

***On the Road to the Reformation:
Sola Gratia, Sola Fide, Sola Scriptura, Solus Christus***

**WELS Western Wisconsin District Pastor/Teacher Conference
June 5-6, 2017
Watertown, Wisconsin**

**Note: All the presentations and reports can be found at the Western WI District website:
www.welswwd.weebly.com. Go to "Proceedings" and follow the link for "2017 District Conference."**

Sunday, June 4

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

Monday, June 5

- 7:00-8:30 – Breakfast
- 7:00-9:00 AM – Registration at LPS gymnasium
- 9:00 – Call to Order and Opening Prayer – District President – Pastor Michael Jensen
- 9:05 – Epitome of the Formula of Concord – Pastor Roy Hefti
 - Pastor Hefti presented pages 1 to 22.
- 10:10 – Western Wisconsin District Celebration of Reformation 2017 – Pastor Rich Lehmann
 - Please refer to the WWD Worship committee report.
 - A resolution will be coming to recommend a percentage division of the Reformation 500 worship offering. The offering will be divided between the WWD Scholarship Fund and the Wartburg Project.
 - New posters are printed and available. Pick up two at the table in the entry.
 - Please consider renting coach busses from your area. Parking is \$7/car. Contact the Reformation 500 committee for possible subsidy to help pay for the coach.
- 10:20 – Dismiss for service
- 10:30 – Divine Service with Holy Communion – Pastor Jerry Ewings, Lord of Love Lutheran, De Forest, WI
 - The worship offering totaled \$1,237
- 12:00 – Lunch
- 1:15 – Call to Order – Pastor Jensen
- 1:15 – Devotion – Pastor Ken Ewerdt, St. Paul's Lutheran, Ixonia, WI

Pres. Jensen thanked Pastor Ewerdt, as well as everyone involved in the morning worship service.

- 1:30 – Epitome of the Formula of Concord – Pastor Roy Hefti
 - Pastor Hefti presented pages 22 – 40.
- 2:35 – Commission on Lutheran Schools – Principal Fred Uttech
 - Please see the WWD Schools Coordinator report.
 - Mike Wieting, one of our school counselors, accepted a Call and is moving to the NW District
 - For the first time in several years, a district wide teachers conference will be held at Tomah, Feb. 15-16, 2018.
- 2:45 – World Missions – Pastor Larry Schlomer
 - Pastor Schlomer presented his report.
 - Multi-language publications
 - Academia Cristo
 - World seminaries
 - Growing number of confessional Lutherans oversees
 - North America: 1,300 congregations
 - Overseas missions: 700 congregations

- Pastors: 400, plus another 400 in training
 - Forward in Christ – World Missions edition will be available through the end of June.
 - Wels.net/missions – Go see what’s happening!
 - This presentation is available to congregations to show. You can find it at wels.net.
- 2:55 – India Mission Work
 - Here are some highlights from the PowerPoint presentation:
 - Tradition says Thomas went to India.
 - “Father Heyer” (MN Synod) began work in India in 1841.
 - The LCMS did some work in 1984.
 - 2.5 million Indians are Christians.
 - Most are Hindu.
 - Christ Ev. Lutheran Ministries is the name of our mission.
 - 150 congregations
 - 3500 communicants
 - 54 trained pastors and evangelists
 - 19 in training
 - Goals:
 - Training
 - Publishing in Hindi and Telugu
 - Build worship facilities
 - Christian Aid and Relief offers grants (ex: wells, incubators)
 - 175 children cared for in 6 homes
 - Gentle Shepherd Lutheran School in Guntur
- 3:05 – Break
- 3:15 – Epitome of the Formula of Concord – Pastor Roy Hefti
 - Pastor Hefti presented pages 40-58.
 - **A Motion was made, seconded and passed to accept and thank essayist.**
- 4:20 – District Reports (evangelism, mission board, special ministries, area Lutheran high schools)
 - Evangelism: Pastor Joe Fricke summarized his written report.
 - District Mission Board/WELS Home Missions: Pastor Paul Schupmann presented a PowerPoint presentation which accompanied the written report.
 - Special Ministries: Pastor Bob Wassermann summarized the committee’s work. A Special Ministries Directory is available with the conference reports.
 - Area Lutheran High Schools
 - Lakeside Lutheran High School: Mr. Jim Grasby
 - Luther High School: Rev. Jon Bilitz
 - Northland Lutheran High School: Mr. Ryan Wiechmann
- 5:15 – Closing Devotion – Pastor Donald Swartz, Mt. Olive Lutheran, Monroe, WI
- 5:30-6:30 – Supper
- Evening – Gemuetlichkeit arranged by LPS

