

TEACHING EVERYTHING GOD COMMANDS

At first it was just a spot by the lock on the car trunk. Gradually it spread until the metal was eaten through. Eventually the lock fell in and the trunk became useless. That's how rust works.

False teaching is something like that rust. It may begin with disregard for some portion of God's Word that doesn't please. It may spring from the human mind that is conceited enough to think it can judge what is and what isn't God's Word. Human reason, public opinion, and scientific theory, like rust, attack God's infallible Word. Rust doesn't stop to think about the metal it attacks. Nor do false teachers think of what they are doing to God's Word. But to attack any part of God's Word is ultimately to attack its central teaching—of how God paid for the sins of the world through the atoning work of his Son. To lose part of God's saving Word is to decrease the impact of all of it. Yet there are many false teachers out there.

What are we to think of those false teachers and the churches they lead? Are we saying there are no members of God's church in visible churches that teach falsely? Of course not. Where the gospel message is present in some form, the Spirit will be at work in the hearts of people. But we are saying that what the church teaches is important.

The apostle Paul not only said, "*I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified*" (1 Corinthians 2:2). He also stated, "*I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God*" (Acts 20:27). Paul knew what "rust" could do to God's Word. He understood that to preach Christ crucified was to proclaim everything God has entrusted to us in his Word. Jesus said it too. Shortly before his ascension, he told his disciples of all time, "*[Teach] them to obey everything I have commanded you*" (Matthew 28:20). Note, he didn't say "some things" or "the things you think are important" but "everything."

When I choose a church, I'm choosing a group of Christians with whom I will approach God's throne

in prayer, with whom I will sing his praises and extol his glory, and with whom I will receive my Savior's body and blood. Within that group, God's saving Word will be proclaimed to me and by me. I will choose a church to strengthen me in life, to comfort me in distress, and to prepare me for death and heaven. I want my membership in a church that teaches and stands for what I believe and stand for also.

In short, I'm saying that I want a church that treasures and preserves the truth.

Taken from the devotional series, *For Living Saints*, published by Northwestern Publishing House

TREASURER REQUEST

Hope Church fiscal year closes June 30, 2022. Please submit any invoices/receipts for reimbursement, that were incurred for Hope Church, by Sunday, June 26.

They may be placed in the Treasurer slot in the Narthex.

This will give us the most accurate record of expenses for this year. Thank you for serving.

VBS – A DAY WITH JESUS

VBS – A Day with Jesus is Friday, June 10th at 8am until 12pm. If you have volunteered to help, please be in the Fellowship Hall at 8am for the assignments and schedules.

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SUPPORT

Hi all,

Hopefully by the time you are reading this a couple of the more noticeable projects will be completed or nearing completion. The front doors to the church have been removed and are receiving a powder coating that should last for many years. Expect the doors to be replaced soon if it hasn't been done yet.

The stained glass window that had been bent has been repaired by Rainbow glass and replaced, and it looks great.

The next project that we have planned is taking down the large cross above the church narthex, and refinishing it and getting it repainted. Keep an eye out for an email going out asking for help getting it down soon.

Please keep in mind that more than ever we are requesting help with the lawn care. If you can help, please get ahold of me or Ted V.

God Bless
Tim

LWMS News

The results of the recent election are as follows:
Missions –World -Native American Special Projects:
Home – WELS Campus Ministry support

Always remember that these are the results of the vote at Hope. There are numerous other LWMS member ladies who will also be voting. The final results will be published in a later Star of Hope.

The funds collected at the Spring Rally totaled \$5261.00. When the amounts going to the mission projects are known they will be published.

MAY is a 5 Sunday month so on Sunday May 30th there will be a basket for your mission (mite box) offerings located by the side door in the front or **if the front doors are complete the basket will be in the entry.**

REMEMBER ALWAYS TO PRAY FOR MISSIONS
both home and world.

READING BETWEEN THE WINES

Reading Between the Wines is on summer hiatus, but will meet during July to select the upcoming season's books. Enjoy a safe, relaxing summer everyone!

TOGETHER



News from the WELS

May 2022
Website: www.wels.net

May 3, 2022

AID CONTINUES TO UKRAINE

We are in constant contact with the bishop (president) of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church (ULC). He reports that thus far no members of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church have lost their lives or been injured. Some of their homes have been damaged or destroyed. None of the ULC churches

have been destroyed in the conflict, although three parsonages have been damaged.

