55	64
2015	62	77
2016	85	98
2017	98	115
2018	106	121
2019	107	128

### **WELS PNW District Workers (2019 to-date)**

#### **Pastors**

Pastor Brad Snyder	IN at Cross of Christ, Boise, ID (Feb. 2019)	
Pastor Brian Hackmann	OUT to Grace LC, Milwaukee, WI (May 2019)	
Pastor Kent Reeder	IN at Grace/Salem/DMB mission restart, Seattle, WA (May 2019)	
Pastor James Wilcox	IN at Faith LC, Tacoma, WA (June 2019)	
Pastor Matt Proeber	IN at Peace LC, Eagle River, AK (July 2019)	WLS
Pastor Timothy Matthies II	IN at Asia Lutheran Seminary, Hong Kong (July 2019)	
Pastor Geoffrey Rue	OUT to St. Paul LC in East Troy, WI (July 2019)	
Pastor Ben Zuberbier	OUT to Zion LC in Columbus, WI (Aug. 2019)	

#### **Teachers**

Teacher Joe Schmudlach	IN at Evergreen LHS, Tacoma, WA (Jan. 2019, call made permanent)	
Teacher Paul Leifer	OUT to St. Paul LS, Livonia, MI, Principal (June 2019)	
Teacher Melissa Mittelstadt	OUT to First Steps Learning Center, La Crescent, MN EC Dir. (June 2019)	
Teacher Ryan Holper	OUT to Manitowoc LHS, Manitowoc, WI (June 2019)	
Teacher Ted Klug	OUT to MLC, New Ulm, MN (June 2019)	
Teacher Jennifer Keller	OUT to Shepherd LS, Albuquerque, NM (June 2019)	
Teacher Perry Lund	OUT to Divine Savior Acad., Doral, FL (June 2019)	
Teacher Elizabeth Henning	OUT to St. Paul LS, Rapid City, SD (June 2019, reassignment)	
Teacher Travis Kretsch	OUT to WLA, Fond du Lac, WI (June 2019, reassignment)	
Teacher Mara Bingham	IN at Christ the King Prek, Bremerton, WA (July 2019)	
Teacher Elijah Kroll	IN at Grace LS Princ. Appr., Kenai, AK (July 2019)	MLC
Teacher Sarah Proeber	IN at Peace Prek, Eagle River, AK (July 2019)	MLC, KMLHS
Teacher Steph Rockhoff	IN at Faith LS Prek, Anchorage, AK (July 2019)	MLC, Antigua, Sleepy Eye
Teacher Alyssa Maertz	IN at Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA (July 2019)	MLC, tutored 2 yr. MLS
Teacher Joshua Enstad	IN at Evergreen LHS, Tacoma, WA (July 2019)	MLC
Teacher Maggie Enstad	IN at Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA (July 2019)	MLC
Teacher Holly Wildeman	IN at Immanuel LS, Salem, OR (July 2019)	MLC
Teacher Jennifer Adickes	IN at Faith LS, Tacoma, WA (July 2019)	MLC, 1 yr.
Teacher Brigetta Guelker	IN at Southridge Prek, Kennewick, WA (Aug. 2019)	
Teacher Jessica Acosta-Ware	IN at Grace LS, Portland, OR (Aug. 2019, recertification)	
Church Anniversary	25 <sup>th</sup> Cross of Christ LC, Boise, ID (celebrating Oct. 27, 2019)	
Church Closing	Living Hope LC, Redmond, WA (Oct. 6, final service; Dec. 31, 2019 dissolve)	

*Please note corrections, errors, omissions and share them with Pastor Cale Mead, he will relay that info to the DP.*

## COP Items

Listed below are items of information that I share from recent COP work. Some of these items correspond to information in Synod President Schroeder's report in the Book of Reports and Memorials (BORAM, pp. 5-10) and/or summarized in Together Newsletter (10.15.19):

- Congregational Services Administrator Jon Hein will begin training the circuit pastors of the synod to provide counsel and resources in connection with their work; he's starting in the SEW Distr. and working with such topics as worship guest follow-up; council training; inactive follow-up; SS teacher training, etc.
- Seminary President Earle Treptow will serve as an advisory member of the COP Doctrine Committee to maintain consistency in seminary training and practice of theology in the field, among other things;
- In recent years regular meetings have been held between the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations (CICR) and the Doctrine Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS). Beginning next Fall of 2020, the COP Doctrine Committee will take the place of the CICR at those meetings. The reason for this is that the COP Doctrine Committee is a closer counterpart to the ELS Doctrine Committee;
- LCMS – ELS – WELS – an 8<sup>th</sup> meeting with LC-MS leaders will be held in December. The agenda will include their wording/understanding of fellowship, office of the ministry, objective justification. May God continue to bless these brotherly discussions as the truth of Scripture is discussed;
- An appointed committee has completed its initial work in providing a reiteration of the Biblical principles regarding the roles of man and woman in God's world. The final draft of the cover letter, document and Bible study will be sent out shortly (early November). These materials are available for study on the circuit and congregational level. The committee will be looking for feedback in our district conventions. Circuits and congregations will be encouraged to use it in the first semester next year;
- Human Sexuality, Personhood, Identity, and the Historic Christian Faith: A Confession on Human Sexuality. We thank the subcommittee members for their work on this pastoral statement of biblical teaching. With some minor revisions, the document will soon be ready for use within our synod. We hope that institutions within our fellowship will use this as a biblical statement from which they may make confession, policies, etc.
- *A Pastoral Statement on the Transgender Movement*. This well-written article by Prof. Paul Wendland will appear in an upcoming issue of WLQ.
- Retirement Fund Strategy Proposal – the Synodical Council will be studying a proposal in November to convert the WELS pension program from defined benefit to defined contribution. The details of this proposal, if passed by the SC, will be rolled out at our district convention; leadership believes this effort seeks what's in the best interests of the called worker;
- A slow but growing trend in congregations... not paying for spouse's health insurance. The COP is encouraging against this practice. The spirit of the "Synod Code" assumes that calling bodies are providing adequate health insurance for the called worker and family;
- FIC is considering some cosmetic changes in their publication by Jan. 2020... updating their website, new market strategy, slightly smaller size of publication, branding, etc.; readership of the hardcopy was at ~65,000 in 1980 and has dropped to ~30,000 today;
- Hymnal Project is nearing completion, content is wrapped up and heading to publishing for formatting, proofing and production; estimated cost of the actual book ~\$25;
- On the horizon, our next District Convention 2020 (and perhaps Synod Conv. 2021) may tackle some bigger topics (pension, M/W revision, recommendations to bylaw changes to the discipline process, transgender statement, etc.);
- Gospel Opportunity in Vietnam – By God's grace, we've received gifts and commitments totaling almost \$1.96 million (98% of our \$2M goal) to purchase land, build the training center in Hanoi, and

