



# Pacific Northwest **DISTRICT**

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

## **District President's Report to the 53<sup>rd</sup> Biennial Convention**

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

*at Evergreen Lutheran High School in Tacoma, WA*

*June 7-8, 2022*

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

***Who is like you, LORD God Almighty?  
You, LORD, are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds you.  
(Psalm 89:8)***

We last met four years ago in-person, in a true convention setting. Looking ahead from 2018, none of us could have predicted what unique challenges and trials were waiting for us. Oh, the decisions and divisions we would see in our country and in our churches (opinions). Pastor, teachers and lay leaders would be asked to navigate turbulent waters as Christians living in two kingdoms.

Shelter-at-home orders, transitioning to virtual worship, then back to in-person worship with varying degrees (and changing) regulations, distance learning in our schools, quarantining, masking, vaccination concerns, questionable mandates for adults and children... these things challenged us severely. During this time we saw civil unrest, rising crime, political divides, and more recently a concerning economy. In WELS we have experienced unprecedented called worker vacancy rates in pulpits and classrooms.

Seeking to be faithful to God's Word and to our callings, church and school leaders strove to thread the needle of respecting our neighbor while standing firm in our freedom... of obeying authority while honoring God's will on a variety of issues. Toss in important topics that will *differ greatly* from person to person like matters of conscience, levels of patience and personal sacrifice. Then insist on establishing policies and procedures so we can all assemble and work *together*. It bears repeating, no one could have predicted the challenges. And no one could have predicted how polarizing this could be. A global pandemic dropped like a boulder into the pond of existing end-time trials. As if the ripples weren't big enough. As we dealt daily with these issues, how true the statements, "This stuff wasn't in our teaching manuals at MLC" and "The things you never learned at Sem!"

Honest sons and daughters of Christ admit that we were far from perfect in handling these challenges and struggles. Our flesh was at times judgmental of others, selfish, and loveless. In our attitudes, words, and deeds we added sin on top of sin. But the truth is, even if God said, "Let's try this a second time over the next four years," we would do some things differently, but our mulligan would miss the mark again. That's because the world is a sinful place and so is our natural heart.

So, how did we survive it all? How in the world did our churches and schools survive all this? The answer is found in the psalmist's rhetorical question, **"Who is like you, LORD God Almighty?"** No one. That's the expected and correct answer. No one is like our Savior-God. He stands alone and he alone is the reason the Church survives any challenges, trials, or global pandemics. Because the Church is... his. Because he is mightier than anything and everyone. Because he is faithful to all his promises.

God's Son, Jesus, credits his holiness to our account. At our baptisms he washed us clean and robed us in his righteousness. We are his. We are forgiven by his perfect sacrifice on the cross. We are his. And if the gates of hell cannot prevail against his Church, then a virus doesn't stand much of a chance. **"You, LORD, are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds you."** Amidst all the world's questions, confusion, worry and fear – the psalmist reminds us that the God of free and faithful grace is steadfast, firm, and faithful.

Did we church and school leaders handle the past couple years with pure attitudes, flawless leadership and perfect solutions to every single challenge? No. But thankfully, God was faithful to his promise: **"the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin"** (1 Jn. 1:7). Were our churches and schools left for dead by stay-at-home orders? No. In fact, many of our schools are growing and mission offering support for our church body has never been stronger. We survived it all because there is no one like our Savior-God. He is bigger and stronger than global problems. He is faithful to his promises that as we go about baptizing and teaching his saving gospel, he will be with us always until the very end of the age.

During the past years of unprecedented challenges, the world was runnin' scared. Meanwhile, God was bringing blessings to his people. He used the pandemic in different ways. God used it to call some children home for eternity. He used it to bring many churches into the age of technology so we could communicate the gospel better. He used it to teach us forgiven children how better to view Christian freedom, how to slow down and respect the viewpoints of others, and how to patiently show love for our neighbors. Our convention's Bible study time will lead us to see other blessings too. Are the trials that God allows to come our way truly embraced for the strengthening of our faith? Do we use the traumas of the day to run back to LORD and hope in him? God does bring blessings from trials. He did. He does. He will again.

