



## SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN DISTRICT 54<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention + June 11-12, 2024

### District President's Report

To: The 54<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention of the Southeastern Wisconsin District of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Assembled at Wisconsin Lutheran College, June 11 and 12, 2024

#### Partners in the Gospel

When one comes to the final chapters of Paul's Epistles, there is ample evidence that Christ's apostle never thought of himself as a "lone ranger" in gospel ministry. Often in those closing verses we find the names of First Century Christians whom Paul wanted to thank and commend for standing behind him, beside him, and even in front of him to push the cause of Christ's gospel in the ancient world. There's "Aquila and Priscilla and the church that meets at their house" (1 Corinthians 16:19). There's "Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ" (Romans 16:9). There's "Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:21). There's "Nympha and the church in her house" (Colossians 4:15). There's "Onesiphorus, who often refreshed [Paul] and was not ashamed of [his] chains" (2 Timothy 1:16; 4:19). The list of Paul's coworkers could go on and on - literally; check Romans 16! None of the people he mentions was an apostle like him, called by Jesus the way he was called by Jesus. But each one was a trusted partner in the joint work of sharing the gospel to a world that so desperately needed it.

Laymen and women. Staff ministers. Teachers. Pastors. The Scriptures are clear. We're all in this together. It is our inestimable privilege to be Partners in the Gospel. My prayer for this convention, through worship and keynote and ministry reports and fellowship and friendship, is for each one of us to be revitalized in our partnership as God's people. We are a disciple-making team, and each one of us has our part in Christ's Great Commission. The way God has gifted us uniquely and empowered each one of us to disciple through our varied vocations is something for which the Apostle Paul was so very thankful, as we heard in the sermon this morning. May we, too, express our thankfulness to God and leave this place renewed in the blessed status Jesus has given to each one of us: partners in the gospel.

My thanks to you, dear brothers, for allowing me the privilege of serving as your district president these last two years. The opportunities to serve and be served with gospel encouragement through a myriad of ministry situations has indeed been a gift. I'm also thankful for the best praesidium a district president could have, Vice Presidents Aaron Steinbrenner and John Bortulin. Their shepherd hearts and administrative gifts have been a blessing to the district and certainly to me personally. District Secretary Billy Carter is always working on big jobs behind the scenes so I can concentrate on tending to the more pastoral matters of being district president.

Two other ministry groups come to heart and mind as I contemplate the partnership we have in the gospel as our church body's largest district. First, there is the brotherhood of 20 circuit pastors who truly serve as the praesidium's right arm in support of all our called workers. This past year we finished up a system of visits with each circuit pastor individually, and with each visit I was struck

by how lovingly and energetically these men serve. To say that I could not carry out my duties without them is not an overstatement. Please know how important their work is and treat your circuit pastor election at this convention accordingly.

The second group for which I would like to publicly thank God is the Commission on Lutheran Schools team, with Jim Rademan, Paul Patterson, Cindi Holman, and Eileen Rosenow taking the lead in ably and faithfully serving our district's approximately 125 Early Childhood Ministries and Lutheran Elementary Schools, our five high schools, and our college. These men and women work tirelessly for the cause of Christian education as a way to partner in the gospel. The man who most interacts with the CLS team is pastor Dave Kolander, who has served me so incredibly well as an assistant for two years. Dave will officially lay that mantle down on July 31, to be replaced by incoming Educational Assistant to the District, Mr. Phil Leyrer.

"Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:38). We did ask. He did send. Of the 38 teacher and staff minister requests from our district, 20 were able to be filled at MLC's Assignment Day. Of the 12 pastor requests, three were able to be filled at the Seminary's Assignment Day. Praise the Lord of the Harvest! Newly assigned male teachers who have become members of our district through their assignment are:

Nathaniel Brown	Garden Homes, Milwaukee, WI
Nicholas Schroeder	St. Lucas, Milwaukee, WI
Christopher Robbert	Christ-St. Peter, Milwaukee, WI

The three pastors assigned to our district are:

Jacob Schmidt	Faith, Radcliff, KY
Hugo Ugalde-Bemer	Zion/St. Peter, Theresa, WI
Zackary Zuberbier	Faith, Antioch, IL

Included in the Mequon assignments were two vicars:

Austin Claflin	Peace, Hartford, WI
John Wendland	David's Star, Jackson, WI

You may find all the assignments on the MLC and WLS websites. May the Lord Jesus hold closely and guide powerfully those he has called into the public ministry of the gospel. At the same time, we renew our request to the Lord of the Harvest for more workers. We look forward to hearing and reacting to a report from the Ministry Recruitment Task Force at this convention to consider how we may be the answer to our own prayer.

Pastor and teacher vacancies in our district (and, to an extent, across our synod) have become a bit of a story, but as is the case with all ministry challenges, the Lord blesses us even through the challenges. On the teacher side of things, more and more WELS Christians who are teachers but not WELS Teachers are presenting their gifts to the church in the form of seeking provisional call status and diving into WELS Ministry Certification courses. On the pastor side, congregations are considering merging for the sake of a stronger ministry presence in their area. Individuals and congregations are responding to pastor and teacher vacancies with a spirit of partnership in the gospel,

including a new mission start in Cedar Lake, Indiana. Of course, we do not pray for more vacancies. But we do pray for the wisdom and courage to see the blessing in what the Lord is allowing us to experience. We pray for the boldness to keep moving forward with the gospel amidst vacancy challenges.

Let me encourage you to talk gospel ministry with a brother at this convention as you reflect on the gospel ministry we do as a church. And as you do, thank God for the privilege of being a partner in the gospel, surely the noblest vocation a person can have.

Your brother in Christ,  
Rev. Daniel P. Leyrer

---

## Membership Changes

The following have accepted calls into the district during the biennium:

### Pastors:

Timothy Westendorf (Mount Calvary, Waukesha) from Nebraska District  
Peter Walther (St. John (Forest Home), Milwaukee) from North Atlantic District  
Nathan Wordell (Wisconsin Lutheran College) from Northern Wisconsin District  
Frederick Schleg (Palos, Palos Heights) from Pacific Northwest District  
Mark Westra (Bethlehem, Menomonee Falls) from North Atlantic District  
Joel Schwartz (St. John, Wauwatosa) from South Atlantic District  
Joshua Hanson (Peace, Hartford) from Arizona/California District  
John Koester (Trinity, Waukesha) from Nebraska District  
Aaron Winkelmann (Pilgrim, Menomonee Falls) from Western Wisconsin District  
Harland Goetzinger (Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary) from North Atlantic District  
Matthew Scharf (Grace, Milwaukee) from Nebraska District  
Jonathan Fischer (Our Savior, Grafton) from North Atlantic District  
Peter Schlicht (Good Shepherd, West Bend) from Western Wisconsin District  
Kenneth Rodrigue (St. John, Burlington) from Northern Wisconsin District  
Patrick Brown (Christ Alone, Mequon/Thiensville) from Northern Wisconsin District  
Jeremiah Gumm (St. Lucas, Milwaukee) from South Atlantic District  
Christopher Johnson (Mt. Lebanon, Milwaukee) from Arizona-California District  
Brian Hennig (Northwestern Publishing House) from Minnesota District  
Nathan Berg (Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson) from Western Wisconsin District  
Michael Vogel (Trinity, Caledonia) from Nebraska District

### Teachers:

Zachary Seeger (Illinois Lutheran Schools, Crete) from South Atlantic District  
Joshua Gregovich (Mt. Lebanon, Milwaukee) from Minnesota District  
Steven Thies (David's Star, Jackson) from Western Wisconsin District  
Jonathan Witte (Illinois Lutheran Schools, Crete) from Western Wisconsin District  
Benjamin Melott (St. John, Wauwatosa) from South Central District  
Grey Davis (Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee) from Minnesota District  
Jared Witkowiak (St. Paul, Muskego) from Minnesota District  
Nathan Scharf (Star of Bethlehem, New Berlin) from Nebraska District  
Nicolas Raith (St. John, Milwaukee) from Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
Jason Zweifel (Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee) from South Atlantic District

David Retzlaff (St. John, Libertyville) from Minnesota District  
Terrance Greening (Bethany, Hustisford) from Arizona-California District  
Charles Galecki (St. John (Forest Home), Milwaukee) from Michigan District  
Neil Schlieve (Zion, South Milwaukee) from Michigan District  
David Knittel (First, Elkhorn) from Northern Wisconsin District  
Joel Burmeister (Trinity, Caledonia) from Arizona-California District  
Matthew Redfield (St. John, Milwaukee) from North Atlantic District  
Landon Zacharyasz (Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee) from Northern Wisconsin District  
Scott Georgson (St. Paul, Muskego) from Dakota-Montana District  
Matthew Meitner (St. John, Lannon) from Western Wisconsin District  
Craig Breitzkreuz (David's Star, Jackson) from Western Wisconsin District  
Christopher Luebke (Kingdom Prep LHS) from Northern Wisconsin District  
Nathan King (Wisconsin LHS) from Northern Wisconsin District

The following world missionary transferred his membership into the district during the biennium:

Jason Schulte

The following candidates were assigned by the Synod Assignment Committee to calls in the district in 2022 and 2023 and were received into membership as a result of those assignments.