The bishop (whose congregation is in the capital city of Kyiv) has been staying outside of Kyiv for safety reasons. Last Sunday he was able to return to Kyiv temporarily to lead worship and to deliver much needed supplies of food and medicine. Yesterday he provided this report: "People were very happy to see each other again especially after recent missile attacks, although we did not have as many people at the worship service as on Easter. Shut-ins also rejoiced to be visited and communed and are grateful for the food aid received. Thank you very much! Many thanks to all brothers and sisters in WELS, to the U.S., and praise to the Lord!"

Generous WELS donors have provided significant funds to enable the ULC to purchase supplies of clothing, food, and medicine. Those supplies are provided to refugees from different places around the country and for the people of the communities in which ULC congregations are located. Our synod has forwarded funds to the ULC upon its request. It's important to note that these requests are coming to us in amounts that enable the ULC to purchase what is needed and what it can distribute. To date, \$66,000 has been requested and sent directly to the ULC. We are ready to send more as soon as the ULC requests it. Another \$100,000 has been sent to a reputable agency (Direct Relief) that is assisting Ukrainian refugees in Poland and other countries. We are also making plans to provide funds to our sister church in Bulgaria, which is caring for Ukrainian refugees arriving there. The synod is also ready to provide help to Ukrainian refugees who are able to come to the United States. Ukrainians who come to the U.S. as refugees need to work with the U.S. State Department, and we are looking for ways to assist in that process.

We are also looking forward to the day when the war is over and resettlement and rebuilding can begin. Because of the generosity of WELS members, we believe that some of the funds already given will be able to be used for those efforts.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

PASTORS ATTEND CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY RETREATS

Another successful year of Celebration of Ministry retreats is complete. From April 25–29, Grow in

Grace, the institute for continuing education at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., hosted more than 400 people for the ninth annual retreat. Four retreats were held at the Drury Plaza Hotel on the Riverwalk in San Antonio, Texas, for pastors who are celebrating 3, 10, 25, and 35 years since graduating from the seminary. After a two-year hiatus caused by the pandemic, it was a blessing to be able to again offer encouragement and support for pastors and their wives in this way.

These retreats build relationships with ministry peers and offer encouragement through worship, Bible studies, workshops, and presentations. Bible study topics covered Ezekiel, the pastoral epistles, Psalms, and Colossians. Separate and joint workshops were offered for pastors and their wives and covered topics such as time management, caring for others and yourself, focusing on your own gifts, and financial challenges and opportunities.

Though these workshops and Bible studies are a key part of the retreats, fellowship with classmates, worship services, and a beautiful location also play a part in the experience.

When Grow in Grace initially began the Celebration of Ministry retreats, only pastors celebrating 10 years since graduation and their wives attended. In more recent years, the event has included pastors celebrating three years; 25 years; and, in 2018, 35 years since graduation.

The 2023 retreat plans are already underway, with the retreats set to take place in San Antonio from April 12–14. To the graduating classes of 1988, 1998, 2013, and 2020, make sure to check your mailboxes this month for your save the date to your Celebration of Ministry retreat.

NEW LEADERSHIP AT NORTHWESTERN PUBLISHING HOUSE

On May 2, Mr. Jeremy Angle began serving as the president of Northwestern Publishing House (NPH). As president, Angle will focus on supporting the mission of NPH—delivering biblically sound, Christ-centered resources within WELS and beyond. Angle will oversee all the functional areas of this ministry such as product development, production, distribution, customer service, human resources, accounting, technology, and sales.

“NPH is without a doubt a mission,” says Angle, “but also a business. I see my job as combining the two and being a steward to NPH—the mission, the business, and all its team members.”

His predecessor, Mr. Bill Ziche, retired at the end of 2021 after eight years in that role. Ziche helped NPH pivot from operating out of a physical storefront to a digital one. At its February meeting, WELS’ Synodical Council noted that Ziche displayed “outstanding leadership in strategically repositioning NPH to support the gospel ministry for years to come.”

