



Pacific Northwest DISTRICT

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

PNW District President's Report, Winter 2022

Dear Co-Workers in Gospel Ministry,

The Conference of Presidents (COP) held its winter meeting on Jan. 3-6. A number of items were discussed. These and related district notes are as follows:

- There are ~143 pastoral vacancies in the synod, 124 of which are parish pastor positions. 40 of the pastoral vacancies are in associate pastor positions (meaning those congregations are still being served by at least one pastor). This May's Sem graduating class will be similar to recent years (~28); 2023's Sem graduating class will be slightly larger (~40). The need to recruit young candidates for the pastoral ministry remains.
- PNW pastor vacancies remain at 2 for full time (3? 4? depending on approval for Renton Restart and Eastern Idaho New Start) and 1 semi-retired in Omak.
- The growing shortage of teachers continues, especially in the areas of principals and early childhood/primary.
 - over 140 teachers have announced their retirement;
 - over 250 teachers have announced their resignation; (44% personal; 46% family; 10% other)
- We are thankful that this present school year (2021-22) has been blessed with increased student enrollments (EC – 12%; LES – 8%; ALHS/Preps: 3%). Perhaps some of the turmoil in our world has contributed to over 44,900 students (prek-grade 12) hearing about Jesus in our WELS schools. This blessing has resulted in 84 new called teacher positions serving in WELS schools (compared to 20-21).
- These stats show how recruitment efforts for future pastors and teachers are strongly encouraged/needed from all of our churches and schools by our pastors and teachers.
- There are requests for 4 PNW teacher call lists at present.
- This year's teacher "calling window" closes on Maundy Thursday, April 14, 2022.
- The overall cost of the vicar program is \$42,000 per vicar, down slightly from last year. The vicar stipend was increased by \$25 per month to \$1750 (housing and majority health insurance provided).
- The COP expressed thanks to God for the generous Congr. Mission Offerings (CMO) in 2021.
- Thanks also to our PNW congregations who submitted their 2021 statistics and 2022 CMO subscriptions by the Feb. 4 deadline.

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
2020	122	136
2021	113	136
2022	124	143

- Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) is continuing its search for a new president. Mr. Bill Ziche, current NPH president, has announced his plans to retire. Mr. Mark Buske, director of marketing for NPH, will serve as acting president until a new president is found.
- The COP expressed its support for a proposal by Northwestern Publishing House and the Commission on Lutheran Schools to develop a comprehensive K-12 religion curriculum (22:6) for schools and Sunday schools. SC still needs to determine the funding of this project.
- The COP recently issued a pastoral letter on Christian freedom. If circuit pastors deem it wise, it can be used to foster circuit discussion on the applications and challenges we all face to honor God and love, honor and support each other.
- The COP doctrine committee has been making final edits on the restatement of the synod's teaching on male and female roles. It is hoped that the final document will be ready for review by the district conventions this summer.
- Does your congregation have child protection policies and protocols? Are they being regularly reviewed with leadership, pastors, youth leaders and LES and Sunday School teachers? Are screening and regular training part of your procedures? Resources for training and implementing policies, etc. are available at <https://freedomforcaptives.com/resources/get-training/>
<https://welscongregationalservices.net/preventing-child-abuse-in-church/>
- Pastors should not forget about this site for a variety of solid Congregational Services resources: <https://welscongregationalservices.net/> return to worship, stewardship, personal evangelism, etc.
- WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership is being planned for January (Mon. 16 – Wed. 18) 2023, at the Conrad Hilton Hotel in Chicago. An audience of 1200-1500 is being targeted (entire hotel). Cost would be similar to the last LL conference. Keep this in your prayers and pencil in those dates.
- WELS Called Workers want to keep their personal bios updated <https://cloud.wels.net>
- If, as a PNW Called Worker, you have changed your cell number or updated an email in the past 6 months, please email all your updates to Deb Arstein deb.arstein@cocboise.org and cc District Secretary Dan Kramer peaceinjesuspastor@gmail.com and me pnwdp@wels.net Thank You!

Important District Dates, Upcoming Events

March 17-18, 2022	Cascades Conf. Teachers' Conference, Holy Trinity, Des Moines, WA
April 4-6, 2022	COP Spring Meetings
April 9-20, 2022	WELS Pastor calling window closed
April 14, 2022	WELS Teacher calling window closes until October (for active teachers)
April 2022	PNW Men's Retreat TBD?
May 12-13, 2022	MLC assignment meetings
May 14, 2022	MLC graduation and call services
May 24-25, 2022	WLS assignment meeting
May 26, 2022	WLS call service
May 27, 2022	WLS graduation
June 4, 2022	Evergreen LHS graduation
June 7-8 (9), 2022	PNW District Convention at ELHS
October 4-7, 2022	Fall COP Meetings at the CMM in Pewaukee, WI
October 19-21, 2022	Fall Pastors-Teachers Conference at Evergreen Luth. HS, Tacoma, WA

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