Pastors

Zachary Kluball to Victory, Lexington  
Nathan Klusmeyer to Water of Life, Racine  
Christian Willick to Resurrection, Aurora

Teachers:

Aidan Gregorius to St. Marcus, Milwaukee (one-year assignment)  
Branden Mueller to Wisconsin Lutheran School, Racine (assignment made permanent)  
Alexander Stoeberl to Atonement, Milwaukee (assignment made permanent)  
Noah Arnold to Illinois Lutheran Schools, Crete  
Hoonsik Jo to Jerusalem, Morton Grove  
Ryan Kluba to Good Shepherd, West Bend  
Conor Kopp to Illinois Lutheran Schools, Crete  
Nicholas Mitchell to Shoreland LHS, Kenosha  
Caleb Paul to Illinois Lutheran Schools, Crete  
Tony Sahatjian to Zion, South Milwaukee  
Ziwen Shi to Illinois Lutheran Schools (assignment made permanent)  
Evan Willick to Mouth Calvary, Waukesha  
Keegan Young to Christ-St. Peter, Milwaukee  
Bryce Marohn to Kenosha Lutheran Academy, Kenosha  
Caleb Lash to Shoreland LHS, Kenosha

The following candidates were assigned by the Synod Assignment Committee to calls in the district in 2024 and became members of the district as a result of those assignments:

Pastors

Jacob Schmidt to Faith, Radcliff  
Hugo Ugalde-Bemer to St. Peter/Zion, Theresa  
Zackary Zuberbier to Faith, Antioch

Teachers:

Nathaniel Brown to Garden Homes, Milwaukee  
Hoonsik Jo to Jerusalem, Morton Grove (reassigned for second year)  
Christopher Robbert to Christ-St. Peter, Milwaukee  
Nicholas Schroeder to St. Lucas, Milwaukee  
Keegan Young to Christ-St. Peter, Milwaukee (assignment made permanent)

The following called worker transferred membership to a congregation in the district:

Pastor Kurt Lueneburg from the Western Wisconsin District

The following accepted calls within the district during the biennium:

Pastors:

William Carter (St. Paul, Brownsville) to St. Peter, Mayville (additional charge)  
David Kolander (Christ the Lord, Brookfield) to assistant to the district president  
Nixon Vivar (One Latin America Team) (call made permanent)  
Joel Gaertner (The Lutheran Home Association) to WELS Special Ministries  
Noah Headrick (St. John, Burlington) to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon  
Mark Wagner (retired) to 316NOW (executive director)  
Jonathan Learman (St. Peter/Zion, Theresa) to Morning Star, Jackson  
Bradley Taylor (Christ, Pewaukee) to Zion, South Milwaukee

Teachers:

Keith Kopczynski (Faith, Antioch) to St. John, Libertyville  
Taylor Chadek (Atonement, Milwaukee) to permanent call  
*Cody Harms\** (Atonement, Milwaukee) to Dean of Students  
*Shaun Stannard\** (Atonement, Milwaukee) to Eighth Grade classroom  
Todd Gorsline (Atonement, Milwaukee) to Dean of Students  
Christopher Bartsch (Atonement, Milwaukee) to Principal  
*Cody Harms\** (Atonement, Milwaukee) to Dean of Students (provisional)  
Scott Beyersdorf (David's Star, Jackson) to Assistant Principal  
Philip Leyrer (Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee) to SEW District Superintendent of Schools  
Michael Henning (Good Shepherd's, West Allis) to Christ Alone, Thiensville  
Devan Boling (Morning Star, Jackson) to Vice Principal  
Peter Langebartels (St. Marcus, Milwaukee) to Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee  
Daniel R. Johnson (Mt. Lebanon, Milwaukee) to Living Hope, West Allis  
Tyler Schoen (Garden Homes, Milwaukee) to Morning Star, Jackson  
Timothy Babinec (St. Philip, Milwaukee) to St. Jacobi, Greenfield  
Joshua Bauer (Garden Homes, Milwaukee) to Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee  
Aaron Kjensted (Resurrection, Aurora) to Principal  
Jeff Wetzel (St. Paul, Muskego) to Christ, Big Bend  
Paul Marquardt (Garden Homes, Milwaukee) to Wisconsin Lutheran School, Racine  
Paul Berger (Christ Alone, Thiensville) to Salem, Milwaukee  
Phil Krueger (Centennial, Milwaukee) to Staff Minister  
Jason Dutcher (Zion, Hartland - grades 2-4)  
Christopher Bartsch (Atonement, Milwaukee) to Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee  
Nicholas Raith (St. John, Milwaukee) permanent call  
*Christopher Joch\** (Trinity, Waukesha) to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee  
Jonah Gauger (Shoreland LHS) to school counselor (additional charge)

Mark Blauert (Wisconsin Lutheran School, Racine) to administrator  
Matthew Moeller (Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson) to Illinois Lutheran Schools, Crete  
Nathan Schultz (Our Savior, Grafton) to David's Star, Jackson  
Michael Sievert (Atonement, Milwaukee) to Risen Savior, Milwaukee  
Casey Pufahl (Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee) to St. Jacobi, Greenfield  
Benjamin Washburn (Peace, Hartford) to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee  
Sherman Carstensen (Peace, Hartford) to Principal

The following inactive called workers accepted calls to district congregations/schools during the biennium:

Pastor Michael Bartsch (crm) to Divinity-Divine Charity, Whitefish Bay

Teachers:

Daniel Unke to Garden Homes, Milwaukee  
Henry Tomhave to Garden Homes, Milwaukee  
Richard Baumgart to Wisconsin Lutheran School, Racine  
Kyle Jackson-Robinson to Shoreland LHS, Kenosha

Staff Ministers:

Joshua Kramer to Faith, Antioch  
Patrick Ruehrdanz to WELS Ministry of Christian Giving

The following uncertified teachers or staff ministers accepted provisional calls to district congregations or schools during the biennium:

*Josh Tietz\** to Atonement, Milwaukee  
*Marcus Grasenick\** to Kingdom Prep LHS, Milwaukee  
*Dayton Lueck\** to St. Marcus, Milwaukee  
*Jonathan Medico\** to Risen Savior, Milwaukee  
*Christian Ristow\** to Zion, Hartland  
*Aaron Zingsheim\** to Peace, Hartford  
*Jonah Gauger\** to Shoreland LHS, Kenosha  
*Timothy Probst\** to Christ-St. Peter, Milwaukee  
*Milton Cockroft\** to Atonement, Milwaukee, Chief Executive Officer  
*Konstantine Kindreich\** to Risen Savior, Milwaukee  
*Samuel Wallace\** to Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee  
*Jeremiah Hoffman\** to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee  
*Evan Witz\** to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee  
*Christopher Joch\** to Trinity, Waukesha  
*Ezekiel Kroll\** to Garden Homes, Milwaukee  
*Ben Kopczynski\** to St. John (Forest Home), Milwaukee  
*Elisha Doerr\** to Garden Homes, Milwaukee  
*William Delwiche\** to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee  
*Doug Reinhardt\** to Garden Homes, Milwaukee  
*Lukas Ryan\** to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee  
*Ethan Allen\** to Shoreland LHS, Kenosha  
*Eric Sego\** to Shoreland LHS, Kenosha  
*Matthew Peters\** to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee  
*Jeff Potratz\** to Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee  
*SM Terry Helton\** to WELS Ministry of Christian Giving

The following pastor was granted *candidatum reverendi ministerii* (crm) status during the biennium:

Lloyd Harter

The following workers have completed requirements for ministry certification or are in the process of completing those requirements and thus were declared provisionally certified during the biennium:

Teachers:

Branden Mueller (7/1/2022)

Philip Randall (7/1/2022)

Jason Van Acker (7/1/2022)

Aaron Zingsheim (10/14/2022)

William Turner (1/16/2023)

Tyler Schoen (7/1/2023)

Devin Boling (7/11/2023)

Bret Hopf (7/19/2023)

Peter Schwichtenberg (7/25/2023)

Shaun Stannard (9/20/2023)

James Flegel (11/15/2023)

Lukas Ryan (1/1/2024)

Ezekiel Kroll (1/11/2024)

William Delwiche (2/6/2024)

Marcus Grasenick (2/16/2024)

Cody Harms (5/16/2024)

Ethan Degner (5/18/2024)

Staff Ministers:

Terry Helton (8/1/2023)

Milton Cockroft (12/21/2023)