Angle is focused on continuing that support for gospel ministry. “I look forward to building on the traditions and legacy of NPH while adapting to best deliver the resources and teachings,” he explains. “Having worked in the secular business world my entire career, I find myself asking the questions, ‘What can NPH do and build on to support the leaders of today and tomorrow in both the church and secular world? How do we more closely link the two?’”

Helping Angle navigate which resources NPH should produce going forward is Rev. Chris Cordes, who began his work as NPH’s editorial vice president in February after Rev. Curtis Jahn retired after serving NPH for 29 years. Cordes and Angle will work closely on developing future projects.

“I am really looking forward to working with the team at NPH and its board of directors, learning and getting to know them and their growth desires,” says Angle, “as well as working with the synod, our congregations, and our schools on how we can best serve all and help grow. I am also excited about looking beyond and how we can best serve the world keeping to God’s true Word and teachings.”

REPORT TO THE TWELVE DISTRICTS AVAILABLE ONLINE

The 2022 *Report to the Twelve Districts* is now available online. *Report to the Twelve Districts* contains current information from WELS areas of ministry and committees that help guide district convention delegates. Each WELS congregation will receive one printed copy at the end of May. Copies will also be available at district conventions.

All of WELS’ 12 districts hold a convention in even-numbered years. (The synod convention takes place

in odd-numbered years.) Each male called worker, in addition to a lay delegate representing each congregation, attends his district’s convention as a voting delegate. District conventions are held to carry out the business of a district, such as electing district officials, as well as to hear updates on synodical ministries and to react to synodical initiatives. Delegates also enjoy worship and fellowship during their conventions.

“District conventions offer delegates the opportunity to learn, to ask questions, to debate issues, to offer advice and guidance to those called to serve them,” says WELS President Mark Schroeder. “In the end, delegates have the opportunity to see God at work, uniting WELS members in a stronger faith and in a greater commitment to carrying out his work together.”

May 17, 2022

ASSIGNMENT DAY AT MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE

Assignment Day at Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn., is one of the highlights of the year. Last Saturday, May 14, 2022, in a special service, candidates for the teaching ministry learned where they will be serving. All 74 teacher candidates who could go anywhere—57 from the graduating class and 17 previous graduates—were assigned. In addition, 51 teacher candidates who were limited geographically received assignments. Total assignments this year were fewer than in the two previous years; 116 requests to the Assignment Committee for teachers could not be filled.

There are still 140 teaching vacancies in the synod. District presidents will be working with calling bodies and with MLC to address this significant need.

It should be noted that 48 men graduated from the pre-seminary program at MLC, a significant increase over previous years. This will be a real blessing at a time when pastoral vacancies have also increased.

Jesus encouraged us to pray for workers in his harvest field. God’s people have prayed, and God has answered those prayers with young people saying, “Here am I; send me!”

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

REACHING COMMUNITIES WITH COMPASSION

Through its new Community Care & Compassion Matching Grants Program, WELS Christian Aid and Relief is offering matching grants to congregations that want to reach out in their community through a compassion ministry. Grants are available up to \$2,500.

Grants can support any compassion ministry in a community, such as a Christmas toy drive or a Thanksgiving meal at your church. It can also support those who need encouragement, like seniors, veterans, or victims of domestic violence. WELS Christian Aid and Relief Director Rev. Daniel Sims recommends that a good place to start is to determine the particular needs in your community. If there is a local charity working to serve those needs, find ways to assist them.

“When we act with compassion and love, it gains us opportunities to talk about our Savior,” says Sims. “I encourage congregations to find the people who are hurting in your community, formulate a plan to help them, and get in touch with us. Let us help you reach out to them in love.” To learn more and apply for a grant, visit wels.net/relief.

One example of a congregation taking advantage of this new grant program is Bethlehem, Richland Center, Wis. In 2020, this exploratory mission was looking for a ministry space to call home. God provided a perfect fit: a former elementary school that had just come on the market.

The building was more than just a former school. It was also home to a county-run program that provides hot meals each week to senior adults. “We didn’t just purchase a facility,” says Rev. Daniel Lewig, pastor at Bethlehem. “We got a ministry right along with it—and an open door to see where God leads.”

Supported by offerings and a pandemic relief grant from WELS Christian Aid and Relief, Bethlehem members upgraded the former classroom in which the meals are served to make it more welcoming and encourage conversation and connections.

