



Pacific Northwest **DISTRICT**

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

District President's Report to the 51st Biennial Convention

of the **Pacific Northwest District** of the **WELS**

at Evergreen Lutheran High School in Tacoma, WA

June 12-13, 2018

Dear PNW WELS Pastors, Teachers, Staff Ministers, Lay Delegates and Guests,

"We do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake."

2 Corinthians 4:5

In the mid-1990's, the U.S. auto industry celebrated its 100th Anniversary. In observance, the *Chicago Tribune* ran an article. The author suggested several vehicles that made significant contributions during that century and whose reputations still live on today.

The list included the 1908 Model T Ford. Known as the *Tin Lizzie*, this car officially put America on the road. The 1941 Jeep was another. This utility vehicle was credited for helping win WWII. It was also the inspiration for the millions of SUVs that run our streets and fill our campgrounds today. The 1949 Volkswagen Beetle was known as "The People's Car." 25 years into production it surpassed the Model T as the world's best-selling auto. You can't get through the 1950's and 60's without a little muscle. The Chevy Corvette and Pontiac GTO caused people to turn their heads. But it was the 1964 Ford Mustang that set a first-year record of .5M sold, not to mention that it drew a "cult following." There are a few others. But the point is this, after 100 years, certain cars made a big difference in the auto world.

How about us? This is our Pacific Northwest District's Centennial Anniversary. As we look back at the past 100 years, are there certain missionaries, pastors, teachers or staff ministers who really made a difference? Any churches or schools make significant contributions during this time? Whose reputation still lives on today?

Well, those are the wrong questions, aren't they? Those are the questions the world asks? The sinful flesh might also have an interest in the answers. They might be good questions for the auto industry, but they're not so good for gospel ministry. Our focus is more along the lines of what Paul told the Christians at Corinth, *"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful"* (1 Cor. 4:2). When it comes to the time that all of us spent serving in this Pacific Northwest District over the past century, the big question is, "were we faithful?"

When a pastor, teacher or staff minister holds a Divine Call to serve in the public ministry of the gospel, it is a precious trust. We are servant-leaders in our congregations and schools. We are obedient servants of Jesus Christ our Savior. We are trustees of the saving truths of God's Word. As such, we never view our Call as just

an ordinary job. Neither do we see our church, school or ministry as a “means to another end.” The gospel ministry isn’t a platform to further ourselves. It’s neither our “start-up business” nor our “paycheck” nor our “retirement plan.” The ministry of the gospel is a sacred trust. And the One who Called us to serve in it deserves our faithfulness.

For Called workers and laymen alike, faithfulness in gospel ministry involves going to great lengths to thank our Savior, because he went to great lengths to save us. Faithfulness means regularly admitting our sins together. Faithfulness means turning to Jesus and trusting his free forgiveness. Faithfulness always means giving our best to Jesus in every circumstance because we’re thankful. Sometimes it means working late. Other times it means not getting our way. Faithfulness can be seen in the way lay leaders compensate their workers. And it will be evident in their workers’ attitudes of contentment, loyalty and commitment to ministry. Church councils and workers holding each other accountable to ministry goals, celebrating kingdom growth, making tough ministry decisions, denying ourselves for the kingdom’s sake – all these are examples of faithfulness.

I recall coming to this district 30 years ago as a vicar. With the exception of a few, the names of the pastors and teachers have all changed. Some took Calls to serve in other places. Others were called home to heaven. There are a few new churches and schools that weren’t here before and, sadly, some that were that aren’t anymore. But more than the names of the people and places, is what God deserves and requires most of all – faithfulness with his gospel ministry. God deserves to have us make him and his work a top priority. God wants our willing, obedient, diligent service above all. How can we help others come to know him? How can we help children and adults know his love better?

Over the decades it’s been sad to see pastors and teachers leave. Then too, it’s been a joy to see new workers come. But it is also an example of being faithful when workers put personal desires aside and go where they can best serve Jesus. In the end, gospel ministry is all about Jesus. We are his servants. Our goal is to proclaim the message of forgiveness clearly. Our goal is to help others see that it was Jesus who made the most significant contribution to world history when he saved us by his death and resurrection. Our goal is to get out of the way so Jesus’ reputation, love and saving work live on. That’s also why the Spirit led Paul to write, *“We do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake”* (2 Cor. 4:5).