The following accepted part-time retirement calls in the district during the biennium:

Pastors:

James Langebartels (St. Jacobi, Greenfield) from Western Wisconsin District

Paul Janke (Good Shepherd, West Bend) from Dakota-Montana District

Thomas Kneser (Living Hope, West Allis)

Teacher John Freese (Zion, Hartland)

The following accepted calls out of the district during the past biennium:

Pastors:

Mark Kock (retired) to Pacific Northwest District

W. Joseph Gawel (Victory, Lexington, Kentucky) to Northern Wisconsin District

Peter Martin (Faith, Radcliffe, Kentucky) to Northern Wisconsin District

John C. Hartmann (Zambia) to Arizona/California District

Richard Warnecke (Christ, Pewaukee) to Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Lon Kuether (Zion, Crete) to Michigan District

Luis Acosta (Risen Savior, Milwaukee) to South Atlantic District

Benjamin Wessel (Woodlawn, West Allis) to Michigan District

Michael Borgwardt (Crossroads, Chicago) to Pacific Northwest District  
Brian Schmidt (Trinity, Caledonia) to Minnesota District  
Paul Horn (Lamb of God, West Lafayette) to Arizona-California District  
Jason Hacker (Grace, Waukesha) to Northern Wisconsin District  
Paul Krueger (Mt. Lebanon, Milwaukee) to Pacific Northwest District  
Benjamin Reichel (Kettle Moraine LHS, Jackson) to Northern Wisconsin District  
Michael Bartsch (retired) to Western Wisconsin District  
Peter Leyrer (Risen Savior, Milwaukee) to Minnesota District  
Jeffery Drake (Trinity, Hartford) to Northern Wisconsin District

Teachers:

Craig Breitkreuz (Faith, Antioch) to Western Wisconsin District  
Josiah Willitz (Illinois Lutheran Schools, Crete) to Michigan District  
Duane Vance (Illinois Lutheran Schools, Crete) to Minnesota District  
Justin Gut (Trinity, Waukesha) to Western Wisconsin District  
Theodore Glodowski (First, Elkhorn) to Arizona/California District  
Craig Weide (Christ, Big Bend) to South Atlantic District  
David Ring (Wisconsin Lutheran School, Racine) to Northern Wisconsin District  
Andrew Schmiede (Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee) to Michigan District  
Daniel Unke (Garden Homes, Milwaukee) to Western Wisconsin District  
Mark Heckendorf (Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac) to Nebraska District  
David Zank (Kenosha Lutheran Academy, Kenosha) to South Atlantic District  
Philip Warnecke (Risen Savior, Milwaukee) to Northern Wisconsin District  
William Tomlin (St. John, Lannon) to Western Wisconsin District  
Michael Pingel (Trinity, Waukesha) to North Atlantic District  
*Ben Kopczynski* (St. John (Forest Home), Milwaukee) to Northern Wisconsin District  
*Konstantine Kindreich\** (Risen Savior, Milwaukee) to Arizona/California District

The following called worker transferred to a congregation in another district during the biennium

Pastor Paul Prange (WELS Ministerial Education) to Western Wisconsin District

The following called worker was granted a leave of absence during the biennium:

Staff Minister Leonard Epple (St. Matthew, Niles)

The calls of the following workers expired or their positions were eliminated during the biennium:

Pastor Jeffrey Samelson (Christian Life Resources)

Teachers:

Craig Breitkreuz (Faith, Antioch)  
Keith Kopczynski (Faith, Antioch)

The following called workers resigned during the biennium:

Pastors:

Andrew Glende (Lighthouse Youth Center)  
Aaron Weber (Zion, South Milwaukee)

Teachers:

Benjamin Edmundson (St Philip, Milwaukee)  
Ryan Latterman (Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee)



Josh Lepke (St. Paul, Muskego)  
Joseph Keller (Illinois Lutheran Schools, Crete)  
James Speerschneider (Trinity, West Bend)  
Paul Kramer (Risen Savior, Milwaukee)  
Christian Kuether (St. Marcus, Milwaukee)  
*Michael Schlieve\** (Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee)  
Aaron Trimmer (Our Savior, Grafton)  
Tony Sahatjian (Zion, South Milwaukee)  
Staff Minister Andrew Carter (Grace, Milwaukee)

The following members of the district have announced or entered retirement.

Pastors:

Mark Wenzel (10/10/2022)  
Michael Turriff (11/13/2022)  
Bruce Marggraf (6/30/2023)  
James Behringer (6/30/2023)  
Thomas Kneser (12/31/2022)  
James Fischer (8/31/2023)  
Joel Leyrer (6/30/2023)  
Paul Wendland (6/30/2023)  
John Hartwig (8/31/2023)  
Paul Lehniger (6/30/2023)  
Philip Schupmann (6/25/2023)  
John Hartwig (8/31/2023)  
David Carlovsky (7/31/2024)  
Donald Scheuerlein (8/31/2024)  
Raymond Schumacher (6/30/2024)  
Gary Koschnitzke (6/15/2024)  
Bryan Gerlach (8/31/2024)

Teachers:

Mark Ricke (6/30/2023)  
John Freese (6/30/2023)  
Mark Leverence (6/30/2023)  
Paul Berger (6/30/2023)  
Gerald Hosbach (6/30/2023)  
William Plamann (6/30/2023)  
Joseph Brinkman (6/30/2023)  
Keith Kopczynski (6/30/2023)  
Jay Sierzyn (6/30/2023)  
Scott Sievert (6/30/2023)  
Timothy Gustafson (6/30/2024)  
Joe Archer (6/30/2024)  
Michael Falk (6/30/2024)  
Paul Snamiska (4/30/2024)  
John Kolander (6/30/2025)

The following members of the district entered the Church Triumphant during the biennium.

Pastors:

James Humann (7/16/2022)  
Dean Fleming (7/26/2022)  
Aaron Strong (10/12/2022)  
David Kuske (10/29/2022)  
Richard Lauersdorf (1/23/2023)  
John Gawrisch (2/18/2023)  
Gerald Meyer (11/3/2023)  
Herbert Lichtenberg (3/2/2024)  
Hermann John (3/25/2024)

Teachers:

Harold Goede (7/19/2022)  
Theodor Nommensen (2/15/2023)  
Gerald Lanphear (5/21/2023)  
Steven Enter (9/23/2023)

Closures and Mergers:

The following congregations closed during the biennium:

St. Mark, Brown Deer  
Gethsemane, Milwaukee

The following congregations merged during the biennium:

Good Shepherd's, Jordan, and Woodlawn in West Allis merged to form Living Hope, West Allis

The following school closed during the biennium:

Faith, Antioch

The following schools merged during the biennium:

Word of Life, Milwaukee became a third campus of Christ-St. Peter, Milwaukee

---

The praesidium made the following appointments to district positions during the biennium:

Pastor Nathanael Brenner to the District Nominating Committee  
Teacher David Porth to District Worship Coordinator  
Pastor Aaron Voss to District Discipleship Coordinator  
Layman Todd Biesterfeld to the District Nominating Committee  
Layman John Stark to the District Constitution Committee  
Pastor Frederick Schleg to Circuit Pastor, Southern Circuit, Chicago Conference  
Pastor Adam Gawel to Circuit Pastor, Central Circuit, Chicago Conference  
Pastor Kirk Lahmann to Chairman, District Constitution Committee  
Pastor Peter Prange to District Constitution Committee



## SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN DISTRICT 54<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention + June 11-12, 2024

### **Minutes of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Biennial Convention June 14-15, 2022**

#### Tuesday, June 14

The 53<sup>rd</sup> Biennial Convention of the Southeastern Wisconsin District opened with a communion worship service held in the gymnasium of Wisconsin Lutheran College. District President David Kolander served as presiding minister. Pastor Keith Free of St. John, Mukwonago, formerly the administrator of WELS Home Missions preached a sermon based on Mark 1:29-39 under the theme, "Share the Gospel." The other district officers served as lectors. Teacher David Porth served as keyboardist. A festival choir and brass ensemble also accompanied the service.

After a break, President Kolander called the convention to order in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

President Kolander then introduced Vice-President Richard Mannisto of Wisconsin Lutheran College, who welcomed the delegates to the campus and showed a video about the college and its work.

President Kolander asked Vice President Daniel Leyrer to take the chair while he presented the President's Report. President Kolander noted the decisions he and Vice President Michael Woldt had made not to accept nomination to another term and explained a plan for him to serve as an interim assistant to the new district president until someone accepts the call to serve as the new district superintendent of schools. He spoke about the challenges we are experiencing as the number of vacancies and encouraged us to continue encouraging young men and women to consider studying to be pastors and teachers. He also highlighted several items included in the Report to the Districts, including the continued discussion on the roles of men and women and the recent changes in the pension plan, and especially the planned effort to establish 100 missions in the next 10 years.

