

Encourage One Another

WELS Western Wisconsin District Convention | June 6-7, 2022 | Watertown, Wisconsin

Sunday, June 5

- 7-9:00 PM – Registration at LPS gymnasium

Monday, June 6

- 7-8:30 – Breakfast
- 7-9:00 – Registration at LPS gymnasium
- 9:00 – Call to Order and Opening Prayer – District President – Pastor Michael Jensen
- 9:05 – Election Committee Report – Pastor Silas Schmitzer

The Elections Committee Chairman, Rev. Silas Schmitzer, opened nominations for the office of District President.

- 9:10 – District President's Report – Pastor Michael Jensen, WWD President

This resolution was brought to the floor via the President's Report:

Therefore, brothers, the recommendation is on the floor for the Capitol Circuit of the Central Conference to now become the Capitol Conference of the WELS Western Wisconsin District

There was no discussion to the resolution. The resolution passed with no dissenting votes.

- 9:40 – WELS Conference of Presidents – President Mark Schroeder

The Conference of Presidents report can be found in *The Report to the Twelve Districts*

Here are the highlights:

- We gather in peace, freedom and safety. Pray for our church in Ukraine as they continue to gather around the Risen Savior.
 - Over \$1.2 has been given to Ukraine
 - The Committee on Relief has sent funds through the organization, "Direct Relief"
 - World Missions has set aside \$25,000 to send as needed and requested.
- World Missions
 - A second missionary will be sent to London. In addition to the mission in London, our missionaries will be serving many who are coming to London from Hong Kong
 - The Latin American synods joining into one synod.
 - Vietnam: The Seminary building process is resuming.
- Home Missions
 - Calls will be extended for the Administrator
 - "100 Missions in 10 Years" begins in the fall
 - This is an increase of 3-4 per year from what we're already doing
 - There is an increase in class sizes in the coming years.
 - There are also funding opportunities to utilize.
- Ministry assignments
 - Pray that the "pendulum" is swinging back as more workers enter the field.
 - Encourage those you know who could be pastors or teachers.
- Christian Worship Hymnal: 60% of congregations have adopted the new hymnal.
- Northwestern Publishing House: Christ Light is undergoing and extensive review.
 - The COP appointed a committee to study curricular needs.
 - A project director has been called.
- The WELS Pension system has changed in the past year. Parsonage allowances are now also available to our female teachers.

- Finances: Amazing blessings!
 - Healthy
 - CMO in May was 7.8% more than last May. The calendar year to date offerings total \$8.9 million! CMO is up 204% for the fiscal year.
 - All entities see net assets increasing.
- Retirements
 - Don Tollefson (North Atlantic District President)
 - Dave Kolander (Southeast Wisconsin District President).
 - Paul Janke (World Mission Chairman). Jon Schroeder taking place
 - Brad Johnson and Tim Kriewal are ending their service as lay members of Synodical Council
 - Keith Free as advisor, as he has accepted a Call.
- LCMS discussions. The next information discussion will be in December
- CELC
 - The purpose of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference is for “mutual encouragement and theological discussion”
 - The Conference meets every three years. The Conference meets next year in Seoul, South Korea.
- Challenges
 - Culture -it may seem we’re losing – but God has promised that the gates of hell will not prevail.
 - We have what we need to face these challenges: the gospel of the Risen Savior.

Questions from the floor:

1. Can you give us an update on the CLC (Church of the Lutheran Confession) talks?
WELS, ELS and CLC had formal discussions with the hope of restoring fellowship.

A study of the principles for breaking fellowship was drafted. The WELS and ELS accepted the document. The CLC didn't act on the document, therefore the process has stopped

2. An encouragement was offered from the floor to help and encourage police officers who may wish to make ministry a second career.