Tuesday, June 6

- 7:00-8:15 – Breakfast
- 8:30 – Call to Order – Pastor Jensen
- 8:30 – Opening Devotion – Pastor Shaun Arndt, Good Shepherd Lutheran, Holmen, WI
- 8:45 – District President’s Report – Pastor Michael Jensen, Western Wisconsin District President

The District President's report was accepted with no discussion or questions.

- 9:00 – Synodical Reports

9:00 – WELS Presidium – President Mark Schroeder

- Pres. Schroeder greeting our conference with the words of Philippians 1, thanking us for the partnership in the gospel that we share.
- Pres. Schroeder offered information regarding the upcoming Synod Convention.
 - The Convention theme and title of the long range plan is “Our Great Heritage.”
 - The essay, “Our Great Heritage,” will be presented by Prof. John Brenner.
 - We’ll have the joy of declaring fellowship with the following church bodies: East Asia Lutheran Synod; South Asian Lutheran Ev. Mission (SALEM); Lutheran Church of Ethiopia.
 - Special reports: Review of the Ministry of Christian Giving; Translation Liaison Committee; Compensation Review Committee (including a bible study)
 - We look forward to receiving greetings from Ev. Lutheran Free Church of Germany (ELFK).
 - The Financial Plan for the next biennium will be presented.
 - “*Joint Statement Regarding Termination of Fellowship.*” This document resulted from ELS, WELS and CLC discussions. The document was approved by the ELS last summer. The CICR is recommending we adopt the document at this summer’s convention. The CLC deferred it to their pastors for their review and study and will take it up again next summer.
- The pastoral vacancy rate is at 6-8% . This is not at a “crisis” point until over 10%. Yet, it does offer the reminder to encourage and recruit for ministry.

Question: Now that the Synod debt is retired and the \$1.6 million is no longer used for debt repayment, some of the \$1.6 million should be used to help with current student debt or prevent future debt. Since 2009, student debt is at \$16.9 million (Synod debt was at \$22.4 million at that time.) While the CMO remains flat and the budgeted support also remains flat, graduates average \$20,000 in debt.

Answer: The \$1.6 million has been used in much the same way a household might use mortgage money. Once the mortgage is paid off, the “extra” often gets diverted to other needs as they arise. The \$1.6 million is not just extra money, but is still used to maintain current ministry, and allow for limited expansion of our ministry. Check out the “unfunded” sections of the fiscal plan. We want to work on increased funding for our schools. MLC is also working on finding ways to help with tuition costs.

Question: When a graduate is assigned, the congregation or school often sees a savings from previous worker wages due to less years of experience. Can congregations be encouraged to use that “savings” to help their new workers relieve their debt?

Answer: That’s a good idea and we will add it to the Conference of Presidents meeting agenda.

9:10 – Synodical Council – Mr. Art Tessmann – The report was presented by Mr. Todd Poppe.

- The CMO remains flat, but WELS remains viable.
- The budget is balanced.
- Mr. Poppe provided a review of the purpose and function of the Financial Stabilization Fund.
- \$1.7 million annually is set aside for capital projects.

9:20 – Compensation Committee – Principal James Moeller

- Mr. Moeller referred us to page 100 in the BoRaM . When it comes to the compensation of our workers, he encouraged us to remember these three words: “prayerfully, carefully and thoughtfully.”

- The appendices to the report contain a Bible study to be used when setting a worker's compensation.
- After summarizing the philosophy and components of the compensation plan, Mr. Moeller introduced the compensation plan worksheet. This worksheet can be found at wels.net. Remember, this is the last step, not the first step in setting the worker's salary.
- The compensation committee will be asking for convention approval of the guidelines and components.