After his report, Vice-President Leyrer invited Secretary Billy Carter to the podium to present a gift to President Kolander for his faithful service to the district. He told President Kolander and the delegates that we had "drawn the long straw" when God gave us President Kolander and presented him with the gift of a very long plastic straw and a monetary gift.

Staff Minister Thomas Banaszak, chairman of Floor Committee #1 - Elections, explained the elections process and highlighted the duties of district president listed in the district by-laws. Secretary Carter also reminded the delegates of the bylaws definition of who was eligible to vote. Chairman Banaszak conducted the nominating ballot for the office of district president. After the ballots were cast and collected, President Kolander declared the nominations closed.

Secretary Billy Carter presented a resolution from the district officers to authorize several changes in conference and circuit membership and moved adoption of that resolution. It was supported and adopted. He also reported that various groups had asked about other gifts for President Kolander and that the officers had placed a gift basket on the stage for anyone who wanted to do so.

President Kolander spoke to the delegates about the elections for circuit pastors that would take place during the lunch break. Secretary Carter also made several announcements and described the

schedule and procedure for lunch and the circuit pastor elections. President Kolander led the delegates in a prayer that thanked the Lord for the truth of God's Word and for the meal.

After the lunch break, President Kolander introduced Pastor Jim Huebner, first vice-president of the synod, who brought us greetings from the other members of the synod praesidium, President Mark Schroeder and second vice-president Joel Voss. He spoke about the challenges we face in our world, but encouraged us with the comforting words of Psalm 46, "Be still and know that I am God..." He thanked us all for the work we do in the kingdom in our various roles.

Elections Chairman Banaczak reported that the top four candidates nominated for district president were Pastors Jon Bortulin, Jason Hacker, Daniel Leyrer, and Aaron Steinbrenner. After the ballots for the election were distributed, cast, and collected, President Kolander declared the election closed.

President Kolander introduced President Richard Gurgel of Martin Luther College, who presented his keynote address based on the theme of our convention, "Encourage One Another." He focused on the fear and distrust that threaten to destroy our faith and our unity and on some practical encouragements which can help us encourage one another instead.

During a break in the essay, Elections Chairman Banaczak reported that Pastor Daniel Leyrer had been elected to serve as our district president. Pastor Leyrer announced that he was accepting the call to serve us in this way. He asked the district for their prayers for wisdom and guidance for him and patience with him as he learns this role. President Kolander thanked President-elect Leyrer for his willingness to serve and pledged the support of the praesidium and the district as he begins to serve us.

Elections Chairman Banaczak then summarized the by-laws description of the work of the district vice presidents and conducted the nominating ballot for the office of first vice president. After the ballots for the election were distributed, cast, and collected, nominations were closed.

During another break in the essay, Elections Chairman Banaczak reported that the top three candidates nominated for district first vice-president were Pastors Jon Bortulin, Jason Hacker, and Aaron Steinbrenner. After the ballots for the election were distributed, cast, and collected, the election was declared closed.

President Gurgel then read the conclusion of the essay and lead us in the discussion of a few key points and applications. After several questions and discussion, President Kolander thanked President Gurgel for his work and for his encouragements to reflect our Savior's love and mission when faced with challenges and disagreements with each other.

Elections Chairman Banaczak then reported the need for a run-off election for first vice-president between John Bortulin and Aaron Steinbrenner. After the ballots for the election were distributed, cast, and collected, the election was declared closed.

After a break, Elections Chairman Banaczak announced that Pastor Aaron Steinbrenner had been elected to serve as the first vice-president of the district. Pastor Steinbrenner thanked the district for placing their confidence in him and announced that he was accepting the call to serve us in this way. He asked that we keep him in his prayers that he be able to serve the district president and the district to the best of his ability.

Chairman Banaczak then conducted the nominating ballot for the office of second vice-president. After the ballots were cast and collected, the nominations were declared closed.

President Kolander then introduced Pastor John Borgwardt, a member of the SEW District Mission Board, who presented a report on the work of WELS Home Missions, focusing especially on several

new mission starts across the country, as well as the 2021 synod convention's goal of establishing 100 new missions in the next ten years. That presentation included a video about an adult convert from our mission in Atlanta and asked us to consider how many more people like her we could reach if we were able to meet this goal.

Pastor Borgwardt also reported on the work of each of the mission congregations in our district, as well as other locations that the district board is considering for other new mission starts or mission enhancements.

Elections Chairman Banaczak then announced that the top three candidates nominated for the office of second vice president were Pastors John Bortulin, Jason Hacker, and Timothy Spaude. After ballots were distributed, cast, and collected, the election was declared closed.

President Kolander then introduced Pastor Larry Schlomer, administrator for WELS World Missions, who presented a report on the work being carried out by 45 missionaries and many other mission partners in 44 countries around the world. Those missions are currently serving more than 300,000 people with the gospel.

Elections Chairman Banaczak reported that John Bortulin had been elected to serve as second vice president of the district. Pastor Bortulin announced that he was accepting this call to serve us. He asked the Lord to bless his work with President-elect Leyrer and first vice-president elect Steinbrenner. Chairman Banaczak then announced that his committee would continue with the nominating ballot for district secretary right away in the morning.

President Kolander then re-introduced Martin Luther College President Richard Gurgel, who presented a report on the work of Martin Luther College. His presentation included a video that featured several students and President Gurgel himself thanking our Lord and the synod for the blessings that are happening at MLC through the three focuses of the Equipping Christian Witnesses campaign. He also directed the delegates to find the reports from the other WELS ministerial education schools in the Report to the District and in the convention materials.

After several announcements by Secretary Carter, the Tuesday session concluded with a devotion led by Circuit Pastor (and Vice-President-elect) Aaron Steinbrenner. The devotion made use of the order of Vespers (evening prayer) in *Christian Worship* and focused on the Lord's words to his people in Jeremiah 31:31-34. Teacher David Porth played the keyboard for the devotion. Brittany Peterson served as cantor for the hymn based on the Song of Mary.

### Wednesday, June 15

The Wednesday session opened with a devotion led by Circuit Pastors Matthew Kiecker and David Kuehl. The devotion made use of the order of Matins (morning prayer) in *Christian Worship*. Pastor Kuehl's meditation focused on the comforting words of Isaiah 40:1-11. Teacher David Porth played the keyboard for the devotion. Levi Nagel and Brittany Peterson served as cantors.

President Kolander then introduced Pastor Bruce Marggraff, a member of the WELS Christian Aid and Relief committee, who presented a video about the important work they do provide disaster relief across the country and around the world, and humanitarian aid that can help foreign missions and synod congregations to build bridges to their communities by providing need help. He also thanked the Lord for the faithful service of Chairman Bob Hein, who is unable to accept reappointment due to term limits.

Secretary Carter then directed the delegates to important items that will be posted on the website and necessary for our work for the rest of the morning, including an edited version of the nomina-

tions pages from the convention reports and the floor committee reports that will be posted as they are available.

Elections Chairman Banaczak then read the by-laws description of the responsibilities of the district secretary and reminded the delegates that this position does not have the same restriction that only pastors can serve in that role. He then conducted the nominating ballot for district secretary. After the ballots were cast and collected, nominations were declared closed.

Secretary Carter then addressed several important matters of district business. He pointed the delegates to the minutes of the 2018 convention and asked if anyone had any corrections. It was moved and supported to accept those minutes. That motion carried.

Secretary Carter presented the 2020-2021 Financial Report. He reviewed the reasons for the decisions not to assess dues during the pandemic and explained the rationale behind increasing dues this year to cover the cost of this convention and the plans to increase the additional assessment for circuit pastor training for several years until that fund could repay the general fund. It was moved and supported to accept the financial report. That motion carried.

Secretary Carter then pointed the delegates to several other items included in the convention materials. He asked for the delegates' help to report any corrections in the membership list and any additional items for the district calendar. He also encouraged the delegates to use the evaluation form in the material or the electronic version on the website to provide feedback on the convention.

Secretary Carter also presented the slate of delegates, congregations, and alternates (including several delegates from 2021 who had accepted an offer from President Schroeder to serve again) who would represent the district at the 2023 Synod convention at Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota. He asked the delegates to check to see if there were any errors that they noticed in that slate. It was moved and supported to approve the slate of delegates. The motion carried. Secretary Carter told those whose names appeared on the slate, including the alternates, to expect more information soon, to fill out the online pre-registration form, and to clear their schedules of anything that couldn't be easily re-arranged.

President Kolander then introduced Mr. Mark Buske, Marketing Director for Northwestern Publishing House. He began his report by introducing Mr. Jeremy Angle, who was recently named as the new president of NPH, replacing Mr. Bill Ziche, who recently retired after many years of service. Mr. Angle expressed his appreciation for being able to serve the synod in this way and thanked Mr. Buske for giving today's report as he gets acclimated to his position. Mr. Buske also introduced Pastor Chris Cordes who recently accepted the call to serve as NPH's vice president for publishing. He then presented a report on all the different types of resources that NPH is working to make available to WELS congregations, members, and called workers. The rest of his report focused on the kinds of materials that NPH produces for WELS members and congregations.