The Elections Committee presented the ballot to elect the District President:

Rev. Brett Brauer

Rev. Michael Jensen (inc)

Rev. Michael Lindemann

Rev. Andrew Schultz

Rev. Doug Tomhave

- 10:15 – Dismiss for Worship service
- 10:30 – Divine Service with Holy Communion – Pastor Roy Hefti, Preacher
- 12:00 – Lunch
- 1:25 – Call to Order — Pastor Jensen/Election Committee Report

The Elections Committee announced that Rev. Michael Jensen was reelected as District President.

Nominations were opened for the position of First Vice President.

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- 1:30 — MLC Report — Mark Maurice, VP for Mission Advancement
 - The *Equipping Christian Witnesses* Campaign ends on June 30.
 - \$9.5 Million received in gifts.
 - July 1 – *Pursuing Excellence under the Cross* begins. Please review the distributed casebook for details.

- 1:45 – Paper # 1: *Encouragement on Worship Coming Out of the Pandemic* – Pastor Phil Moldenhauer
- 2:20 – Co-presenters' Responses

Pastor McKenney:

1. Thank you for highlighting the tremendous blessing of being together.
2. Please keep in mind the importance of the preacher: He is a person (a pastor), not just a presenter.
3. The use of technology will generate ongoing discussion.

Pastor Arndt: Need to be together.

1. Is Covid new? We've been here before!
2. I appreciate the call away from consumerism. Worship isn't about "us."
3. There is a modern gnosticism that does surround us: don't separate body and soul
4. Refer back to p. 6. Use this a practical resource.
5. We are a Christian community.

- 2:30 – Floor Discussion with Presenter Panel moderated by Pastor Brett Brauer

Q: How do we answer the suggestion that a visitor who "can't open the hymnal" needs the screen?

- The layout of the new hymnal makes this a bit easier
- Be aware of those around you and help each other.
- There are some benefits to the screen. Ease for the visitor is one benefit. The mom with her children was offered as another example of one who may benefit from a screen.

Q: How are the youth responding to use or non-use of technology?

- Some youth are coming because it is a sanctuary from the screens all around them. They are noticing the "mediated existence"
- No screens is not a hindrance – sometimes it makes us different – there are screens everywhere.
- Avoid the "alone, together" that screens often create.
- Don't forget, however, that sometimes a "picture is worth a thousand words."
- Technology is a tool: think about how it is used and why it is used.

Q: See Q 1 in the paper and the Deutschlander quote on p. 3. How has the loss of "private confession" contributed to someone thinking, "he can't mean me" when the public absolution is announced?

- We all need the reminder that Jesus didn't come for all the times I behaved, but for the times I sinned.

Q: The delegate offered the following encouragement:

- Thanks for the encouragement to use the sign of the cross.
- Don't forget to make use of the architecture of the building
- Take time to consider the frequency of communion (cf Q 2).

Pastor McKenney related how children were taught in the early church to place a hand over the heart to confess the "resurrection of [THIS] body"

Q. There is a timelessness to the liturgy. Lift the worshipper up to it, rather than "dumb down." Use the repetition, balanced with variety. It is the "language of church," regardless of age/generation

- The "me" story is hammered by society. Keep letting them hear the "real story" of Christ: doctrinal truth; not personal, self-discovered truth.

Q. Use technology, but also make sure that the liturgy is "alive" (Smile when announcing forgiveness!)

Q. How many of us remember when fathers/husbands took time to “announce” for communion on Saturday?

- There is a balance when considering the frequency of the Lord Supper:
 - Offer the Supper more often, with the potential of preparation.
 - Offer the Supper less often, with the potential for more preparation.

Q. What about the new practice of continuous flow verses kneeling at the table?

- If use continuous flow, work to slow down, not make it seem like a “drive through”
- The traditional use of tables can help us slow down and remember we’re not disconnected.

Q. How we do help those in “detransition?” (Those who transitioned to the other sex and now regret what they’ve done.)

- Rather than engage in the cultural war – give the comfort of the Gospel.

Q. The pandemic has interrupted, and even make us forget, some of the routines of life. That seem to be true for worship.

- Let’s work to renew our enthusiasm about the essential nature of corporate worship.
- Stress the joy of bodily worship: Be there!