9:30 – Ministerial Education – President Matthew Crass

- Pres. Crass began his report by recognizing Prof. Roger Kobleske. He is retiring this year. He's also been our convention and conference coordinator for the past 22 years. We thanked him for his years of service to our district.
- Pres. Crass then summarized the school reports. One item of special note is LPS's entrance into the WI Parental Choice program. All 43 applicants for this year are WELS students.

9:40 – Christian Giving – Pastor Kurt Lueneburg

- We were directed to pages 32-38 in the BoRaM. Pastor Lueneburg used his PowerPoint presentation to summarize the report.

9:50 – Reformation 500/NPH – Pastor John Braun

A number of handouts and cards were provided. Pastor Braun's report described the following resources:

- New NPH website
- History materials
- Updated Small Catechism and companion resources
- EHV New Testament and Psalms is available
- Reformation 500 resources:
 - "Return to Grace" and companion Bible study.
 - Reformation: Grace, Faith, Scripture
 - Luther Then – Lutherans Today (for children)
 - God's Plan for Luther and Me (also for children)
 - Outreach resources
 - "Simple way to Pray"
 - Christmas kit

We were encouraged from the floor to go and see the movie, "Return to Grace," as well as read John Braun's book: "Luther's Protest."

10:05 – Hymnal Project – Pastor Jon Bauer

- The first Lutheran hymnal was published in 1524. That became the reason for the initial 2024 target date for a new hymnal.
- Congregational testing is being done in the following areas: lectionary; technology; psalmody (both for inclusion in the hymnal, plus a stand-alone volume); hymnody and rites. (The main service proposed for the hymnal will be used next week at the WELS Worship Conference.)
- Forward in Christ will publish a hymnody series from July 2017 through March 2018. The hymn list will be on the website.
- Over 1000 public submissions have been received! June 30 is the deadline to offer submissions.
- The current goal is to have the new hymnal and its resources available for Advent 2021.

- Pastor Bauer elaborated on the system used for determining how and which hymns would be cut.
- The goal for this hymnal is to have a single set of lessons for each Sunday. The committee is working to find a balance between prophecy (CW lectionary) vs narrative (CWS lectionary) for the first lessons. Each lesson will strive to have content and length that is “preachable.”

10:15 – Campus Ministry – Pastor Jon Bilitz.

- Pastor Bilitz will be installed on June 18.
- Pastor Trapp will retire on June 25. A farewell will be held at Eastside at 12:30 pm. Register for the dinner at wlchapel.org
- There are many “part time” campus ministries across our district.
- If possible, please include a cell number with any students submitted to Campus Ministries. Texting seems to be the best way to reach them.

- 10:25 – Break

- 10:40 – Reports

Wartburg Project – Pastor John Brug

Prof. Brug encouraged us to regularly check Wartburgproject.com. There is a major study posted each month. He then summarized some of the experiences and people involved in the project.

District Scholarship Fund – Pastor Galen Riediger

Applications can once again be found at the district website, www.welswwd.weebly.com. The deadline to apply for the 2017-18 school year is October 15, 2018.

District Support – Pastor Jerry Ewings

The Support committee report can be found on pages 12-13 in the BoRaM.

The resolution for the offering to be taken at the October 29, 2017 WW District Reformation Service was presented. Pastor Ewings then moved for adoption. There was a second from the floor. The resolution passed.

WLCFS – Dan Nommensen Pastor Jim Mattek presented the report.

Counseling hours are increasing by 50% each year. If you know of a master’s level counselor in our WELS fellowship, please let WLCFS know.

The Member Assistance Program (MAP) is available to congregations to offer counseling to members in need.

Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries (WLIM) : Pastor Phil Henselin

Pastor Henselin highlighted the second page of his report. WILM is also beginning work with those suffering from PTSD.

Lutheran Military Support Group (LMSG): Prof. em Erik Opsahl

Prof. Opsahl concluded our conference with his Power Point report.

- 11:45 – Conference Closing Devotion – Pastor Brett Brauer, Trinity Lutheran, Watertown, WI