Elections Chairman Banaczak reported that the top three candidates nominated for the position of district secretary were: Pastors Billy Carter, Jason Hacker, and Steven Neumann. After ballots were distributed, cast, and collected, the election was declared closed.

President Kolander introduced Mt. Peter Aisbet, the district's representative on the Synodical Council, gave a presentation on the work the Council does to oversee the finances of the synod.

When WELS Chief Financial Officer Kyle Egan rose to answer a question from the floor, President Kolander took the opportunity to introduce him to the delegates.

Elections Chairman Banaczak reported that Pastor William Carter had been re-elected to serve as the secretary of the district. Secretary Carter thanked the delegates for giving him the privilege and

joy of using his gifts in this role and asked them to join him in his prayers that the Lord would help him use those gifts and his experience as district secretary to help the new district praesidium do the very important work that we ask them to do.

After the morning break, Elections Chairman Banaczak directed the election ballot for the remaining district positions. He read through the list of candidates for each position and noted two positions that needed one more nominee in order to hold an election. President Kolander asked the delegates if there were any nominations from the floor, especially for those two positions. Pastor Jonathan Bergemann was nominated for the position of chairman of the District Nominating Committee. Layman John Nolte was nominated for the position of a layman from the Milwaukee Metro Conference on the District Nominating Committee. After one more request for any other nominations from the floor, the nominations were closed. After the ballots for these positions were distributed, cast and collected, the elections were closed.

Pastor Bryan Gerlach, director of WELS Worship, gave a presentation on the work of all six commissions under the umbrella of WELS Congregational Services. He showed a video in which Congregational Services Director Jonathan Hein and the directors of each of those commissions highlighted the resources available from each of those commissions to help congregations in their ministry to the souls in their care and in their communities and invited leaders of WELS congregations to attend the next National Lutheran Leadership Conference in Chicago in January 2023.

Pastor Gerlach also highlighted several new resources available for the new hymnal, including a new feature in Service Builder for adding other worship materials outside the hymnal. He pointed the delegates to training videos and webinars available for Service Builders and showed one of those videos which focuses on some customization features available in Service Builder. He also noted that Northwestern Publishing House is continuing to work diligently to secure copyright permissions for more items in the hymnal to be printed in worship folders using Service Builder.

Elections Chairman Banaczak reported the need for runoff elections for two of the elections for the other district offices. After ballots for those runoffs were cast and collected, those elections were declared closed.

President Kolander then introduced Pastor Paul Lindhorst, one of our district's giving counselors for the WELS Ministry of Christian Giving, who presented a report on the work that MCG does to encourage the congregations and members of the synod in the grace of giving. He noted that the other giving counselor for our district, Mr. Rick Kneser, would be retiring later this year after eight years of service to our district.

Secretary Carter then provided instruction for the box lunches and President Kolander us in a meal prayer. Sessions continued after everyone had picked up their lunch and began to eat.

While the delegates were eating, we heard brief reports from the WELS Historical Institute and from the WELS Foundation.

Elections Chairman Banaczak reported the need for one more runoff election for one of the other district offices. After ballots for that runoff were cast and collected, those elections were declared closed.

Pastor Nathan Strobel, chairman of Floor Committee #2, District President's Report and Resolutions presented his committee's report. President Kolander asked Vice President Leyrer to take the chair during this report.

Resolution 1 - Changes in District Membership was moved and supported. One correction was made, correcting the title of Paul Johnston from teacher to pastor. After a moment of silence for the

one pastor who was added to the list of those who have entered the Church triumphant, the resolution was adopted as corrected.

Resolution 2 – Acceptance of Newly-Assigned Called Workers was moved, supported and adopted. Vice President Leyrer then introduced two of the candidates who were present.

Resolution 3 – Ratification of Praesidium District Appointments was moved, supported, and adopted with one correction.

Resolution 4 – Convention Offering, which designated the offering from the convention communion service for WELS Christian Aid and Relief to be used to provide relief for our brothers and sisters in the Lutheran Church of Ukraine, was moved, supported, and adopted.

Resolution 5 – Special Recognition of Thanks, which thanked all those who served us at this convention, was moved, supported, and adopted.

Resolution 6 – Non-Praesidium Assistant to the District President (Interim Capacity) was moved, supported, and adopted.

Resolution 7 – Special Recognition of Thanks, which thanked the Lord for the service of outgoing Vice President Michael Woldt, was moved, supported, and adopted.

Resolution 8 – Special Recognition of Thanks, which thanked outgoing President Kolander and his wife Luann for their six years of faithful service to the district, was moved supported and adopted. Per the resolution, the delegates rose to give Pastor and Mrs. Kolander a standing ovation and gave glory to God for their service by singing the common doxology.

Vice President Leyrer thanked Chairman Strobel and his committee for their work and their report.

Pastor Thomas Banaczak, Chairman of Committee #1, Elections, reported the results of the final runoff elections and presented the committee's final report. It was moved, supported, and adopted to accept the report.

President Kolander thanked Chairman Banaczak and his committee for their work and their report.

Secretary Carter informed the delegates that he would be sending a summary of the convention that could be used as a bulletin insert. He noted that WLC had a very quick turn-around for the next events in the recreation complex and asked the delegates to help them by taking everything they could out with them when they left.

President Kolander then thanked the delegates for their work at the convention and for their support and prayers during his time as district president. He asked for the Lord's blessings on us as we continue our work in his kingdom.

It was moved and supported and adopted to adjourn the convention.

The convention closed with a meditation led by Circuit Pastor Robert Dick. The devotion was based on the order of Terce (Midday) in *Christian Worship* and focused on the Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6:22-27. President Kolander conducted the installation of the district officers and circuit pastors as a part of the devotion. David Porth served as the organist.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor William R. Carter, District Secretary





**SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN DISTRICT**  
**54<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention + June 11-12, 2024**

**2022-2023 Financial Report**

**Calendar Year 2022**

Balance, 12/31/2021, Checking Account		\$2,217.27	
Balance, 12/31/2021 Savings Account		\$5,118.20	
<b>Funds Available, 1/1/2022</b>			<b>\$7,335.47</b>
<b>Income, 2022</b>			
Dues	\$52,722.75		
Offering	\$2,354.00		
<b>Uncashed checks</b>	\$350.00		
Interest	\$20.53		
<b>Total Income, 2022</b>		\$55,447.28	
<b>Expenses, 2022</b>			
Internet/Email Hosting	\$428.40		
Office Supplies	\$520.88		
Conferences/Conventions			
Arrangements	\$34,664.39		
Worship	\$2,237.72		
Printing	\$3,768.63		
Offering	\$2,354.00		
Circuit Pastor Training	\$4,818.76		
Counseling	\$400.00		
Gifts	\$300.00		
<b>Total 2022 Expenditures</b>		\$49,492.78	
<b>Balance, 12/31/2022</b>			<b>\$13,289.97</b>
Balance, Old Checking Account			
Balance, Checking Account		\$7,151.24	
Balance, Savings Account		\$6,138.73	
Circuit Pastor Training Balance			-\$6,829.04
General Fund Balance			<b>\$20,119.01</b>

**Calendar Year 2023**

Balance, 12/31/2022, Checking Account	\$7,151.24	
Balance, 12/31/2022 Savings Account	\$6,138.73	
<b>Funds Available, 1/1/2023</b>		<b>\$13,289.97</b>

**Income, 2023**

Dues	\$32,326.60	
Offering	\$1,679.00	
Interest	\$0.61	
<b>Total Income, 2023</b>		<b>\$34,006.21</b>

**Expenses, 2023**

Internet/Email Hosting	\$349.20	
Postage	\$189.00	
Office Supplies		
Conferences/Conventions		
Arrangements	\$16,965.19	
Worship	\$3,594.43	
Printing	\$1,007.93	
Offering	\$1,720.00	
Circuit Pastor Training	\$2,173.72	
Counseling	\$1,200.00	
Gifts	\$100.00	
Bank Charge	\$30.00	
<b>Total 2023 Expenditures</b>		<b>\$27,329.47</b>

<b>Balance, 12/31/2023</b>		<b>\$19,966.71</b>
Balance, Checking Account	\$13,857.37	
Balance, Savings Account	\$6,109.34	

Pastor William R Carter,  
Secretary-Treasurer

## Notes from the Financial Report

**Changes Since the Last Convention** - Two years ago, this report showed a significant shortfall in the fund for our annual Circuit Pastor Training that happened because we had scheduled those training sessions in years when we didn't assess any dues because we didn't have full conventions or conferences. That report also announced our intention to increase the amount of our "additional" dues assessment for circuit pastor training for several years to draw down the shortfall.