The Elections Committee presented the ballot for the First Vice President:

Rev. Brett Brauer (inc)

Rev. Andrew Schultz

Rev. Doug Tomhave

- 3:15 — Recess for Circuit Pastor Elections in assigned rooms (102)
- 3:35 – Break

The Elections Committee announced that Rev. Brett Brauer was reelected as First Vice President.

Nominations were opened for the office of Second Vice President.

- 3:50 – Paper #2: *Encouragement on Soul Care Coming Out of the Pandemic* - Pastor Bruce McKenney
- 4:25 — Co-presenters’ Responses

Pastor Moldenhauer

1. Pastoral character is shown when doing for those who can’t/won’t do for you.
2. Pastoral care involves dialogue. “Have one ear open to the Word and one ear open to the soul.”
3. As we visit, don’t forget the every member visit; visit even those who are coming to church.
4. Pastors: don’t be afraid to let a brother share the Word with you.
5. There was a time when we talked about the “cure of the soul.” We don’t just care; the Gospel is the cure!
6. Be aware of the cultural emphasis on “care of self” as opposed to the “care of soul.” There is an emphasis on “wellness” and “self care” that also leads to separation, rather than gathering.

Pastor Arndt:

1. Thanks to Pastor McKenney who modeled the pastoral heart in his paper.
2. One on one soul care is so important. Don’t forget the example of Christ.
3. Circuit Pastors, find and take the time to visit the members of your circuit.

- 4:35 – Floor Discussion with Presenter Panel moderated by Pastor Brett Brauer

Q: What do you do in your school settings to address the needs in the families?

No specific answers were offered.

Q: Mark Klug; chairman of Christian Family Solutions (CFS) described how they are working to build a pipeline of future clinicians.

Q: We accepted the excuse of low attendance during COVID. How can we show concern for our pastor's health as he stands in front of an empty church?

- COVID has probably been harder than all of us wish to admit. Hard to "get back."
- We all know who the ones not attending are; we all can reach out to the friend, neighbor etc.
- Don't forget: the Means of Grace is there whether "full" or "empty."

Q: The "Peter Plan" is a great resource to restart/start the visits.

Q: Our teachers are exhausted. We're seeing families fall apart and see the struggles of our children. CFS has offered a trial program of a counselor once a week to the schools in Watertown, WI. Perhaps having counselors available is no longer a luxury, but a necessity.

Q: Is there value in not "overscheduling?"

- Yes, you have your own physical and mental health to care for as well as your Call to care for others. Don't forget you're also a father/husband
- Spend the best time you can in preaching and visiting the people.

Q: Compassion ministry is not just doing something for someone, but also just "being there."

Q: Teachers, make yourselves available to your students. Let them know you are there for them.

Pastor McKenney then discussed the issue of suicide. "If he tells you he's going to commit suicide, then he's likely to do it. Make sure you're listening. He is often looking for an escape hatch."

The Elections Committee presented the ballot for Second Vice President:

Rev. Andrew Schultz

Rev. Jeff Seelow (inc)

Rev. Doug Tomhave

- 5:20 – Election Committee Report
- 5:25 – Closing Devotion – *Let Us Hold to the Hope We Profess* — Pastor Dave Nottling
- 5:45-6:45 – Supper
- – Evening – *Gemuetlichkeit* arranged by LPS

Tuesday, June 7

- 7-8:15 – Breakfast
- 8:30 – Call to Order – Pastor Jensen/Election Committee Report
- 8:30 – Opening Devotion — *Let Us Consider How to Spur One Another On*— Pastor Phil Heyer

The Elections Committee announced that Rev. Jeff Seelow was reelected as Second Vice President.

Nominations were opened for District Secretary/Treasurer.