We look forward to spending time together over the next two days to grow in God's grace, rejoice in God's blessings through WELS, and do God's work. It is a joy to be called "God's children." What better status could we be given? After all, who is like our Savior-God? No one is like him who is gracious, mighty and faithful. No one! He is The Almighty... and we are his!

## **PNW District Official Acts**

**2018-2022**

The Constitution for the Districts states, *"At each regular convention of the district the president shall submit a written report on the activities of his office during the past biennium"* (Article VII, Section 1). Since this report serves as the written report on activities of the DP's office and since we didn't hold a regular convention in 2020, what appears below are the names and dates of the past 4 years. I ask that you look through the lists and note any additions, corrections, and deletions for you and your staff. Please share any changes *by writing them on a piece of paper and giving them to Pastor Isaac Cherney*. He will then submit those changes and I will report appropriate revisions to you before the end of the convention. Thank You!

As we've streamlined our record-keeping and gone away from paper forms to more electronic filing, we've done away with recording some stats here. Since all divine calls are to be authorized through the district presidents' offices (below), **INSTALLATIONS** of our called workers are to be authorized by the local DP but recorded locally in congregations' records. So, installation dates won't appear here. I issue a signed, sealed, colorful certificate of **ORDINATION** to every pastor on his special day. But should he lose

it and need it to prove he is an ordained minister (for an out-of-state wedding, etc.) for a legal form, he can contact me or WELS. But ordination dates will no longer appear here.

### **Ministry Changes TO the PNW District**

(Note – changes within a calling body are not listed)

Mr. David Malnes (SM)	02/20/18	Praise and Proclaim Ministries, Meridian, ID
Rev. Nathan Zastrow	04/16/18	Grace Lutheran Church, Yakima, WA
Rev. Aaron West	05/01/18	St Matthew Lutheran Church, Spokane, WA
Rev. Jonathan Leach	07/01/18	Truth In Love Ministry, Nampa, ID
Rev. Cale Mead	07/01/18	Christ Lutheran Church, Juneau, AK (assignment)
Rev. Benjamin Phelps	07/01/18	Grace Lutheran Church, Kenai, AK (assignment)
Mrs. Molly Phelps	07/01/18	Grace Lutheran School, Kenai, AK
Mrs. Nicole Hintz	07/01/18	Christ the King Lutheran School, Bremerton, WA
Mr. Vincent West-Hallwas	07/01/18	Christ the King Lutheran School, Bremerton, WA (assignment)
Mrs. Tamara Godish	07/01/18	Grace Lutheran School, Portland, OR
Mr. Travis Kretsch	07/01/18	Immanuel Lutheran School, Salem, OR (1 yr. assignment)
Mrs. Megan Schwartz	07/01/18	Grace Lutheran School, Portland, OR (assignment)
Mr. Jason Gibson	07/01/18	Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Des Moines, WA
Mrs. Nicole Habeck	07/01/18	Lambs of Faith Preschool, Tacoma, WA
Miss Heidi Moldenhauer	07/01/18	Faith Lutheran School, Tacoma, WA (assignment)
Miss Elizabeth Henning	07/01/18	Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Des Moines, WA (1 yr. assignm't)
Mr. David Habeck	07/01/18	Evergreen Lutheran High School, Tacoma, WA (retirement)
Mrs. Joanna Hafner	08/08/18	Grace Lutheran School, Portland, OR
Rev. David Neumann	08/16/18	Good Hope Lutheran Church, Ellensburg, WA (retirement)
Rev. Nathan Wagenknecht	10/01/18	Faith Lutheran Church, Anchorage, AK
Mr. Joseph Schmudlach	10/22/18	Evergreen Lutheran High School, Tacoma, WA
Rev. Kurtis Wetzel	12/01/18	Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Boise-N. Nampa, ID (reset)
Rev. Bradley Snyder	02/01/19	Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Boise, ID
Rev. Kent Reeder	05/01/19	Illume (Grace) Lutheran Church, Seattle, WA
Rev. P. James Wilcox	06/16/19	Faith Lutheran Church, Tacoma, WA
Rev. Matthew Proeber	07/01/19	Peace Lutheran Church, Eagle River, AK (assignment)
Mrs. Sarah Proeber	07/01/19	Little Lambs of Peace Preschool, Eagle River, AK (assignment)
Mr. Elijah Kroll	07/01/19	Grace Lutheran School, Kenai, AK (assignment)
Miss Stephanie Rockhoff	07/01/19	Faith Lutheran Preschool, Anchorage, AK (assignment)
Mrs. Mara Bingham	07/01/19	Christ the King Lutheran School, Bremerton, WA
Mrs. Jessica Acosta-Ware	07/01/19	Grace Lutheran School, Portland, OR
Miss Holly Wildeman	07/01/19	Immanuel Lutheran School, Salem, OR (assignment)
Mrs. Jennifer Boeder	07/01/19	Faith Lutheran School, Tacoma, WA (1 yr. assignment)
Mr. Joshua Enstad	07/01/19	Evergreen Lutheran High School, Tacoma, WA (assignment)
Mrs. Margaret Enstad	07/01/19	Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Des Moines, WA (assignment)
Miss Alyssa Maertz	07/01/19	Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Des Moines, WA (assignment)
Miss Brigetta Guelker	07/01/19	Southridge Early Learning Center, Kennewick, WA
Rev. Qiang Wang	01/18/20	Abiding Love Lutheran Church, Burnaby, B.C. CAN
Rev. Mark Parsons	07/01/20	Truth In Love Ministry, Nampa, ID
Miss Heidi Kruger	07/01/20	Faith ANC, AK > Grace Lutheran School, Kenai, AK