The balances at the end of this report reflect the decision to go a different direction. The general fund has now swallowed that shortfall. We will no longer keep track of a separate Circuit Pastor Training fund. We will also simplify the annual dues assessment by rolling the "additional" assessment for circuit pastor training into the regular dues.

The dues for 2024 have been set at \$50 per certified male called worker and 25 cents per communicant. Now that we have returned to our regular schedule of conventions and conferences, it will be interesting to see how much the inflation our country is experiencing will affect our costs. We should be able to find the "sweet spot" for our dues assessment in a year or two.

**IRS Regulations for Non-Profits** - WELS CFO Kyle Egan informed us shortly after the last convention that new IRS regulations required other organizations under the WELS umbrella, like districts and conferences, to close any bank accounts that were opened using the synod tax ID number and open new accounts using the ID number of the treasurer's congregation. We opened those new accounts in the fall of 2022 and closed the old ones at the end of 2022.

Those regulations also require that such organizations give the synod an annual report of their financial activity. I am working on complying with that new requirement.

*Note: Please contact me if you are managing bank accounts for a conference or other commission or board, especially if you used the synod's tax ID number when you opened that account, so I can talk to you about the kinds of things that CFO Egan will want from you.*

### Notes on Our Expenses during the Last Two Years

- 1) The **Internet/Email Hosting** category will go down from now on. The Google Suites account we started to handle the communication with the electronic elections in 2020 was recently closed for lack of activity. I never did manage to find other ways to use it.
- 2) **Circuit Pastor Training** - The costs for the training in the fall 2022 were higher than usual because of the cost for our outside speaker and because the check from another district who joined us for that meeting didn't get deposited till this year.
- 3) **Counseling** - the amount in this category was higher in 2023 because the bill for some counseling that took place in 2022 didn't get paid until 2023.
- 4) The **Gifts** category includes gifts from district funds for district officers who celebrate ministry anniversaries or retirements during the biennium.
- 5) **Bank Charges** - this one is on me. I don't look too closely at the bank statements in the months between our conventions/conferences and our district council meetings, because we don't have many expenses those months. Which means that I didn't see that a "paper statement" fee was coming until it was too late, and then it took a while to get the online banking set up.

**Dues Notices** - will not get mailed out until after the convention. Please watch for them and make sure that your treasurer or business manager sees the notice and gets it paid, so that we can pay the bills for this convention in a timely manner.

## Other Items from the District Secretary

### District Membership List

I'd like your help in making sure that the membership list on pages 27-46 of the convention materials is as accurate as it can be. Besides checking that your name is spelled correctly and that you are listed with the correct serving body, please also check the following:

- **Non-Parish Workers** - All those serving joint schools, high schools, and post-secondary schools, as well as all those serving as synod administrators or other institutions, agencies, or affiliated ministries should be listed as a member of the congregation where they hold membership in the "Serving Other Ministries" section of each circuit.
- **Certification Status** - Called workers who are not yet ministry certified should be listed in italics on this roster. Please check to make sure that your own certification status, as well as that of those who serve your congregation or school, is listed correctly
- **Retirement Calls** - Please also check to make sure that I've got any workers serving in retirement calls listed correctly. Because the by-laws use the words "permanent call" to determine whether a called worker is a voting member of the district who's eligible to serve in an elected position or as a synod delegate, it's important to know if there's anything that's less than permanent about the calls that are issued to retired workers. Please let me know.
- **Retired Workers** - Because conferences like to invite retired called workers to their meetings, it's also good to know that our retired called workers are listed in the right congregations. Please check to see if the retired called workers in your congregations are listed correctly.
- **Membership Not (Yet) Known** - Please also check this section (mostly workers who were recently called into our district) to see if you can provide any missing information.

If you find discrepancies anywhere in the membership list, please contact me, so that I can have the correct information, and so that I can make sure that the WELS database also contains the correct information.

**District Website** - I'm certain there are plenty of ways that we could make better use of the district website. Please let me know if there are any improvements you'd like me to consider.

**District Calendar** - Please continue to send me the dates of all pastoral conferences, as well as any workshops, seminars, or other events sponsored by your boards or committees so I can get them posted on the website.

**Constitutional Issues/Questions re: Membership** - I still hope to be able to work with the Called Workers Subcommittee of the Conference of Presidents to clarify the wording of the by-laws definition of a member of the synod that says that only workers with "permanent calls" are voting members of the synod and its districts.

I also still hope to be able to work with the synod's IT department and/or the Lutheran Schools office to sort out whether the workers who are now "provisionally certified" so that they can qualify for the IRS Section 107 housing allowance should or should not be considered as voting members of the synod and its districts and finding a way to sort for that in the database reports that district secretaries can access for their work.

Both of these issues impact the work of keeping track of the membership of our district more than any other district, and perhaps even more than all the other districts combined.



# SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN DISTRICT

## 54<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention + June 11-12, 2024

### 2025 Synod Convention Delegates

The 2025 WELS Convention will meet at Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota the week of July 28-31, 2025. Of the 400 voting delegates, the Southeastern Wisconsin District is to provide 66 delegates: 22 laymen, 18 pastors/professors, and 26 male teachers/staff ministers.

About a week after the convention, these called workers and congregations will receive an email from Secretary Carter with needed information and a link to an online pre-registration. Called workers should complete the online form as soon as possible. Congregations should select delegates and substitutes and have those men complete the online form before February 1, 2025.

Everyone listed below, including alternates, should clear their calendars and be prepared to attend the convention. Alternates may be asked to fill a slot anytime up till about six weeks before the convention. Please respond quickly if Secretary Carter informs you that you need to fill a slot.

#### Pastor Delegates/ Alternates

##### Chicago Conference

Scott Miller *David Ernest*  
Jonathan Bergemann *Kevin Raddatz*

##### Kettle Moraine Conference

Darren Knoll *Bradley Wordell*  
Randy Hughes *Samuel Degner*  
Keith Siverly *Robert Hein*  
Martin Wildauer *Matthew Kiecker*  
Paul White *Robert Wendland*

##### Metro Milwaukee Conference

Joel Schwartz *Curt Golm*  
Brad Taylor *James Saatkamp*

##### Milwaukee Urban Conference

John Schuetze *Chris Koschnitzke*  
Michael Bartsch *Bill Tackmier*  
Raymond Kimbrough *James Hein*

##### Shoreland Conference

Scott Bergemann *Dustin Bergene*  
Kirk Lahmann *Derek Bartelt*

##### Western Lakes Conference

Jonathan Kruschel *John Koester*  
Aaron Winkelman *Philip Casmer*  
Brian Adams *Jonathan Nitz*  
Paul Lindhorst *Jeffrey Bonack*

#### Lay Delegate Congregations /Alternate Congregations

##### Chicago Conference

Amazing Love, New Lenox, IL  
Light of Life, Greenwood, IN  
Abiding Peace, Elgin, IL  
Christ the King, Palatine, IL  
Immanuel, Waukegan, IL  
Bethlehem, Carmel, IL

##### Kettle Moraine Conference

St. Paul, Lomira  
Trinity, West Mequon  
Bethlehem, Menomonee Falls  
David's Star, Jackson  
Peace, Hartford  
St. John, Mequon

*Divine Savior, Indianapolis, IN*  
*Lamb of God, Lafayette, IN*  
*Victory, Lexington, KY*  
*Heritage, Lindenhurst, IL*  
*New Life, Lake Zurich, IL*  
*Hope, West Chicago, IL*

*St. John, Newburg*  
*St. Matthew, Iron Ridge*  
*St. Matthew, Port Washington*  
*St. Paul, Neosho*  
*St. Paul, Slinger*  
*St. Paul, Cedar Lake*

**Milwaukee Metro Conference**

Resurrection, Milwaukee  
St. Paul, Cudahy

*Nain, West Allis  
Messiah, Milwaukee*

**Milwaukee Urban Conference**

Grace, Milwaukee  
Salem (Eastside), Milwaukee  
Garden Homes, Milwaukee

*Mt. Lebanon, Milwaukee  
St. James, Milwaukee  
Atonement, Milwaukee*

**Shoreland Conference**

Peace, Wilmot  
Water of Life, Racine/Caledonia

*Trinity, Union Grove  
St. John (Slades Corners), Burlington*

**Western Lakes Conference**

Mt. Calvary, Waukesha  
Trinity, Waukesha  
Victory of the Lamb, Franklin

*St. John, Mukwonago  
Grace, Waukesha  
St. Paul, Muskego*

**Teacher/Staff Minister Delegates****Teacher Delegates**

Daniel Markgraf  
John Sebald  
Scott Beyersdorf  
Darrel Roecker  
Lyle Timm  
Michael Babler  
James Schneck  
Zachary Cvikel  
Bradley Gurgel  
Michael Strusz  
Robert Balza  
Aaron Palmer  
Ned Farley  
Chad Lindemann  
Zachary Seeger  
Timothy McNeill  
Mark Murphy  
William Strasser  
Jason Walz  
David Leyrer  
Timothy Thierfelder  
Daniel Albrecht  
Casey Holtz  
Christopher Bartsch  
Andrew Becker  
Matthew Evans

