


TOGETHER

June 21, 2016

Rev. John Braun, chairman of the WELS Reformation 500 committee, says, "We want the webpage to be a destination for anyone looking for information about Reformation events in our districts and for resources congregations can use to reach out to others with the gospel we treasure."


Find Reformation resources and event information at wels.net/reformation500. 

Still time to get Brewers tickets for WELS Night at Miller Park

The Milwaukee Brewers are now selling tickets for the third annual WELS Night at Miller Park. Organize your group and plan to join us for the Milwaukee Brewers' game against the Pittsburgh Pirates on Fri., July 29, 2016. Game time is 7:10 p.m. Mr. Dan Johnson, president of Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wis., will be throwing out the ceremonial first pitch. Mr. Brian Davison, member of Koiné will be singing the National Anthem. Last year, nearly 3,500 members enjoyed an evening of fellowship together as they watched the Brewers defeat the Philadelphia Phillies.

The Brewers are again offering WELS members up to 50 percent off the price of tickets. Seating will be along the third base line and

in a block for WELS members. The pricing is Field Outfield Box for \$21/ticket, Loge Outfield Box for \$17/ticket, or Terrace Reserved for \$9/ticket. The ticket service fee will be waived for groups of 20+ if you contact WELS member Jason Fry at 414-902-4516 or Jason.fry@brewers.com. The deadline to purchase tickets is Fri., July 22, 2016.

Buy tickets online at brewers.com/wels. 

Did you know...

WELS has a Facebook page?
facebook.com/welslutherans

WELS has Twitter?
twitter.com/welstweets

WELS has Instagram?
instagram.com/welslutherans

WELS has an app?
WELS offers a mobile application for the iOS and Android cell phone platforms. Get the WELS Mobile app at iTunes and Google Play.

New district presidents and their important role

Earlier this month four new men were elected to serve as presidents of their respective districts. Three of the positions became vacant because of retirements; one position had been filled temporarily after its occupant accepted a call to serve as professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

The following men have been installed as district presidents:

Nebraska District: Rev. Phil Hirsch of Manhattan, Kan.

Western Wisconsin District: Rev. Michael Jensen of Watertown, Wis.

South Atlantic District: Rev. Charles Westra of Columbia, Tenn.

Southeastern Wisconsin District: Rev. David Kolander of Brookfield, Wis.

A turnover of one-third of the district presidents is rare. It seems good to step back and review exactly what the role of the district president is and what weighty responsibilities are entrusted to these men.

The district president is, in many ways, the pastor of his entire district. He is elected to his position by delegates at a district convention who represent every congregation in the district. His election is not just a selection by called worker and lay delegates. It is, in fact, a divine call from God himself.

First and foremost, the district president is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the doctrine and practice in the congregations of his district. Doctrine is what is taught; practice is how doctrine is applied and carried out. For a synod to remain faithful to the Word of God and to the Lutheran Confessions, its doctrine must faithfully reflect scriptural truth, and its practice must carefully apply the teachings of Scripture in the life and ministry of the congregation. The district president carries out his responsibility of overseeing doctrine and practice in two ways: proactively, as he sets the tone through teaching and instructing by his words and example; and reactively, as he addresses situations in which false teaching may occur or in which the practice of a called worker or congregation departs from faithfulness to the teachings of the Bible.

If a called worker or even an entire congregation begins to stray from the truth, it is ultimately the responsibility of the district president to provide evangelical admonition and correction. Circuit pastors and district officers assist and advise him in this, but ultimately, faithful teaching in his district is a responsibility that rests on his shoulders.



To sign up for the e-mail version, visit wels.net/together.

The district president has a very important role in the call process. When congregations experience a vacancy—of pastors, teachers, or staff ministers—it is the district president to whom they turn. He consults with the congregation to determine its specific needs, and then he provides the congregation with a call list. The district president places candidates on that list because, after extensive research and much prayer, he is convinced that any one of them can meet the needs identified and outlined by the congregation.

The synod's constitution has charged the Conference of Presidents (which includes the district presidents, along with the synod president and two vice presidents) of encouraging congregations and individuals to provide the financial support necessary to carry out the work we do together as a synod. In that role, the district president is the primary voice in the district making congregations aware of the financial needs of the synod and then encouraging congregations to support that work through their Congregation Mission Offerings.

Not least, in his role as the pastor of the district, the district president provides individual counsel and encouragement to the workers in his district. He spends much time getting to know the called workers he serves and makes himself available when they have questions, concerns, or struggles. He offers words of admonition and correction when it's needed. He also takes time to be sure that called workers are receiving the care and support that ministers of the gospel should receive from those whom they serve with the Word.

The 12 men who serve as district presidents receive no additional compensation for their important work. They have been asked by God and his people to fill a very important role. They do so with a deep sense of awe at the trust that people have placed in them. They carry out their duties faithfully, spending many hours in meetings and many days on the road. And we would not want to neglect the faithful support of their wives, who provide encouragement to their husbands as they carry the weight of their office and who willingly sacrifice time with their husbands for the good of God's church.

Take a moment in prayer to thank God for these faithful servants and to ask God to give them wisdom, strength, and joy in their service.

Serving in Christ,
President Mark Schroeder 


WELS debt nearly eliminated

In 2008, WELS first took up the challenge of eliminating \$22.4 million in debt that had accumulated through school capital projects and amalgamations as well as internal borrowing. Ridding the synod of monthly debt and interest payments would mean those funds could instead be used for Christ's gospel ministry. The Lord blessed that initial effort by moving his people to give \$4.1 million in special gifts. Since then, gifts and payments on the debt have continued. As of June 30, 2015, the debt was reduced to \$4.7 million.

At the 2015 synod convention a new effort was undertaken to eliminate the debt by July 1, 2016. WELS Ministry of Christian Giving Director Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, reports that with a little over one week to go, we're close to meeting the goal. "Christ's people have given him \$2.26 million in offerings (the red shading in the chart) while another \$1.6 million in debt payments (the blue shading) have been made since July 1, 2015. This means we're now prayerfully seeking approximately \$840,000 to reach the \$4.7 million goal. Since we serve the Lord, who does immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to his power that is at work within us, we're confident that God will enable us to complete this offering in the near future—to his glory and the benefit of his gospel work!"

Lueneburg is grateful to everyone who has contributed over the

years to help bring WELS to this point. "I thank our Savior and you for your Christian love in action that helps train gospel workers, open missions at home and abroad, and strengthen our congregations and schools."

If you would like to make a donation toward eliminating the final \$840,000 of synod debt, visit wels.net/oneinchrist. 

Honoring 500 years of the Lutheran Reformation

Oct. 31, 2017, will mark the 500th anniversary of Luther nailing his famous Ninety-five Theses to the cathedral door in Wittenberg, Germany. That event launched Martin Luther's mission to reform the Catholic Church, which was rife with corruption and false teachings. Today, nearly 500 years later, Lutherans and other Protestants still benefit from his Bible-based teachings.

WELS has developed the wels.net/reformation500 web page to provide members and non-members alike with an overview of Martin Luther's life and teachings, available resources for further study on the Reformation, and news about events around the synod that are being planned for 2017 Reformation celebrations.

One particular highlight is an exclusive trailer to the documentary *Martin Luther: The Idea That Changed the World*, which is scheduled to air on PBS in 2017.