- 8:45 – District Reports (Evangelism, Special Ministries, Youth & Family)

Rev. Robert Wassermann – Special Ministries

- Please see wels.net and check out the resources under Special Ministries
- Camp Basic resumes in Prairie Du Chein, WI . See www.campbasic.com for details.
- Jesus Cares ministries are resuming.
- The Organization of WELS Luthean Seniors (OWLS) convention will be at Stony Creek Inn, Onalaska, WI on October 11-13, 2022

Rev. Chip Wilke – Evangelism. Rev. Joe Fricke reported in Pastor Wilke’s absence.

- Please watch the video provided in the convention materials.
- We are looking for a host for a school of outreach this fall and next winter/spring.

- 9:15 —Ministry of Christian Giving — Pastor Kurt Lueneburg

Please see the PowerPoint presentation posted on the district website

The WELS Foundation provides special giving tools for individuals.

The WELS Investment Funds are specifically designed for groups to invest their long-term ministry funds.

Check out the displays and the website.

The Elections Committee presented the ballot for District Secretary/Treasurer:

Rev. Galen Riediger (inc)

Rev. Andrew Schultz

Rev. Doug Tomhave

- 9:30 – Paper #3: *Encouragement on Christian Education Coming Out of the Pandemic* – Pastor Shaun Arndt
- 10:05 — Co-presenters’ Responses

Pastor Moldenhauer

1. The triangle is a strong shape. Don’t overlook the triangle of Church/Home/School.
2. Keep in mind, “we’re not just imparting information.” A working definition of education could be something like this: "Developing Christian character that inhabits the biblical world and approaches life with God-fearing wisdom."
3. Teachers, once your students leave your classroom, keep them in minds. Talk to them when they come home from college.

Pastor McKenney:

1. Parochial could become a negative word, but it is a beautiful word to remind us to assist families for this life and for the one to come.
2. Use the schools. They are often the biggest and most visible outreach we have.
3. Many feel like our world is “falling apart” Many are turning to our elementary schools because they know they “need something.”

The Elections Committee announced that Rev. Galen Riediger was reelected as District Secretary/Treasurer.

The Ballots for synodical and district positions was distributed. After some questions from the floor, these specific instructions for the back page of the ballot were given:

- Capitol Conference: Vote for 2
- Central Conference: Vote for 2
- Chippewa/Mississippi/Southwestern Conferences; Vote for 1
- Wisillowa Conference : Vote for 2
- Worship Coordinator: Vote for 1

- 10:15 – Break
- 10:35 – Floor Discussion with Presenter Panel moderated by Pastor Brett Brauer

Q: Thank you for not focusing on the pandemic, but rather focusing on each other!
Don't ask "what's wrong with you?!!" but rather, "What's wrong? What do you need today?"

Q. Remember parental authority of the fourth commandment, and schools flows out of that; not the other way around.

- Is there a way to offer help to home schools?
- Our schools are unique in the parent/teacher relationship because of the 4th commandment and because of the Great Commission and the Divine Call.

Q: The delegate offered these questions for reflection within our own congregations and schools:

- Is this "our" school or "their" school?
- Is the pastor as recognizable to the kids as to the parents?
- Why are we seeking prospects? Is it to keep school afloat, or to keep them in God's grace?

Q: Referring to discussion question 2:

One family would pick a Bible passage at breakfast. Then they would talk about the passage at supper after thinking about it all day.

Q: How much teaching can be done when preaching?

One congregation tried monthly Vesper services. The evening included a meal, teaching moment and Vespers to close. (Luther often used the Vesper service for his "teaching" time.)

Q: Referring to discussion question 1. How can congregations provide the time for pastoral visits.

- When there is a larger ministry, then there are often more meetings. Encourage the leaders to do what they can to free them from those meetings.
- Perhaps the meetings can be scheduled for the evening rather than fill up every evening.
- Whatever your setting is, find a way to get pastors/teachers/leaders into the homes of the people.

Q: *Tell* the Bible stories.

Q: WI Parental Choice program has offered a unique opportunity to approach people. It's forced us to be transparent and upfront as to what we're all about. Use that opportunity to use the Bible Information Class (BIC)

- The world has changed, but remember, our mission hasn't changed.
- Give tours when school is in session.
- Do the phone calls; do the on-site visits.

