


our missionaries a glimpse of the joyful and thankful support so many give to our work. The gathering is a highlight on the calendar every year," says Schlomer.

For many attending this annual event, it is an opportunity to share the experience with their family members. "As a mom, I definitely want my kids to learn that missionaries aren't just people that maybe live in a different country; (that) we're all called to be missionaries for Christ and we can do that whether we live in India, or whether we live in Indiana or Wisconsin or anywhere (that) Christ has called us to share the good news with other people," says Katherine Schmoller, Lamb of God, Lafayette, Ind.

"Thanks to the amazing dedication of our LWMS partner, WELS missions and missionaries continue to receive prayers, encouragement, and financial gifts. Such faithful support isn't taken for granted. It is another evidence of the power of the Lord's love moving hearts to support the work we do in the WELS through Home and World Missions," says Rev. Keith Free, administrator for Home Missions.

Karen Fischer, LWMS president, sums up the convention and the importance of WELS mission work, "It was a wonderful, emotion-filled convention that underscored how God takes all of us – little pieces of rubble – to build his church

as he sees fit, making more of us together than we could ever make individually and building a diverse church full of saints around the world."

Next year's convention will be held June 22–25, 2017, in Orlando, Fla. Registration opens January 2017. For more about LWMS, visit www.lwms.org. 

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.

TOGETHER



July 5, 2016

Church dedication in Ukraine

On June 19, one congregation of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, our sister synod in Ukraine, experienced a joyful event. After years of worshipping in rented classrooms and halls, Resurrection Lutheran Church in the capital city of Kiev dedicated its first church building.

Rev. V'yacheslav Horpynchuk, who also serves as the bishop (president) of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, has been looking forward to this day for a long time. He pointed out that this building will not only enhance the worship and work of the congregation but will also serve another important purpose. In Ukraine, churches without permanent buildings of their own are often viewed with suspicion, as nothing more than fly-by-night sects. A permanent church building provides a sense of legitimacy and authenticity. Having their own building in the heart of Kiev has already brought many positive comments from people in the city, some of whom have visited for worship.

The Ukrainian Lutheran Church faces some difficult challenges as it strives to proclaim the saving gospel and the pure Word of God in Ukraine. The Lutheran church has a long history in Ukraine dating back to the days of the Reformation. But the takeover of Ukraine by the Soviet Union saw thousands of church buildings destroyed, members persecuted, and congregations scattered. Rebuilding a Lutheran presence in Ukraine, where the Orthodox and Catholic churches dominate, is no easy task. Added to that, Ukraine is a country experiencing the trauma of war in the east, a government in which corruption is the norm, and an economy still struggling to recover.

But in spite of those challenges, the members and pastors of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church carry out their mission with joy, optimism, and solid commitment. Horpynchuk often talks about opportunities to plant new mission congregations in towns and cities throughout Ukraine. He recognizes the importance of continuing to train new pastors to serve. And he is optimistic that other congregations will soon enjoy the blessing of their own permanent church buildings.

Please keep our brothers and sisters of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church in your prayers.

Learn more about our work in Ukraine and in other mission fields at wels.net/missions.

Serving in Christ,
President Mark Schroeder 



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

Youth Rally impacts teens

More than 2,500 WELS teens and their adult leaders gathered from across the country and the world to worship, study, have fun, and celebrate the one who has washed away every sin and who guides us forward in his holy name, Jesus Christ. The 2016 WELS International Youth Rally, a biennial event, was held June 28–July 1 at Colorado State University–Fort Collins.

The four-day event, organized by WELS Commission on Youth and Family Ministry, featured two keynote speakers and several educational workshops focused around the theme “Our God Reigns,” a timeless truth based on Isaiah 52.

The rally kicked off Tuesday evening with a worship service led by Rev. John Boggs, chairman of the Commission on Youth and Family Ministry, and accompanied by the band Koiné. “The whole rally experience is designed to meet the kids where they are at today. It is designed for them to have fun, to be edified, and to understand and cherish the truth that they are not alone, that they have brothers and sisters throughout this country who are involved in the struggle with them, who know Jesus and share the truth and joy that they have in him. You see that in the worship, in the breakout workshop opportunities, and in the late-night small group reflection time,” says Boggs.

The rally’s mission is to provide teens and adult youth leaders with

Bible-focused worship, education, and fellowship opportunities that deepen their commitment to Christ and the church. Here is what some of the rally-goers had to say about their experience . . .

Duke Backhaus, 18, from St. Paul’s, Tomah, Wis., says he was impressed by the presentations offered. “The workshops were amazing; I really loved them. They all pointed me towards Christ and taught me a lot. I know now I’m going to be a pastor.”

Emily Gage, 18, from Good Shepherd, Woodlands, Tex., explains what it is like to worship daily with more than 2,500 other teens: “It was awesome to praise God with so many fellow Christians my age and to know that everyone is here for the same reason.”

Hailey Becker, 16, from Faith, Fond du Lac, Wis., attending with 58 members of her youth group, says, “I’ve been thinking about going to Martin Luther College after high school, and this rally really helped me with that decision.”

Grant Kloosterman, 16, from Living Word, Gray, Tenn., sums up his thoughts on his first rally: “WELS really is like a big family. It seems everyone knows someone and nobody here at the rally feels like a stranger. We all love each other. It was great to end each day with evening reflection time. It was a time to relax, discuss, learn, and listen with your youth leaders and friends on the incredible day we all experienced.”

Also at the rally, Youth and Family Ministry introduced a

new youth ministry program called “Transformed: Equipping Youth Leaders” to youth leaders. Duane Vance, a youth leader from Jerusalem, Morton Grove, Ill., attended the “Transformed” workshop and says the new program is fantastic. “The synod is launching an amazing program that is really going to give youth leaders a tremendous amount of content and resources to help them plan activities and to train teens to become positive role models and mentors.” The program is scheduled to be released this fall.

Boggs says, “The young people of our synod are not just the future of our synod; they are the here and now of our synod. They need to be in worship and Bible study, and they need our prayers, support and attention now. The focus of the WELS International Youth Rally is to share God’s precious Word that speaks as much to them now at the age of 14-18 as it will as they grow older.”

The next WELS International Youth Rally will be held in 2018.

To view photos from the rally, visit facebook.com/welslutherans and Instagram [@welslutherans](https://instagram.com/welslutherans). 

LWMS convention highlights mission work

The Chicago Area Circuit of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary Society (LWMS) welcomed nearly 1,100 WELS women from around the world to praise God and show their support for WELS

mission work. “Christ Alone, Our Cornerstone” was the theme for the 53rd annual LWMS convention, held June 23–26 in St. Charles, Ill.

Longtime missionary Terry Schultz was the preacher for opening worship, and he was amazed at the enthusiasm of the men and women attending the service. “To stand up on stage and see over one thousand women have such a passion for missions—it’s like no other church service you can imagine. Their support through their prayers, volunteer work, and their gifts allows WELS to bring that Bible-based truth to all ends of the earth,” says Schultz. More than \$30,000 was collected to support WELS mission work during the opening service.

During the convention, members attended several workshops and learned from home and world mission speakers about what God is doing through WELS missionaries with their prayers and support.

Dorothy Stone, Overland Park, Kan., has attended several conventions with her mom and encourages women who may be apprehensive about attending to just sign up and try it. “The convention has a flow and a feel about it that is not describable. It is definitely worth experiencing in person,” says Stone.

Rev. Larry Schlomer, administrator for World Missions, explains how special the convention is to the missionaries who are able to attend. “The excitement of the many mission supporters at the LWMS convention is contagious. It gives