**First Alternates**

Marc Shambeau  
Joel Mattek  
Gerald Zeamer  
Kenneth White  
Paul Marquardt  
Michael Mittelstadt  
David Leonard  
Brian Humann  
David Kren  
Jason Snodie  
Aaron Trimmer  
Timothy McEachern  
Thad Jahns  
Lance Meyer  
Joel Schultz  
Kevin Klug  
Joel Radue  
Wesley Schmandt  
Andre Gosch  
Kevin Glaeske  
Joshua Gibson  
Kevin Lorge  
Alex Moore  
Andrew Baxter  
Joel Davis  
James Henkel

**Second Alternates**

Joseph Janke  
James Haferman  
James Holman  
James Rademan  
Kevin Sonntag  
Leonard Epple  
Nathan Hinz  
Matthew Moeller  
James Ott  
Travis Wendt  
Philip Adickes  
Joshua Schoeneck  
Matthew Sonntag  
Steven Thies  
Joshua Nelson  
Peter Iles  
Thomas Neuman  
Peter Schumacher  
Joshua Metzger  
John Werner  
Scott Georgson  
Adam Harvey  
Aaron Kjenstad  
David Porth  
Derek Rabbars  
Charles Galecki



## SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN DISTRICT 54<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention + June 11-12, 2024

### Report of the District Mission Board

“Lord, enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.” Acts 4:29

The Board for Home Missions (BHM) met April 18 and 19, 2024. There were several action items that came out of that meeting that benefited our Southeastern Wisconsin District (SEW).

1. A new start was approved for Cedar Lake, Indiana.
2. A mission restart was approved for Crossroads in Chicago, Illinois.
3. An enhancement was approved for St. Marcus in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
4. An unsubsidized mission was approved for St. Paul’s in Round Lake Park, Illinois.

Our SEW District Mission Board (DMB) is working to bring several requests to the BHM in spring of 2025 for possible mission restarts, enhancements, and as unsubsidized missions.

We encourage all our pastors, teachers, and laypeople to contact any of our SEW DMB members if they see areas of growth where we may be able to start a new congregation. Or contact us if you are a part of a healthy congregation that can use three years of funding for an enhancement for a new outreach project in your church or school.

Our SEW DMB would also like to help congregations see the potential mission opportunities in their area with multicultural ministry, a church merger, a mission restart, or an unsubsidized mission.

Let us know where our SEW DMB can be of service in your area of Kingdom work.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michael D. Zarling  
SEW DMB Chairman



## SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN DISTRICT 54<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention + June 11-12, 2024

### Report of the District Ministry of Christian Giving

The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi, “I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:3-6 NIV). Even today you can pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel. You have joined with hundreds of congregations and thousands of believers in proclaiming the good news about Jesus. It is truly amazing that almost every congregation in the synod submits a subscription for Congregational Mission Offerings (CMO) for the coming year, and a statistical report for the past year. Thank you, members of the Southeastern Wisconsin District, for promptly sending in your CMO commitments and statistics this past February. Next year is the latest possible deadline for each of these tasks, noon Central Time on the first Friday in February, which is February 7, 2025.

The Lord has blessed the congregations of our church body to fulfill their commitments to CMO for the past several years. For this we give thanks to God. Here’s the latest report from WELS Ministry of Christian Giving: April 2024 CMO were 17.0 percent (\$319,000) higher than April 2023 CMO. On a calendar year-to-date basis through April 2024, total CMO was \$7.45 million, which is 7.5 percent (\$517,000) higher than the first four months of 2023 and 3.7 percent (\$266,000) higher than projected receipts. On a fiscal year-to-date basis (FY24) through April 2024 (ten months), total CMO is \$20.05 million, 2.7 percent (\$518,000) higher than the previous fiscal year (FY23) through April 2023. As of the end of April, the Southeastern Wisconsin District numbers are \$1,263,824 year to date, or 101.2% of subscriptions. Praise be to the Lord for the generous gifts from his people.

If you would like help in any area of Christian giving, from current gifts to deferred gifts and estate plans, feel free to contact the planned giving counselors for our district.

SEW Giving Counselors:

Mr. Scott Wagner Deferred counselor  
scott.wagner@wels.net  
Phone: 605-231-7402

Rev. Paul Lindhorst Current counselor  
paul.lindhorst@wels.net  
Phone: 605-880-1583

Respectfully submitted,  
Pastor Tim Henning, SEW MCG Chairman



## Report of the District Worship Committee



### Who we are

- **Mr. David Porth** (Coordinator) Pilgrim - Menomonee Falls
- **Pastor Thomas Schultz** - Christ the King, Palatine, Illinois
- **Mr. Jon Pasbrig** - Trinity, West Bend (ELS)
- **Mr. Jason Snodie** - Trinity, Waukesha

### Committee Updates

- Thank you to all those who made our 2024 District Convention a success.
- We give thanks for the leadership provided to Commission on Worship (C/W) by its past chairman, Jon Zabell, and its outgoing administrator, Bryan Gerlach. We look forward to partnering with the new C/W Chairman, Rev. Michael Schultz, and with interim administrator Rev. Paul Prange.

### New Resources from NPH (and other publishers)

- New music releases are happening now and will be available for purchase at the Worship Conference.
  - 8 keyboard collections
  - 7 choral anthems
- As of 2024, the rollout of print resources for *Christian Worship* is nearly complete. Through Northwestern Publishing House, several new products are continuing to become available. Two products worth considering for your congregation's musicians are the two volumes of Easy Hymn Accompaniments.



The Piano Edition offers simplified settings of each of the hymnal's tunes in a fluid, articulated style. The Chorale Edition offers simplified 4-part harmonizations for beginning accompanists.

The Hymnal's digital resources continue to be updated and expanded. Three items worth learning more about are:

- Christian Worship Service Builder: [online.nph.net/servicebuilder](https://online.nph.net/servicebuilder)
- Christian Worship Musician's Resource: [online.nph.net/musicians-resource](https://online.nph.net/musicians-resource)
- Christian Worship Service Builder Playlist (an add-on subscription component of Service Builder)
- In addition, several new books on worship are recently available from NPH and other publishers are offered as recommended summer reading for called workers and congregational leaders:
  - Zabell, Jon (ed.) *Christian Worship: Foundations*. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 2023
  - Paustian, Mark. *Our Worth to Him: Devotions for Christian Worship*. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 2022.
  - Strey, Johnold. *Christian Worship: God Gives his Gospel Gifts*. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 2021.
  - Magness, Phillip. *Church Music for the Care of Souls*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2023.
  - Perry, Tim. *Funerals for the Care of Souls*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021.

## National Worship Conference Updates | July 30 - August 2, 2024

- Carthage College, Kenosha - <https://welsworshipconference.net/>
- Southeastern Wisconsin District congregations are strongly encouraged to support members and called workers in attending the **2024 National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts: July 30 - August 2 at Carthage College, Kenosha, Wis.** Registration is already open and discounts are available to congregations and attendees of the WELS Women's Ministry Conference.

## Additional Reminders

- Southeastern Wisconsin District Congregations and called workers are encouraged to engage with a number of resources to deepen and sharpen their understanding of gathering around the Means of Grace. The issues of *Preach the Word* are exploring "[Themes in Current Homiletical Theory](#)," and offering insights into narrative and inductive approaches to preaching. A new series of *Worship the Lord* is defining "[More Worship Words to Wrestle With](#)" by applying topics such as symbolism, flexibility, creativity, and authenticity.
- Congregations and schools of the Southeastern Wisconsin District can also benefit from consultations hosted by the Lutheran Institute of Music Education. The Institute offers workshops on music curriculum for K-8 education and staff development. For more information, visit: [sites.google.com/view/welslime/home](https://sites.google.com/view/welslime/home)

## Other important Christian Worship links

- Samples all in one place: <https://online.nph.net/cwsample>
- Updates on yet-to-be-released: <https://online.nph.net/cwshipping>
- Ongoing tracking of identified music errata: <https://online.nph.net/cwmusicerrata>
- All things Service Builder: [help.christianworship.com](https://help.christianworship.com) or <https://online.nph.net/servicebuilder>

Respectfully submitted,  
Mr. David Porth  
SEW District Worship Coordinator

## **Report of the District Special Ministries Committee**

**Mission to the Visually Impaired (MVI)** - provides free audio recordings of Meditations and Forward in Christ through the WELS Listen Library - <https://listen.wels.net/> or MVI can mail them on flash drives or cassette tapes. If you or someone you know has vision challenges, sign up at [www.wels.net/refer](http://www.wels.net/refer).