Mrs. Carissa DeNoyer	07/01/20	Little Lambs of Peace PreK, Eagle River, AK (1 yr. assignment)
Mrs. Danielle Tews	07/01/20	Messiah's Children Preschool, Nampa, ID
Rev. Paul Bourman	07/01/20	Hope Lutheran Church, Tigard, OR (assignment)
Mr. Justin Eternick	07/01/20	Grace Lutheran School, Portland, OR
Mr. Benjamin Springer	07/01/20	Immanuel Lutheran School, Salem, OR
Mrs. Michelle Springer	07/01/20	Immanuel Lutheran School, Salem, OR
Rev. Simon Duoth	07/01/20	Divine Peace LC (Sudanese), Renton WA (PSI assignment)
Rev. Christopher Royce	07/01/20	Messiah Lutheran Church, Olympia, WA (assignment)
Miss Emily Muir	07/01/20	Evergreen Lutheran High School, Tacoma, WA (assignment)
Mr. Joshua Roth	07/01/20	Imm. Salem, OR > Faith Lutheran School, Tacoma, WA
Mrs. Michelle Most	07/01/20	St Matthew Lutheran School, Spokane, WA
Rev. Mark Swanson	11/01/20	Trinity Lutheran Church, Eugene, OR
Rev. Gregory Hein	12/16/20	Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Boise, ID
Rev. Bart Brauer	01/01/21	Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Des Moines, WA
Rev. Justin Gran	06/01/21	Messiah Lutheran Church, Nampa, ID
Mr. Michael Chappell	07/01/21	Faith Lutheran Preschool, Anchorage, AK
Miss Sarah Hughes	07/01/21	Little Lambs of Peace Preschool, Eagle River, AK (assignment)
Miss Jennifer Keller	07/01/21	Grace Lutheran School, Kenai, AK
Rev. Erich Neumann	07/01/21	Calvary Lutheran Church, Bellevue, WA (assignment)
Mrs. Kristine LaPoint	07/01/21	Christ the King Lutheran School, Bremerton, WA
Miss Emma Turriff	07/01/21	Calvary Luth. PreK-Kindergarten, Bellevue, WA (assignment)
Miss Charlotte Huebner	07/01/21	Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Des Moines, WA
Mrs. Sherri Lueck	07/01/21	Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Des Moines, WA
Mrs. Katelyn Parker	07/01/21	Lambs of Faith Preschool, Tacoma, WA (assignment)
Mr. Kyle Raymond	07/01/21	Evergreen Lutheran High School, Tacoma, WA
Mrs. Ruth Schwark	07/01/21	Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Des Moines, WA
Mrs. Stephanie Roth	07/01/21	Faith Lutheran School, Tacoma, WA
Miss Erika Rosenbaum	07/01/21	St Matthew Lutheran School, Spokane, WA (assignment)
Vicar Ross Gottschalk	08/01/21	Faith Lutheran Church, Anchorage, AK (1 yr. assignment)
Vicar Paul Ritter	08/01/21	Christ the King LC, Bremerton, WA (1 yr. assignment)
Rev. Philip Janisch	06/01/22	Peace Lutheran Church, Vancouver, WA
Rev. Craig Wasser	07/01/22	Imm. Salem, OR > MCG for PNW and AZ-CA
Mr. Glenn Metzger	07/01/22	St Matthew Lutheran School, Spokane, WA
Mr. Dale Rundgren	07/01/22	Immanuel Lutheran School, Salem, OR
Mrs. Kathryn Rundgren	07/01/22	Immanuel Lutheran School, Salem, OR
Mrs. Noelle Leitzke	07/01/22	Grace Lutheran School, Portland, OR
CRM Jacob Heyn	07/01/22	King of Kings in Wasilla, AK (assignment)
Miss Emma Dorn	07/01/22	Immanuel Lutheran School, Salem, OR (assignment)
Mr. Nathan Spaude	07/01/22	Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Des Moines, WA (assignment)
Mr. Evan Kolander	07/01/22	Evergreen Lutheran High School, Tacoma, WA (assignment)
Mrs. Chantel Kolander	07/01/22	Faith Lutheran School, Tacoma, WA (assignment)
Vicar Daniel Waterstradt	08/01/22	Christ the King LC, Bremerton, WA (1 yr. assignment)
Mrs. Melissa Waterstradt	08/01/22	Christ the King Luth. Sch., Bremerton, WA (1 yr. assignment)

