

District President's Report
Grow Conference, February 7, 2019

Devotional Thought:

When John the Baptist's disciples saw Jesus, Jesus asked them, "What is it you want?" They replied, "Teacher, where are you staying." (John 1:38) What a great answer! They were telling Jesus that they just wanted to be with him, to watch him, to learn from him to live with him. As a leader in the Lord's church don't forget how they answered. Jesus asks us what we want every day. Too often we talk about what we want to make our personal lives or our church lives better. Can you think of some examples? But Jesus first just wants us to want him. Spend the best moments of every day in a real devotional time with Jesus and you will receive his powerful grace, his perfect example and his peaceful promises. If you have been rushing to tell him your needs before filling your need for him, you have undoubtedly been drained by your circumstances. It happens every time. "Teacher, where are you staying?" That's your answer to Jesus day by day.

News In WELS

The Conference of Presidents held its winter meetings from Jan. 7-10, 2019. The topics that were discussed were summarized in President Schroeder's Together e-newsletter emailed on Jan. 15. Topics included:

- a. The COP expressed its support for an effort by Congregational Services to assemble a **"Rural Ministry Task Force"** that will provide ministry resources for rural and small-town congregations. The COP is also working with the Commission on Congregational Counseling to develop guidelines for congregations that are beginning the process **of closing or merging**.
- b. The COP is developing guidelines to assist congregations that are exploring alternative approaches to congregational structure and polity (**constitutions/bylaws**).
- c. The COP expressed support for the plans of Congregational Services to offer two efforts to replace Mission and Ministry Sunday in fall 2019.
 1. The 10 for 10 stewardship program, will offer a ten-week emphasis on whole life Christian stewardship. The work we do together as a synod will be highlighted as one part of the program.
 2. The **"Welcome Home"** initiative featuring a "Welcome Home Sunday" on Oct. 27, will help congregations to seek to regain those who have strayed from active congregational membership.
- d. The COP expressed support for a **WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership being planned by Congregational Services for Jan. 21-23, 2020, in Chicago, IL**. The conference will emphasize leadership that is rooted in the beliefs of confessional Lutheranism. It may be wise in our district to discuss whether or not this conference would replace our 2020 Grow Conference.
- e. The COP again discussed the importance of encouraging congregations in their efforts to focus on their Congregation Mission Offering (**CMO**) planned commitments and achieving them. The continuation of vital synodical ministries depends on increasing CMO support from our congregations. Thanks to all of you and the hard work of John Strackbein, Our MCG coordinator we had only one congregation abstain from reporting their subscription this year. Our total WELS subscription is \$20,881,292. That's \$230,586 (1.1 %) lower than actual gifts in 2018.
- f. The COP has begun an effort to **review the synod's bylaws dealing with discipline of called workers** and congregations, as well as the appeals process. The COP will complete its work in time for the revised process and bylaws to be reviewed by the 2020 district conventions.
- g. **The COP Doctrine Committee will schedule regular meetings with the Doctrine Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod** and with the faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.
- h. The COP expressed support for Congregational Services and plans to form an Institute of **Lutheran Apologetics** (defending the Christian faith and teachings).
- i. No change is currently being made to **the teacher calling window** (Nov. 1 – 1st Sun. in June), but the matter is being studied to move it earlier. The proposed idea on the table is shifting the calling window to October 1,

through April 30. This way schools can go to the MLC graduating class if they are left without a worker at the end of the calling season.

District Items:

1. On **April 29- May 1, 2019**, at camp Shiloh our pastors conference will feature a satellite course from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary entitled **"Archaeology and Geography of the Gospels."** It's time to sign up for this course on line. Please see Pastor Nathan Buege if you need more information.
2. If you will be **wanting a vicar, teacher or pastor assignment this year** the forms are due to me by May 1, 2019. Vicar in Mission settings Vicar requests are due February 14, 2019 to the District Mission Board.
3. **South Central District Missionaries Conference (TNT)** – October 14-15, 2019.
4. **We have a WELS Kingdom Worker in Tyler, Texas, named Sherry Deaton.** Keep her in your prayers and consider sponsoring her work with a monetary donation or monthly installments for her ministry.
5. Holy Word Member Amory Stephenson is launching **website development** for affordable price. Go to

Synod Dates:

MLC Assignment Day – May 18, 2019

WLS Vicar Assignment Day – May 21, 2019

WLS Pastor Assignment Day – May 23, 2019

WELS Women's Ministry Conference July 18-20, 2019 – "Living Stones, Positioned to Thrive" - Based on 1 Peter 2:4-5. Location is Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis.

Synod Convention – July 29-31, 2019

WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership -January 21-23, 2020

Calls into The South Central District

Pastor Ted Bojanac has accepted the call to serve Shepherd of the Hills, Fredericksburg, Texas.
The Africa Mission Field will be calling for a Theological Educational Coordinator soon.

Calls out of the District:

Pastor Dan Laitinen has a call to Apostles Lutheran Church in San Jose, California.

Pastor Caleb Schoeneck has a call to Our Shepherd Lutheran Church in Crown Point, Indiana.

Pastor Jonathon Semro has a call to Zion Lutheran Church in Rhinelander, WI,

Teacher Miss Kari Fuerstenberg - a call to teach special ed. at Divine Savior Lutheran Academy in Doral, Florida.

Vacancies:

Beautiful Savior, Bella Vista, Arkansas – currently served by Pastor Neil Hansen

Abiding Savior, Killeen, Texas – currently served by Pastor Keith Kuschel.

Shepherd of the Hills Fredericksburg, Texas – until June 2019, currently served by Pastor Gary Johnson.

Congregations Closing:

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Richland Hills, Texas

Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, Hillsboro, Texas

Joined ELS:

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, San Angelo, Texas

Synod-Wide Workers

Pastors: 115 vacancies for theologically-trained men, 103 of these are for parishes

From 2013 to 2018 the number doubled from 55 to 110+; 2019 remains approx. level to 2018
Approx. 26 seniors will be available for assignment in May 2019

Teachers: 153 active teacher calls; 43 principal vacancies, only 28 are actively calling

approx. 100-110 MLC grads that are category 1 for May 2019

45-50 MLC grads that are category 4 for May 2019

Teacher Vacancy Request Forms: – if a vacancy arises, **requests** for teacher call lists should be submitted online at <http://wels.net/callrequest> and I should be notified ahead of time that you are requesting a list and submitting that form. We would set up a call meeting date at that time. Thanks in advance for that good communication.

Pastor, Staff Minister and Teacher Self-Assessment Forms: – This is also a good opportunity to bring to mind that our Synod data-base for pastors and teachers serves as one key tool in developing call lists and providing accurate information for calling bodies at call meetings. If you haven't already done so, please update your contact info whenever there is a change (address, phone, birth, etc) and also update your self-evaluation forms annually with review by your Circuit Pastor, Principal or ECE Director. Go to: <http://cloud.wels.net/me>

Respectfully Submitted,

**Pastor Don Patterson
SCD President
WELS**