

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

READING BETWEEN THE WINES

Reading Between the Wines will meet in Fellowship Hall on **Monday, July 18th from 10:00 until noon** to discuss the upcoming season's book selections. This is an excellent time for new members to join us as we determine the 2022-2023 reading and discussion list. As always, all Hope members and their guests are welcome!

PASTOR'S MESSAGE.....	1
READING BETWEEN THE WINES.....	1
VBS-A DAY WITH JESUS RECAP	3
TOGETHER	3

VBS-A DAY WITH JESUS RECAP

VBS-A Day With Jesus was big success! We had 21 students, 5 of which were from Smart Start families.

Many members of Hope were led to help out with the one day program. It was a joy to see so many smiles and willing hands! We were able to use all the classrooms and the play yard. On such a warm day, having the A/C on for the indoor activities was a plus!

Our lesson for the day was "Jesus Calms the Storm". We were able to share that Jesus loves us so much that He saved us from our sins and that He takes care of us all the time.

We ended with a hot dog BBQ. We enjoyed lunch and fellowship with the VBS families in the Fellowship Hall. It was nice to visit with familiar families as well as make connections with new families.

Overall, the one day program was very well received and ran smoothly. Ideas for summer 2023 for a possible June program and a second one in July are being considered.

Finally, a huge thank you to everyone for all the help, planning, and prayers for our 2022 VBS-A Day With Jesus!

In His service,
Carol H



News from the WELS

June 2022
Website: www.wels.net

June 7, 2022

CELC HOLDS REGIONAL CONVENTION IN ALBANIA

The Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) is a worldwide fellowship of Lutheran church bodies committed to the teachings of the Lutheran church found in the Book of Concord of 1580. WELS and 12 other church bodies established the CELC in 1993. Since then the CELC has grown by God's grace to include 34 church bodies today.

Every three years, representatives from all CELC churches gather for fellowship and theological study at an international convention. In addition to the full meeting, various regional meetings are held in alternate years. One such regional meeting of our sister church bodies in Europe took place recently in Durres, Albania. Thirty-two representatives and guests met May 20-22 under the theme "Triumph together in Christ."

Professor Mark Paustian of Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., led participants in a study of Romans chapters 7-8 and Exodus chapters 3-4. Churches presented reports highlighting blessings and challenges from their fields and invited the conference to give thanks and pray for specific blessings. The conference concluded with a festival worship service and sermon based on Acts 1:1-8, "You will receive power!"

Participants found time for informal fellowship at the nearby beach, during a walking tour of downtown Durres, and on an excursion to Kruja, with its market, cafes, restored fortress, and historic museum.

Immediately after the conference, a dozen guests remained in Durres for a two-day workshop on 1 Thessalonians. Participants discussed the letter's original impact for believers enduring persecution and considered contemporary blessings as we serve souls and await Christ's return.

We give thanks to God for blessing the participants in this conference, and we pray that he will use it as a means to strengthen our fellowship and our commitment to the mission he has given us.

The next full CELC convention will be held during the summer of 2023 in Seoul, South Korea.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

FREE DIFFERENT WAYS TO MAKE PLANNED GIFTS BOOKLET

Do you want tips for offering a gift that benefits WELS ministry important to you? The Different Ways to Make Planned Gifts booklet from WELS Foundation and Ministry of Christian Giving can help guide you. This concise yet comprehensive booklet contains information, illustrations, scenarios, and links to videos about different types of tax-smart current and deferred gifts.

In addition, your local WELS Christian giving counselor can walk you through the booklet and the process of supporting the Lord's work

June 21, 2022

TWO NEW DISTRICT PRESIDENTS ELECTED

All 12 districts held their conventions during the last two weeks. The conventions reviewed the reports submitted by all areas of ministry and provided reaction and input to those reports and to future plans that have been made.

Districts also held elections for district officers and for other board and committee positions. Two of those elections resulted in new district presidents.

Rev. Don Tollefson, president of the North Atlantic District, retired as of the end of June. Rev. Michael Seifert, serving at Living Hope, Midlothian, Va., was elected as the new district president. Rev. David Kolander, president of the Southeastern Wisconsin District, chose not to run again. Rev. Daniel Leyrer, serving at St. Marcus, Milwaukee, Wis., was elected as the new district president. Because of the size of the district in terms of congregations and called workers, Kolander has accepted a call to serve as the assistant to the new district president in addition to his current call as pastor at Christ the Lord, Brookfield, Wis.

Both new district presidents will serve on the Conference of Presidents.

We thank God for the faithful service of Revs. Tollefson and Kolander and pray for God's continued blessings as they serve him in the future.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

Coverage of the district conventions will be included in the August issue of *Forward in Christ* magazine.

WELS' 2021 STATISTICS ARE NOW AVAILABLE

The complete 2021 Statistical Report as well as the 2021 Statistical Summary are now available at welscongregationalervices.net/stats.

"Statistics are one of the tools believers use as they seek to steward God's blessings wisely," says Rev. Jonathan Hein, coordinator of WELS Congregational Services. Hein explains that each year, WELS congregations track certain statistics—membership totals, attendance figures, ministrations, offerings, types of gains and losses, etc. That information can help churches with their ministry planning. WELS compiles all that congregational information in its annual statistical report, which aids WELS' leaders as they plan the synod's collective ministry. The complete statistical report is hundreds of pages of information. WELS Congregational Services annually produces a briefer statistical summary report. This year's summary is 19 pages long and contains information such as:

The reported total WELS membership at the end of 2021 was 340,511.

From 2020 to 2021, total WELS membership decreased by 1.1 percent (down 3,733 souls). That is the smallest loss WELS has experienced in the past six years.

Currently 20 percent of WELS members fall into the category of "youths"—those newborn through 8th grade.

Congregation Mission Offerings for 2021 increased by 4 percent from the previous year.

"The statistical summary gives us reasons to praise the Lord of the church," says Hein. "It also identifies challenges that deserve prayer and planning."

Hein concludes, “The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians, ‘You do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed’ (1:7). God has richly blessed our congregations and our synod with every type of resource we need to proclaim his gospel. May the Spirit give us the faith and the wisdom to steward those resources well.”

For more details, visit welscongregationalservices.net/stats.

YOU SHOULD ALSO KNOW

What’s a charitable gift annuity? Is it the right way for you to provide a supplemental retirement income to yourself for life *and* support a ministry close to your heart after you are in heaven?

When retired teacher Arnie Nommensen began serving as a WELS Christian giving counselor, he met a WELS member who made quite an impression on him. This believer had set up multiple charitable gift annuities to support gospel work, so Arnie saw firsthand the benefits to ministry.

Arnie realized that setting up charitable gift annuities to support ministry was also right for him and his wife, Carol. They knew that long after they are in heaven, their charitable gift annuities will continue to support the ministries they love, like WELS Christian Aid and Relief.