## **Ministry Changes FROM the PNW to another WELS District**

Rev. Matthew Kimmel	01/06/18	St Matthew Lutheran Church, Spokane, WA to WW
Mr. Martin Santos	06/30/18	Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Des Moines, WA to NE
Rev. Joel Hoff	06/30/18	Divine Peace Lutheran Church, Renton, WA to NW
Rev. Robert Guenther	06/30/18	Grace Lutheran Church, Kenai, AK to MN
Mr. Allen Ash	06/30/18	Evergreen Lutheran High School, Tacoma, WA to MI
Mrs. Amanda Humann	06/30/18	Lambs of Faith Preschool, Tacoma, WA to SEW
Mr. Brian Humann	06/30/18	Faith Lutheran School, Tacoma, WA to SEW
Mrs. Alyssa Kelley	06/30/18	Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Des Moines, WA to NW
Mr. Jason Kelley	06/30/18	Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Des Moines, WA to NW
Rev. Jeremy Schulz	07/31/18	Faith Lutheran Church, Tacoma, WA to SC
Rev. Daniel Moll	08/31/18	Hope Lutheran Church, Tigard, OR to SC
Rev. Benjamin Workentine	09/15/18	Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Boise, ID to NW
Mr. John Sebald	10/31/18	Truth In Love Ministry, Nampa, ID to SEW
Rev. Brian Hackmann	04/30/19	Peace Lutheran Church, Eagle River, AK to SEW
Mr. Ryan Holper	06/30/19	Grace Lutheran School, Kenai, AK to NW
Miss Jennifer Keller	06/30/19	Little Lambs of Peace Preschool, Eagle River, AK to AZ-CA
Mr. Travis Kretsch	06/30/19	Immanuel Lutheran School, Salem, OR to NW
Mr. Theodore Klug	06/30/19	Evergreen Lutheran High School, Tacoma, WA to MN
Mr. Paul Leifer	06/30/19	Faith Lutheran School, Tacoma, WA to MI
Miss Elizabeth Henning	06/30/19	Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Des Moines, WA to DM
Mr. Perry Lund	06/30/19	Evergreen Lutheran High School, Tacoma, WA to Satl.
Miss Melissa Mittelstadt	06/30/19	Faith Lutheran Preschool, Anchorage, AK to MN
Rev. Geoffrey Rue	07/31/19	St Paul Lutheran Church, Tacoma, WA to SEW
Rev. Benjamin Zuberbier	08/30/19	Trinity Lutheran Church, Eugene, OR to WW
Rev. Joel Nitz	04/30/20	Messiah Lutheran Church, Olympia, WA to WM (Vietn.) NW
Miss Katherine Rath	06/30/20	Evergreen Lutheran High School, Tacoma, WA to SEW
Miss Rebecca Hussman	06/30/20	Grace Lutheran School, Yakima, WA to SEW
Mrs. Marilee Nolte	06/30/20	Grace Lutheran School, Yakima, WA to NE
Mrs. Kelsey O'Haver	06/30/20	St Matthew Lutheran School, Spokane, WA to NW
Mr. Thomas Zarnstorff	06/30/20	Faith Lutheran School, Anchorage, AK to AZ-CA
Mrs. Cindy Zarnstorff	06/30/20	Faith Lutheran School, Anchorage, AK to AZ-CA
Rev. Kevin Schnake	07/31/20	Trinity Lutheran Church, Omak, WA to WW
Rev. Edward Frey	07/31/20	Messiah Lutheran Church, Nampa, ID to MN
Rev. Matthew Zimpelmann	09/15/20	Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Boise, ID to NW
Rev. Thomas Voss	10/15/20	Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Des Moines, WA to NW
Rev. Noah Herrmann	04/30/21	Calvary Lutheran Church, Bellevue, WA to NE
Mrs. Amanda Edwards	06/30/21	Calvary Lutheran PreK and Kindergarten, Bellevue, WA to WW
Mr. Phillip Bunkowske	06/30/21	Evergreen Lutheran High School, Tacoma, WA to MN
Rev. Robbin Robbert	10/31/21	King of Kings Lutheran Church, Wasilla, AK to MN
Miss Heidi Moldenhauer	06/30/22	Faith Lutheran School, Tacoma, WA to Satl.
Mrs. Kristine LaPoint	06/30/22	Christ the King Lutheran School, Bremerton, WA to NW
Mrs. Megan Schwartz	06/30/22	Grace Lutheran School, Portland, OR to WW
Rev. Simon Duoth	06/30/22	Divine Peace LC (Sudanese), Renton, WA to AZ-CA
Rev. Craig Wasser	06/30/22	Immanuel Lutheran Church, Salem, OR to MCG