The revitalized dining area also serves as Bethlehem’s fellowship hall, and seniors from the community are invited to all church activities. In addition, Lewig visits with guests each week and leads them in prayer. Bethlehem members help

serve the meals or simply spend time getting to know their neighbors.

Once the seniors are in the building, it’s a natural progression to introduce them to the worship space in the gym. Through God’s blessing, several of the seniors have attended worship, and some have taken Bible information classes and become members.

Bethlehem plans to apply for a new Community Care & Compassion Matching Grant through WELS Christian Aid and Relief to offer even more fellowship opportunities for local seniors, like dinners and movie nights.

“It’s not the food that brings them together,” Lewig says. “It’s the connection. Our members help with that connection and connect it to a higher purpose. We created an environment where you’re not just eating a meal for a day but a meal for eternity.”

MILITARY CONTACT PASTORS MEET FOR CONFERENCE

WELS Military Services assists WELS congregations serving military members when they are stationed nearby. Civilian ministry to the military is a cornerstone of WELS Military Services’ work by equipping churches for local gospel and fellowship ministry to military personnel and their families.

Across the nation, 125 WELS churches near military installations and their pastors (called military contact pastors) are appointed to reach out to the men and women who serve in the United States Armed Forces.

April 26-28, 2022, the WELS Military Services Committee held its annual Military Contact Pastors Workshop at Risen Savior, Pooler, Ga., near Army Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield. Members of the Military Services Committee and a group of WELS military contact pastors met to discuss ministry to the military with Fort Stewart chaplains and military personnel. WELS members Lt. Col. Michael Hefti and his wife, Katie, shared the stresses of military life and the importance of their WELS pastors and church family in supporting them spiritually.

Fort Stewart held a meeting attended by more than a dozen of the post’s military chaplains. The chaplains explained their work and the retreat

attendees spoke to them about the unique needs of WELS military personnel for religious accommodation. Fort Stewart representatives explained family resources available to military members. The official program ended with a demonstration of how a worship service in the field would be set up and a visit to a museum on the post.

The annual workshop is sponsored through a grant from the Lutheran Military Support Group, a national organization of WELS and Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) veterans. The Lutheran Military Support Group also sponsors free professional Christian counseling for military members served by WELS Military Services and WELS and ELS veterans.

Rev. Jim Behringer, director of WELS Special Ministries, said, "Of all the military contact pastors workshops, this year's meeting was superior. Fort Stewart's chaplains went the extra mile to create mutual understanding. They were impressed by WELS' desire to serve military personnel, and they made every effort to help us in that regard. Our attendees are always highly motivated by the speakers, but we had some outstanding presentations that I hope will improve our ability to serve military members with the gospel while helping them carry their burdens."

Rev. Paul Horn, chairman of the WELS Military Services Committee, notes that the key to serving more WELS members in the military is through referrals from their loved ones made at wels.net/refer. "When we know who our WELS military members are and where they are stationed, we can better serve them with Word and sacraments," says Horn. "When our congregations are aware that military families are in their church, the best thing they can do is to assimilate them into the mission and ministry of the congregation as quickly as possible. Military families move often. Making your church their church home will provide much needed encouragement and support." To learn more about WELS Military Services, visit wels.net/military.

INSTANT GRATIFICATION

By Pastor Clark Schultz

What's the longest you've had to wait for something? The year was 1980. My fifth-grade teacher had taken our whole class to see the movie *Empire Strikes Back*. The rolling credits, the big reveal of who Luke's father really was, Han Solo getting frozen, and then the ending credits. The movie ended with a cliff-hanger. I turned to my teacher and said, "So, when does the next movie come out?" He said, "Three years." My reaction: "Three years? Holy cow, that's a long time to wait! That's like forever!"

What's the longest you've had to wait for something at the DMV, at the checkout line, or even for a text response? If you're at a drive-through or a stop sign and don't move fast enough, you're often prodded with a honk or something worse.

We've become an instant gratification nation. We're accustomed to getting what we want—right now!

Do you sometimes apply that "right now" principle to God in prayer? "God, it's my prayer; give it to me right now!"

Patience, friends, the Lord's on a different timetable. And his timetable is perfect and for our good.

"Do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day" (2 Peter 3:8).

Timeofgrace.org