There was another vehicle that made the 100th Anniversary List. It’s not flashy and it’s not famous, but it is incredibly functional. It’s the 1984 Chrysler Minivan, much to the dismay of most of the males in America. It replaced the station wagon as the official “people mover.” And while Dads bragged, “I’ll never drive a minivan” they made fools of themselves trying to stuff their baby’s car seat into the back of their 2-door Honda Civic. I doubt we’ll ever see a minivan on the cover of “Car and Driver” or “Motor Trend” magazine. You won’t hear anyone say, “Wow, nice minivan, what model year is that?!” But virtually every auto maker manufactures a minivan, and every father who’s secure in his manhood admits that while they’re not flashy, they quietly do their job as faithful people movers for the American family.

For 100 years, the Pacific Northwest District of the Wisconsin Synod has been so blessed by God. God’s Word and Sacraments have made all the difference. The Holy Spirit made significant contributions to our district by giving her the gift of workers and the increase of souls. God did the blessing and therefore, the glory and credit and honor all belong to him. The reputation of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, still lives on today. And well it should be! As for us, well, *“All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever”* (1 Pe. 1:24, 25).

Dear Jesus, we praise you for this past century of your grace and blessings to our district. Our place in your forgiven family and our role in gospel ministry is so much more than we deserve. Thank you for faithful gospel

heralds during this past century. Help us to be faithful for the next 100 years. May our hearts be thankful and our attitudes humble, after all, *“we are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty”* (Lk. 17:10). And to think that one day, robed in your righteousness by faith, you will look at us and for your sake, say, *“Well done, good and faithful servant!”* (Mt. 25). *“To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen”* (Rm. 16:27).

General District & Synod News

There are several items to note as we gather for this 51st Biennial District Convention:

- ❖ **District Commission on Discipleship** – WELS Commissions on Adult Discipleship and Youth & Family Ministry have recently combined to form one commission from two. Pastor Donn Dobberstein now serves as Director of the **Commission on Discipleship**. Districts are encouraged to combine their two commissions into one. We will address this change through a motion during elections.
- ❖ **Mission & Ministry Sunday** - *Mission and Ministry Sunday* is set aside to be a celebration of God’s blessings on his church and a chance to renew our commitment to the Great Commission to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Mt. 28:18-20). *Mission and Ministry Sunday* is recommended for October 21, 2018 but may be held at a time that best suits your local ministry plans. Resources are available at mcg.welsrc.net/download-mcg/mission-festival/
- ❖ **Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO)** remain the foundational source of financial support for WELS mission and ministry. We thank the congregations of the Pacific Northwest District for the financial support you provide for the ministry we carry on together as members of the WELS – all for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls.
- ❖ **Recent Assignments and Current Vacancies** – 102 Teacher candidates were assigned into the public ministry of the gospel on Assignment Day at Martin Luther College; and additional 31 requests were sent away unfilled; 26 Vicars and 28 Pastoral candidates were assigned from Wisconsin Luth. Seminary for service in gospel ministry; there were 48 unfilled pastor requests; currently there are ~98 vacant parishes and a total of ~116 vacancies for pastor-trained men. We thank the Lord of the Church for these gifts and as he told us, we continue to *“ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers”* (Mt. 9).
- ❖ **WELS Called Worker Compensation Calculator** is a handy tool for congregations as they review and establish the compensation of Called workers in congregations, schools, early childhood centers and other WELS ministries. A downloadable Compensation Guide pdf and an instruction video are available along with the calculator tool at cwcompcalc.wels.net/
- ❖ **“Our Great Heritage” – WELS Long Range Plan 2018-25** – Adopted in 2017 to continue the process of planning and using a long-range plan as a guide for adopting ministry goals and objectives. The long-range plan is available for review in the Report to the Twelve Districts, pages 25-28
- ❖ **WELS Convention** will be held at Martin Luther College, July 29 – August 1, 2019. The deadline for submitting memorials to be printed in the Book of Reports and Memorials (BORAM) to the Synod Convention is January 15, 2019. All memorials should be sent to the President’s Office, N16 W23377 Stone Ridge Drive, Waukesha, WI 53188 or by email to carla.martin@wels.net
- ❖ **Satellite Summer Quarter** – because continuing education and spiritual growth for our Called workers has been intentionally encouraged in recent years (with benefits and blessings for congregations and Called workers alike) our Seminary is committed to coming out to the districts to hold regional Satellite

Summer Quarters during odd years (Synod Conv. years). A few districts have been enjoying this for several years now, in place of a formal delegate conference, while they review BORAM in their circuit meetings during May and June. We are recommending a “PNW SSQ19” for next summer. Attendance is encouraged and expected for all our Called workers. This will be discussed tomorrow morning in Plenary Session.