Mr. Benjamin Springer	06/30/22	Immanuel Lutheran School, Salem, OR to MN
Mrs. Michelle Springer	06/30/22	Immanuel Lutheran School, Salem, OR to MN
Mr. Micah Wendt	06/30/22	Immanuel Lutheran School, Salem, OR to SEW

### **RETIREMENTS from the PNW**

Rev. Ray Beckmann	06/30/18	Good Hope/Good Faith LC, Ellensburg, S. Cle Elum, WA
Miss Marilyn Baer	06/30/18	Grace Lutheran School, Portland, OR
Mrs. JoAnn Cordes	06/30/18	Grace Lutheran School, Portland, OR
Mrs. Tammy MacDonald	06/30/19	Christ the King Lutheran School, Bremerton, WA
Rev. David Neumann	11/30/19	Good Hope/Good Faith LC, Ellensburg, S. Cle Elum, WA
Mr. Mark Leitzke	06/30/20	Grace Lutheran School, Portland, OR
Rev. Mark Cares	09/30/20	Truth In Love Ministry, Nampa, ID
Mrs. Mary Kurbis	06/30/21	Faith Lutheran School, Tacoma, WA
Mrs. Beth Humann	06/30/21	Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Des Moines, WA
Mr. David Habeck	06/30/21	Evergreen Lutheran High School, Tacoma, WA
Rev. Gary Kraklow	06/30/22	Peace Lutheran Church, Vancouver, WA