provide two years of staffing to provide theological education for the leaders of the Hmong Fellowship Church; this includes a recent \$100,000 gift from Living Hope in Redmond, WA; Praise God!

- WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership planned by Congregational Services for Jan. 21-23, 2020, in Chicago, IL. The conference will emphasize leadership that is rooted in the beliefs of confessional Lutheranism. It will replace our 2020 Missionaries' Conference. Please make plans for attendance – pastors, men and women, teachers (understanding they have classroom obligations);
- CMO – we thank congregations for their generous gifts to support WELS mission and ministry! CMO gifts are currently solid and our prayer is that we can continue to give strongly to the end of calendar yr. We implore pastors and church leaders to keep CMO encouragements before their congregations considering the valuable work we do together as a Synod with these gifts (worker training, missions, support); new stats may be requested for Congregational Services to better assist us... like the # of children in certain age groups, congregational chairman's contact info, etc.;
- If you have not already done so, please update your record at WELS through the recently changed online process. This updated information helps district presidents and CLS prepare call lists, so we'd like your biographical information to be as accurate as possible. (Pastors: Once you have updated your information you will be asked to share it with your "reviewer," who is your circuit pastor. He will contact you to share any suggestions he might have and then ask you to "submit" your assessment to WELS.) (<http://cloud.wels.net/me>)

### **Important Dates, Upcoming Events**

October 8-11, 2019	COP Fall Meetings, Center for Mission and Ministry, WI
October 15, 2019	WELS Teacher Calling Window Opens
October 16-18, 2019	P/T Conference, Cascades Conf., Cannon Beach, OR
October 28-29, 2019	ACPAT, (P/T Conference, Alaskan Conf.), Faith, Anchorage, AK
December 15, 2019	WELS Pastor Calling Window Closes
January 5, 2020	WELS Pastor Calling Window Opens
January 5-9, 2020	COP Winter Meetings, FL
January 21-23, 2020	WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership, Chicago, IL (replaces PNW Missionaries' Conference for 2020)
March 12-13, 2019	Cascades Conference Teachers' Conf., Parkland LS, Tacoma, WA
March 30 – April 1, 2020	COP Spring Meetings, Center for Mission and Ministry, WI
April 5, 2020	WELS Pastor Calling Window Closes (Palm Sunday)
April 15, 2020	WELS Teacher Calling Window Closes (for active teachers)
April 16, 2020	WELS Pastor Calling Window Opens (Thur. after Easter)
April 17-19, 2020	PNW Men's Retreat
May 14-15, 2020	COP WELS Teacher Assignment Meetings at MLC
May 16, 2020	MLC WELS Teacher Commencement, Assignment Services
May 19-20, 2020	COP WELS Pastor Assignment Meetings at WLS
May 21, 2020	WLS WELS Pastor Assignment Service (Graduation Concert)
May 22, 2020	WLS Graduation
June 6, 2020	Evergreen Luth. HS Graduation Service
June 9-10, 2020	WELS PNW District Convention, ELHS, Tacoma, WA

### **Thanks**

I continue to give thanks for my partners in ministry... our district praesidium (VPs Joel Nitz and Dan Lange, Secretary Matt Zimpelmann)... our CPs who run meetings, encourage and assist in shepherding their circuits... to all our pastors, teachers and staff ministers who faithfully serve – often far away from extended family – to

bring the gospel to the PNW. We have also had a number of pastors who've served extended vacancies in our district. Thank you all for your helpful advice and gospel ministry!

### **Psalm 67**

As a response to God's grace in our lives and ministries...

As a request for God's grace in our lives and ministries...

As a prayer for the strength to share God's grace in our lives and through our ministries...

(let's read together Ps. 67)...

<sup>1</sup> May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us—

<sup>2</sup> so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.

<sup>3</sup> May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you.

<sup>4</sup> May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples with equity and guide the nations of the earth.

<sup>5</sup> May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you.

<sup>6</sup> The land yields its harvest; God, our God, blesses us.

<sup>7</sup> May God bless us still, so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.

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