- ❖ **Recent Synodical Council Recommendation Due to 2018 Tax Changes** - The Synodical Council has approved a policy change to recommend reimbursement to Called workers for the tax on moving expenses, since moving expenses are now considered taxable income: an additional 20% of moving expenses for called workers with minister of the gospel status (pastors, male teachers, staff ministers – due to being considered self-employed for social security purposes) and 13% for workers without minister of the gospel status (female teachers or staff ministers) to help defray the additional tax liability. This is true whether moving expense is paid to the moving company or to the called worker.
- ❖ **General COP Encouragement for Congregations** - It might be easy to forget about our church’s constitution and bylaws or they may not fit because we outgrow them or, sadly, we shrink within them. But operating according to your governing documents is a legal and fiduciary requirement including such things as legal signers, rightful elections, terms of office heeded, properly announced meetings, accurate committee duties and so forth. Failure to operate according to your governing documents could result in severe legal penalties, could jeopardize the property and assets of the organization, and could forfeit one’s non-profit status. If your organization is out of compliance with its own constitution and bylaws, please take reasonable steps to review them and either rewrite OR recommit to compliance. Do remember that any written changes to your constitution and bylaws must be approved by the district constitution committee before they are adopted and implemented by the congregation.
- ❖ **Circuit Pastor Elections** – Circuit Pastors serve the congregations and Called workers of their circuit. We thank the Lord for their willing service that benefits and provides many blessings to our churches. They will be elected by their respective circuits later this afternoon.
- ❖ **Special Guests** – We welcome to our PNW Convention (and thank) – our preacher, former DP Pastor Ted Lambert; WELS President Pastor Mark Schroeder representing the WELS Praesidium; main presenter, Professor E. Allen Sorum of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, who will enrich and encourage us in our ministries with his presentation on all outreach including sharing the gospel in urban and cross-cultural settings; Pastor Bryan Gerlach to report on Congregational Services and the new Hymnal; MLC President Pastor Mark Zarling to share news on our Ministerial Education schools; Pastors Larry Schlomer and Matt Vogt to answer any questions on World and Home Missions; Warren Ehlike, member of Cross of Christ in Boise, ID is our outgoing PNW SC representative on the Synodical Council who will offer an SC report; Pastor Bob Hein will share news from Christian Aid and Relief; Lucas Faust will represent Wisconsin Lutheran College. Thanks to God for these men and for making the trip west, for the work they do for our larger church with and for us. If I missed anyone, my sincere apologies, we will acknowledge you before you address us. Of course, we will have our local district presenters too.

Since this part of my report serves as official record of district ministry activity of this past biennium, I ask that you look through the lists and note any omissions, corrections, additions, deletions. Please share any changes *by writing them on a piece of paper and giving them to our 2nd VP, Pastor Jeremy Schulz*. He will then turn those corrections in to me. I will report those potential revisions to you before the end of the convention. Thank You!

Pastors “TRANSFERRING IN” to the PNW District

Isaac Cherney	<i>Assigned</i>	May 2016	Redeemer LC, Yakima, WA (Ord./Inst. 7.10.16)
Kurtis Wetzel	<i>Assigned</i>	Aug. 2016	Cross of Christ LC, Boise, ID (Ord./Inst. 9.25.16)
Luke Tembreull	NW District	Sept. 2016	Beautiful Savior, Corvallis, OR (Inst. 9.18.16)
Geoffrey Rue	<i>Assigned</i>	May 2017	St. Paul LC, Tacoma, WA (Ord./Inst. 8.5.17)
Aaron West	MN District (ALS)	Apr. 2018	St. Matthew LC, Spokane, WA (Inst. 4.22.18)
Nathan Zastrow	DM District	Apr. 2018	Grace LC, Yakima, WA (Inst. 4.29.18)
Cale Mead	<i>Assigned</i>	May 2018	Christ LC, Juneau, AK (Ord./Inst. 7.12.18)
Benjamin Phelps	<i>Assigned</i>	May 2018	Grace LC, Kenai, AK (Ord./Inst. 7.15.18)
Jonathan Leach	MN District	July 2018	Truth in Love Ministries, Nampa, ID

Pastors “TRANSFERRING OUT” of the PNW District

Timothy Schwartz	WW District	June 2016	Zion LC, Columbus, WI
Howard Mohlke	AZ-CA District	June 2017	Apache Christian Training School, East Fork, AZ
David Salinas	NA District	June 2017	Sure Foundation LC, Woodside, NY
Matthew Kimmel	WW District	Dec. 2017	St. Luke’s LC, New Lisbon, WI
Steven Wall	NW District	Dec. 2017	St. John/St. Peter LC, Cleveland, WI
Joel Hoff	NW District	June 2018	Trinity LC, Neenah, WI
Robert Guenther	MN District	June 2018	St. John’s LC, New Ulm, MN
Jeremy Schulz	SC District	July 2018	Good Shepherd LC, The Woodlands, TX