### **RESIGNATIONS from the PNW**

Mrs. Jill Sarro	06/30/18	Christ the King Lutheran School, Bremerton, WA
Mrs. Samantha Stegman	06/30/18	Christ the King Lutheran School, Bremerton, WA
Mrs. Joanne Love	06/30/18	Grace Lutheran School, Kenai, AK
Mrs. Rebecca Guenther	06/30/18	Grace Lutheran School, Kenai, AK
Mrs. Joanna Hafner	06/30/18	Living Hope Lutheran Preschool, Redmond, WA
Mrs. Leah Gillespie	06/30/18	Faith Lutheran School, Anchorage, AK
Rev. James Getka	11/25/18	Evergreen Lutheran High School, Tacoma, WA
Mrs. Grace Cotter	03/22/19	Calvary Lutheran Preschool and Kindergarten, Bellevue, WA
Mrs. Diane Bloom	06/30/19	Christ the King Lutheran School, Bremerton, WA
Mrs. Stephanie Roth	06/30/20	Immanuel Lutheran School, Salem, OR
Mrs. Sarah Proeber	06/30/20	Little Lambs of Peace Preschool, Eagle River, AK
Mrs. Jennifer Boeder	06/30/20	Faith Lutheran School, Tacoma, WA
Ms. Katie Case	06/30/20	Messiah's Children Preschool, Nampa, ID
Mrs. Carissa DeNoyer	06/30/20	Little Lambs of Peace PreK, Eagle River, AK
Mrs. Megan Rodmyre	12/31/20	Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Des Moines, WA
Miss Stephanie Rockhoff	06/30/21	Faith Lutheran Preschool, Anchorage, AK
Ms. Danee Haro (SM)	05/31/22	Truth In Love Ministry, Nampa, ID
Miss Emma Turriff	06/30/22	Calvary Luth. PreK-Kindergarten, Bellevue, WA

### **CHURCHES in the PNW – openings, closings, dedications**

Trinity LC in Coos Bay, OR	02/14/18	Closed
Abiding Love LC in Burnaby/Coquitlam B.C. CAN;	09/26/19	Opened
Living Hope LC in Redmond, WA	10/6/19	Closed
Salem LC in Edmonds, WA	12/31/19	Merged w/ Grace, Seattle, WA, then CLOSED
Grace LC in Seattle, WA	12/31/19	Merged w/ Salem, Edmonds, WA; rename: Illume
Illume LC in Seattle, WA	03/13/20	Opened
Hope LC in Tigard, OR	12/31/20	Gethsemane rename: Hope
The Vine LC in Hayden, ID	02/27/22	Dedicated Church
Southridge in Kennewick, WA	06/5/22	Dedicated Church and ECM

### **SCHOOLS in the PNW – openings, closings, dedications**

Living Hope ECM in Redmond, WA	06/30/18	Closed
Grace LES in Yakima, WA	06/30/20	Closed
Faith LES in Anchorage, AK	06/30/20	Closed
Southridge ECM in Kennewick, WA	07/1/20	Opened
Calvary ECM in Bellevue, WA	06/30/22	1-Yr. Hiatus

### **Pastor or Teacher Anniversaries Celebrated (25, 40)**

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

Pastor Thad Bitter – 25 years, Summer 2021  
Pastor Gary Kraklow – 40 years, Summer 2021  
Teacher Jill Holter – 40 years, 2021

Pastor Frederick Voss – 40 years, Summer 2022

### **SUSPENDED in the PNW from the WELS ministerium**

Mr. Todd Goldschmidt      06/25/18      Pastor at Living Hope Lutheran Church, Redmond, WA  
On June 25, 2018, with the concurrence of the members of the district presidium, I suspended Todd Goldschmidt from the ministerium of the WELS. His suspension was appealed to and denied by the PNW District Board of Appeals. He appealed to the WELS Board of Appeals on Dec. 12, 2018, but later withdrew his appeal on Jan. 16, 2019. The president of WELS stated the matter was concluded.

### **Current PNW Pastor and Teacher Vacancies (2 full-time; 2 semi-retired)**

- PASTOR at Immanuel LC, Salem, OR
- PASTOR at Trinity LC, Omak, WA (semi-retirement)
- PASTOR at Divine Peace LC, Renton, WA (semi-retirement)
- TEACHER at Immanuel LS, Salem, OR