- 11:20 – District Mission Board/Home Missions Report – Pastor Jeff Mahnke

Please see the PowerPoint presentation posted on the district website.

- 12:00 – Lunch
- 1:15 – Call to Order — Pastor Jensen/Election Committee Report

Pres. Jensen reviewed the geography of the WWD. You can find the map at www.wels.net

The Election Committee distributed the run off ballot between Mr. Kevin Loersch and Mr. Tim Luetzow for MLC Governing Board.

Rev. Jerry Ewings encouraged us to remember young men who may wish to serve the Lord as a second career.

- 1:20 – Synodical Reports
1:20 – Synodical Council – Jake Lemke

Please see the PowerPoint presentation posted on the district website.

1:30 – Christian Aid and Relief – Pastor Bob Hein

Please refer to the video link and handouts posted on the district website. You can find this information in the *Report to the Twelve Districts*, pp. 36-40.

- We are working to provide proper training and equipment so qualified and properly equipped teams are ready to offer aid.
- We are partnering with Word missions to combine compassion ministry with gospel outreach.
- Make use of the Community Care Compassion Matching Grant: \$2,500 maximum grant for local help.

1:40 – NPH – Mark Buske

Please see the PowerPoint presentation posted on the district website, as well as the printed reports. Check out the discount coupon!

- NPH President, Mr. Jeremy Engle was introduced to our convention.
- Pastor Chris Cordes, new Vice President of Publishing was also introduced to the convention.

1:50 – Worker Training – President Matthew Crass

The Report to the Twelve Districts has the reports for each of the four schools. Please refer to materials on the district website.

Preaching and teaching of the gospel is rare. Rejoice that it is not rare among us!

2:00 – World Missions - Larry Schlomer

Please see the PowerPoint presentation posted on the district website.

- 2:20 – Convention Reports
– Elections Committee Report — Pastor Silas Schmitzer

Please refer to the printed report.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Elections Committee report. Motion adopted.

We expressed thanks to our outgoing Circuit Pastors: Jon Hadler, Philip Heyer Andrew Schultz and Philip Wilde.

– Floor Committee of President's Report— Pastor Joel Neumann

Please refer to the resolutions posted on the district website.

- Resolution #1: Adopted
- Resolution #2: Adopted
- Resolution #3: Adopted (with note that we did meet in Perrons in 2019 for the pastor/teacher education conference)

– Floor Committee for District Dues/Fees— Pastor Doug Tomhave

Please refer to the resolution posted on the district website. Adopted

– District Scholarship Fund – Pastor Galen Riediger

Please refer to the printed report found on the district web page. The application link is also live on the district website. Deadline to apply is October 15, 2022.

The 2023 Synod Convention will be held at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, July 31 – August 3, 2023. The list of called workers and congregations who will represent our district was presented and ratified. The list is posted on the district website.

– District Support – Pastor Brett Brauer

Pastor Brauer summarized the work of the Synod's Support committee. If you know of any Called worker, or their families, who need assistance, contact Pastor Brauer.

- 3:00 – Housekeeping, Adjournment
 - The convention service offering totaled \$2,806.00. A motion was made and seconded to send the offering to Christian Family Solutions. Motion adopted.
 - The convention offering its thanks to all who served their Lord by serving us:
 - All who served in the district in various ways during the past two years.
 - Luther Preparatory School for hosting our convention.
 - Abbie Krueger, WWD Office Assistant
 - Delegates, for your time and your service.
 - And of course, to our God for grace upon grace.

- 3:05 – Closing Devotion – *Let Us Not Give Up Meeting Together, But Let Us Encourage One Another* —
Pastor Rich Lehmann
Installation of Officers: LPS President Matt Crass

- 3:20 – Dismissal

To God be the Glory!

Rev. Galen J. Riediger
WWD Secretary/Treasurer