Pastor “RETIREMENTS” from the PNW

James Oldfield	June 2016	Faith LC, Anchorage, AK
Thomas Gumm	Aug. 2017	Grace/Salem LC, Seattle, Edmonds, WA
Ray Beckmann	June 2018	Good Hope/Good Faith LC, Ellensburg, S. Cle Elum, WA

“WITH THE LORD” – Pastors who served in the PNW District and called to heaven in past biennium

† Robert Seifert	d.8.27.16	PNW – Good Hope LC, Ellensburg, WA, Aug. 1996 to Sept. 2000
† Warren Steffenhagen	d.10.24.16	PNW – St. Matthew LC, Spokane, WA, June 1962 to July 1964
† Charles Tessmer	d.10.27.16	PNW – Redeemer LC, Yakima, WA, Aug. 1960 to Aug. 1967
† James Oldfield	d.4.1.17	PNW – Renton, Yakima, Anchorage, July 1977 to June 2016
† William Bernhardt	d.4.14.18	PNW – Immanuel LC, Salem, OR, May 1968 to Jan. 1977

Current PNW Pastor Vacancies (6)

- Grace/Salem LC, Seattle, WA
- Faith LC, Anchorage, AK (associate)
- Divine Peace LC, Renton, WA
- Faith LC, Tacoma, WA
- Holy Trinity LC, Des Moines, WA (not actively Calling at this time)
- Good Hope/Good Faith LC, Ellensburg, S. Cle Elum, WA (semi-retirement, part-time)

Vicars in the PNW

- Summer 2016 Vicar Andrew Ewings at Peace, Eagle River, AK
- Summer 2018 Vicar Zachary VonDeylen at Peace, Eagle River, AK

Teachers “TRANSFERRING IN” to the PNW

Megan Ungemach	<i>Assigned</i>	May 2016	Holy Trinity Preschool, Des Moines, WA
Leah (Snyder) Gillespie	<i>Assigned</i>	May 2016	Faith LS, Anchorage, AK
Naomi Getka	MI District	July 2016	Faith LS, Tacoma, WA
Andrea Cherney	SEW District	July 2016	Redeemer Preschool (part-time), Yakima, WA
Rebecca Guenther	SC District	July 2016	Grace LS (part-time), Kenai, AK
Erica Hoffman	PNW District	July 2016	Christ the King LS (part-time), Bremerton, WA
		Jan. 2017	Christ the King LS (full-time), Bremerton, WA
Phillip Bunkowske	<i>Assigned</i>	May 2017	Evergreen LHS, Tacoma, WA
Martín Santos	<i>Assigned</i>	May 2017	Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA
Micah Wendt	<i>Assigned</i>	May 2017	Immanuel LS, Salem, OR
Jacob Biebert	SA District	July 2017	St. Matthew LS, Spokane, WA
Joanna Hafner	NE District	July 2017	Living Hope Preschool, Redmond, WA
Joel Plocher	NW District	July 2017	Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA
Kelli Plocher	NW District	July 2017	Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA
Lacey Sorn	PNW (ELS)	July 2017	Evergreen LHS, Tacoma, WA
Ryan Schmeling	PNW District	July 2017	Evergreen LHS, Tacoma, WA
Jill Sarro	PNW District	Aug. 2017	Christ the King LS (part-time, 1 yr.), Bremerton, WA
Beth Humann	PNW District	Nov. 2017	Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA (interim)
		July 2018	Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA (permanent)
Heidi Kruger	<i>Assigned</i>	May 2018	Faith LS, Anchorage, AK
Heidi Moldenhauer	<i>Assigned</i>	May 2018	Faith LS, Tacoma, WA
Megan Lemke	<i>Assigned</i>	May 2018	Grace LS, Portland, OR
Vincent Hallwas	<i>Assigned</i>	May 2018	Christ the King LS, Bremerton, WA (PTP – 3yrs.)
Travis Kretsch	<i>Assigned</i>	May 2018	Immanuel LS, Salem, OR (1 yr.)
Elizabeth Henning	<i>Assigned</i>	May 2018	Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA (1 yr.)
Jason Gibson	NW District	July 2018	Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA
Nicole Habeck		July 2018	Faith Preschool, Tacoma, WA (1 yr.)
Nicole Hintz	AZ-CA District	Jan. 2018	Christ the King LS, Bremerton, WA (part-time)
			Christ the King LS, Bremerton, WA (full-time)