## General District & Synod News

- ❖ Our District Website is: [welspnw.weebly.com](http://welspnw.weebly.com). Again, we are trying to make this convention a paperless convention. Most of our documents can be accessed from our website and/or will be projected on the screen.
- ❖ **Harvest is Plentiful, Workers are Few** – We are grateful to the Lord of the Church for these gifts to His Church!... Assignment Committee by the numbers:  
At **MLC** this year, there were 74 (92 in 2021, 120 in 2020) teacher candidates who could go anywhere (57 from the graduating class and 17 from previous years), and all of them were assigned. In addition, 51 teacher candidates who were limited geographically received Calls for a total of 125 candidates assigned (168 in 2021, 150 in 2020). After the Assignment Committee met, there were still at least 140 total vacancies for teacher-trained men and women synod-wide (at least 90 at this time in 2021, at least 50 at this time in 2020). Of those 140, 116 schools brought Calls to the Assignment Committee that went unfilled.
- ❖ At **MLC**, 48 men graduated in the pre-seminary program (35 in 2021, 40 in 2020);
- ❖ At **WLS** this year, there were 90 requests for candidates (74 in 2021, 57 in 2020). There were 27 candidates available (33 in 2021, 26 in 2020), and all of them were assigned, so 63 of those Calls were unfilled (41 in 2021, 31 in 2020). Of those 27 candidates, 25 were seniors receiving their first Call and 2 were from previous classes. In addition, 5 men was reassigned to one-year Calls. After the Assignment Committee did its work, there were still 136 vacancies for pastor-trained men synod-wide (95 in 2021, 87 in 2020), an 11% vacancy rate.
- ❖ **Bible Study on Doctrine of Divine Call** – The Conference of Presidents, at the request of the 2021 WELS convention, has provided a Bible study on the Divine Call for study and discussion in our congregations. A series of articles on the Divine Call by Pres. Earle Treptow of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary are being published in *Forward in Christ* for helpful information and review.
- ❖ **Restatement on Male and Female** – After review of suggested revisions and discussion with many others, the Conference of Presidents expects to distribute the statement, “God’s Beautiful and Balanced Design for Male and Female” in late summer/early fall. There will be encouragement for study and review at that time.
- ❖ **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 provided for the ministry we carry out together as members of the WELS – for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls. Let’s keep this strong moving forward...
- ❖ **Child Abuse Protection Policies** – Based on a report by Dr. Victor Vieth, WELS member and nationally recognized expert on child abuse, the Conference of Presidents encourages congregations to adopt policies that will serve as child protection and help to identify potential victims of child abuse. Resources will be made available to congregations to better inform and



assist in taking steps toward prevention and providing needed spiritual care.

- ❖ **Called Worker Compensation and Health Insurance** – The Conference of Presidents affirms synod code for our workers <https://cwcompcalc.wels.net/> which includes health insurance provided to called workers in the form of full family health insurance coverage (WELS VEBA Plan 2 or its equivalent offered by WELS Benefit Plans <https://welsbpo.net/health/>). We work together to give “double honor” to our workers.
- ❖ **Circuit Pastors** – We thank the Lord for those who serve congregations and called workers as Circuit Pastors – Jason Strong, Fred Schleg, James Wilcox, Thad Bitter, Tim Wilkens and Dan Kramer. They serve for the benefit of both congregations and called workers. We thank the Lord for their willing service as they serve as blessings to His Church. Elections of Circuit Pastors will be held later in this convention.
- ❖ **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). Likewise, MLC is able to provide instructors for growth and teacher certification classes. A few districts have been enjoying this for several years now, in place of a formal delegate conference. The BORAM is reviewed in their circuit meetings during May and June. Pre-Covid, we have enjoyed this too. Another “PNW SSQ23” session is being targeted for next summer. Attendance is encouraged and expected for all our called workers. Exact 2023 dates have not been set. Please look for those dates and set aside this time to grow in God’s Word.
- ❖ **Special Guests** – We welcome to our convention our preacher and presenter, Professor Ken Cherney of our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. He will enrich and encourage with his presentation on Job “I Will Hope in Him.” Pastor Paul Janke, former chairman of the Board for World Missions, will report on WELS World Missions. Pastor Joel Voss, WELS 2<sup>nd</sup> VP, will represent the WELS Presidium. Brent Masters, member of Cross of Christ in Boise, ID and PNW representative on the Synodical Council will offer a report for the Synodical Council. Ms. Ann Poetter will represent Wisconsin Lutheran College. Mr. Jim Holm will share information and videos on WELS Investment Funds. Thanks for making the trip west, for the work you 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.
- ❖ 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. To Him Be the Glory!

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