**Grace brings sinners into God's family.** Sometimes church members do not see the opportunity for the gospel to turn someone's life around - all we see is the sin. When a prisoner has been released after serving his sentence, or someone who has struggled with an addiction comes to church for help in recovery, will they find welcome and encouragement among us? WELS Special Ministries offers a Bible study called "Helping the Hurting with Hope." It gives a congregation the opportunity to discuss how its members can be more like Jesus in welcoming people who are seeking the hope only Jesus brings. The course is found here: [Helping the Hurting with Hope - CongServe \(welscongregationalservices.net\)](http://welscongregationalservices.net)

**Online learning - Chaplain courses** - Chaplain Certification offers useful online learning opportunities, often with financial aid, even if you (or your lay leader) does not become a chaplain. In September these online chaplaincy courses will be offered: "Communicating Forgiveness," "Ministering to the Incarcerated and their Families," "Geriatric and Care Facility Ministry" (Free!), "The Spiritual Side of PTSD" and "Grounded in Scripture" a doctrinal course for those interested in ministry but have not had a foundational study of Scripture. For more information, see the MLC website [www.mlc-wels.edu/continuing-education/wels-chaplain-certificate/](http://www.mlc-wels.edu/continuing-education/wels-chaplain-certificate/) or email [chapcert@wels.net](mailto:chapcert@wels.net).

**\$500 Grant** - Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is offering a grant of \$500 to any church that installs a hearing loop to assist the hard of hearing people in their ministry. For details see [www.WELS.net/mdhh](http://www.WELS.net/mdhh) or email [mdhh@wels.net](mailto:mdhh@wels.net).

**Military Service brings spiritual danger.** Can you imagine a young person leaving home, facing life and death situations and pressures to sin? It happens to our military members. The dangers and the solutions are described in the video "**Staying Close to God's Word While in the Military.**" [www.csm.welsrc.net/military-resources/](http://www.csm.welsrc.net/military-resources/) If you have a member in the military or entering the military, refer them at [www.wels.net/refer](http://www.wels.net/refer).

**Child Safety** has always been a Christian issue. Early Christians rescued abandoned babies and organized orphanages. Luther and Walther were ahead of their time in speaking against child abuse. WELS offers thorough abuse prevention resources. Freedom for the Captives' website has new information every month - not only to make our churches and schools safer, but to recognize child abuse and respond to protect children. Have you looked at the website this month? Visit [www.Freedomforcaptives.com](http://www.Freedomforcaptives.com).

**Where do they turn?** Are your members so familiar with Conquerors through Christ (CtC) that when they need a resource, they know where to find it? One WELS mom turned to the CtC website when her eight-year-old saw some porn on the Internet. "The materials for parents are amazing," she told us. Promote the [conquerorsthroughchrist.net](http://conquerorsthroughchrist.net) website to your members and called workers.

**Gospel Hands** - Members from the Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MDHH) group were recently able to bring to reality a project that has been several years in the making - an online Christian Sign Language Dictionary. The project is entitled "Gospel Hands" and can be found at [www.gospelhands.net](http://www.gospelhands.net). The MDHH team members spent significant time over two days signing and recording to video more than 900 religious sign language signs. It was intriguing to hear the discussion about the best signs and possible alternatives for certain words or concepts. This initial group of videos is only the beginning. There are plans to record more signs in the future and to keep growing this online resource.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Pastor Richard Waldschmidt  
SEW District Coordinator



## SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN DISTRICT 54<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention + June 11-12, 2024

### Report of the District Discipleship Committee

#### MISSION

The Commission on Discipleship exists to serve congregations in their efforts to help their members grow in both their knowledge of God's Word and their sanctified service of Christ and neighbor.

#### AN ENCOURAGEMENT

If you are hosting a regional event that pertains to a WELS Discipleship topic, I would love to know about it. Additionally, if you would like assistance coordinating or promoting such an event, I am here to help. Contact me either by email ([pastor.a.voss@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.a.voss@gmail.com)) or by cell phone (262-330-3399).

#### NEWS

*International Youth Rally* - This year's rally is hosted at Colorado State University from June 25-28. Registration was closed because the capacity of 2,800 has been reached! To interact with the rally from afar, check out [www.instagram.com/welsyouthrally](https://www.instagram.com/welsyouthrally).

*MadeKnown.net* - The WELS Committee on Identity, Gender, and Sexuality is developing a website to provide compassionate truth especially for those who are struggling with or how to think through LGBTQ issues through FAQs, spiritual devotions, contact support, and other helpful sources. The site will go live at the WELS International Youth Rally in June. The title for the site combines Psalm 139:14 ("wonderfully made") and 1 Corinthians 13:12 ("fully known").

*Women's Ministry Conference* - Women are invited to the WELS Women's Ministry Conference, July 28-30, 2024 at The Ingleside Hotel, Pewaukee, Wisconsin to be encouraged and equipped to faithfully use their gifts for services in God's kingdom. Visit: <https://welswmconference.net/> and [www.wels.net/womens-ministry](http://www.wels.net/womens-ministry).

#### AVAILABLE RESOURCES

*Apologetics: Defending the Faith Bible Study* - Defending the Faith is a six-part video series that shows how apologetics is really a ministry of caring—not a chance to argue with people. We care about skeptics and what they think. When we think clearly, we will speak clearly. All this is with the goal of love towards neighbor. Find the resources here: [welscongregationalservices.net/youth-resource-never-too-young-to-talk-about-jesus/](https://welscongregationalservices.net/youth-resource-never-too-young-to-talk-about-jesus/).

*Stewardship Legacy* - Every congregation possesses a rich legacy of resources given by God to carry out his ministry and to be used for Christian living. It is also our responsibility to pass this legacy on to the next generation. The "Stewardship Legacy" series teaches and encourages faithful management of Time, Talent, Treasure, Truth, and Temple. The first set is uploaded entitled, "A Time for Everything." The next set, entitled "Truth," will be available in Fall 2024. Called workers and church leaders will find worship ideas, sample sermons, and Bible study resources. Find the resource here: [welscongregationalservices.net/stewardship-legacy/](https://welscongregationalservices.net/stewardship-legacy/).

**Marriage** – WELS Discipleship continues to emphasize resources for Christian marriages.

*(Links are active in the electronic version of this report.)*

- [Marriage Moments](#) are two-minute weekly videos providing a focused marriage thought to deepen a marital relationship.
- [Marriage for Life](#) is a pre-marriage instruction course, using five lessons to cover topics of forgiveness, marital essence, roles of man/woman, love, and communication. Resources in the link above include an overview, handouts, leader guides, and videos.
- *Resources for Individual Congregations* -- [Marriage Maintenance](#) and [Marriage Keys](#) are marriage-based resources designed for flexible usage at the local congregational level. They incorporate videos and discussion handouts and include leader guides.
- *Regional Marriage Enrichment Retreats* – These are offered upon request.

### **ANTICIPATED RESOURCES**

***An Honest Conversation about Sexuality*** – This five-session series is based upon the questions frequently asked and how attitudes and mindsets can color our conversations. After a panel of WELS college students share their real-life experiences when faith intersects LGBTQ culture. Each video dives deeper into the challenges that will lead teens to engage with each other in honest conversation. Target date: June 2024.

God bless you and your people as you grow in grace and knowledge and are strengthened in your connection to Christ!

Pastor Aaron Voss  
SEW District Discipleship Coordinator

---

---

#### **Commission on Discipleship:**

Rev. Donn Dobberstein, director  
Rev. John Boggs, chairman  
Rev. Gary Pufahl  
Rev. Jonthan Bergemann  
Rev. Aaron Bublitz

Rev. Thomas Kock  
Rev. Paul Schupmann  
Rev. Andrew Schwartz  
Mr. Mark Stein

#### **Advisory:**

Mr. Jeremy Bakken, Northwestern Publishing House  
Prof. Luke Thompson, Martin Luther College  
Rev. Raymond Schumacher, Northwestern Publishing House  
Prof. Paul Waldschmidt, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary  
Mrs. Dawn E. Schulz

#### **District discipleship coordinators:**

Arizona-California – Rev. Gary Pufahl  
Dakota Montana – Rev. Joshua Schultz  
Michigan – Rev. Daniel Westendorf  
Minnesota – Rev. Matthew Ewart  
Nebraska – Rev. Daniel Frey  
North Atlantic – Rev. Mark J. Voss

Northern Wisconsin – Rev. William Monday  
Pacific Northwest – Rev. Andrew Schwartz  
South Atlantic – Rev. Caleb Kurbis  
South Central – Rev. John Koelpin  
Southeastern Wisconsin – Rev. Aaron Voss  
Western Wisconsin – Rev. Scott Schwertfeger