Teachers “TRANSFERRING OUT” of the PNW District

Chris Poetter	WW District	June 2016	Holy Cross LS, Madison, WI (ELS)
Bryan Schneck	MI District	June 2016	Zion LS, Monroe, MI
Deanna Schneck	MI District	June 2016	Peace LS, Livonia, MI
Nicole Schwartz	WW District	June 2016	Zion LS, Columbus, WI
Patrick Cortright	SC District	June 2017	Sienna Luth. Acad., Missouri City, TX
Timothy Fischer	NW District	June 2017	Fox Valley LHS, Appleton, WI
Nicholas Trebesch	WW District	June 2017	Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, WI
Allen Ash	MI District	June 2018	Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, MI
Jason Kelley	NW District	June 2018	St. Paul LS, Appleton, WI
Alyssa Kelley	NW District	June 2018	St. Paul LS, Appleton, WI
Brian Humann	SEW District	June 2018	St. John LS, Mukwonago, WI
Amanda Humann	SEW District	June 2018	St. John LS, Mukwonago, WI (part-time)
Martín Santos	NE District	June 2018	Nebraska LHS, Waco, NE

Teacher “RETIREMENTS” from the PNW

Carol Cole		June 2016	Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA
Stan Bauer		June 2016	Evergreen LHS, Tacoma, WA (part-time)
		June 2017	Evergreen LHS, Tacoma, WA (permanent)
Beth Humann		June 2017	Evergreen LHS, Tacoma, WA
Marilyn Baer		June 2018	Grace LS, Portland, OR
JoAnn Cordes		June 2018	Grace LS, Portland, OR

Teacher Resignations

April Cohrs		Aug. 2016	Grace LS, Portland, OR
Anna Flunker		June 2016	Immanuel LS, Salem, OR
Sara Hondel		June 2016	Grace LS, Kenai, AK
Nicole Trebesch		June 2017	Light of Life Preschool, Covington, WA
Geron Brown		June 2017	Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA
Jason Schleef		July 2017	Immanuel LS, Salem, OR
Gina Paulsen		Aug. 2017	Christ the King, Bremerton, WA
Laura Schleef		Dec. 2017	Immanuel LS, Salem, OR
Tessa Wendinger		Dec. 2017	Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA
Rebecca Guenther		June 2018	Grace LS, Kenai, AK
Leah (Snyder) Gillespie		June 2018	Faith LS, Anchorage, AK

Martin Luther College Emergency Teachers

Erin Plocher	July 2016 – June 2017	Holy Trinity LS, Des Moines, WA
Samantha Koepsell	July 2017 – June 2018	Christ the King LS, Bremerton, WA

PNW Teachers Recertifying the following have either completed or are in the process of WELS recertification

Sheryl Birsching, Naomi Getka, Sharon Holter, Lacey Sorn, Carrie Steinbrenner, Joanna Hafner

Staff Ministers “TRANSFERRING IN” to the PNW

David Malnes PNW District Feb. 2018 Praise and Proclaim Ministries

Pastor or Teacher Anniversaries Celebrated (25, 40)

Teacher Cindy Zarnstorff – 25 years, Summer 2017

Pastor Craig Wasser – 25 years, Summer 2018

Teacher Allen Ash – 25 years, Summer 2018

Teacher Beth Humann – 25 years, Summer 2018

Teacher Tom Zarnstorff – 40 years, Summer 2018

DP Appointments

Pastor Ed Frey (Messiah, Nampa, ID) PNW Special Ministries Coordinator, 8.18.17

Church or School Dedications

Church or School Anniversaries Celebrated

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| • Messiah LC, Olympia, WA | Summer 2016 | 25 th Anniversary |
| • Immanuel LC, Salem, OR | September 2017 | 50 th Anniversary |
| • Faith LC, Anchorage, AK | Summer 2018 | 50 th Anniversary |
| • Evergreen Lutheran H.S. | 2017-2018 | 40 th Anniversary |

Church Closure

- Trinity LC, Coos Bay, OR – February 2018

Church Multi-Site Expansions

- The Vine, Coeur de Alene, ID, August 2016
- Cross of Christ 2nd Site, Meridian, ID, October 2016

Finally, on behalf of our PNW District, thanks to all our Called workers, lay delegates and guest presenters. Your service to our Savior and your partnership in the gospel is truly appreciated. It has been a privilege to serve together with you in the role to which you have Called me. As you know in any ministry, there are burdens and blessings. Both serve to remind us of God’s goodness and grace. May our Savior-God use us all to continually promote and proclaim his gospel... and thankful for our salvation, may we do so faithfully for another 100 years. To Him Be the Glory!

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*Serving our Savior Together,
Pastor John W. Steinbrenner,*

