


# TOGETHER



May 2, 2017

One printed copy of BORAM is being mailed to each delegate, congregation, and male called worker. These printed copies should arrive by May 26.

To read the 2017 *Book of Reports and Memorials*, visit [wels.net/2017synodconvention](http://wels.net/2017synodconvention). 

## Grow in Grace ministry retreats held


From April 19–21, Grow in Grace, the institute for pastoral growth at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, hosted over 140 people for the sixth annual Celebration of Ministry retreats.

Held at the Riverwalk in San Antonio, Tex., three retreats ran simultaneously for pastors and their wives who were celebrating 3, 10, and 25 years since graduating from the seminary.

These retreats build relationships with ministry peers and offer encouragement through worship, Bible studies, workshops, and presentations. Bible study topics covered Lessons at the Burning Bush, Philippians, and 1 Peter. Separate and joint workshops were offered for pastors and wives and covered topics such as time management, caring for others and yourself, focusing on your own gifts, and financial challenges and opportunities.

Though these workshops and Bible studies are a key part of the

retreats, fellowship with classmates, worship services, and a beautiful location also play a part in the experience. Renewed in Grace attendee Rev. Brian Hackmann shares, “The Celebration of Ministry retreat was a great experience. My wife and I looked forward to this opportunity for some time, and I’m sure we’ll look fondly back for some time to come. Reconnecting with classmates is great. Reconnecting and recharging for future ministry is invaluable. Reconnecting with Jesus through Word and sacrament was a forever blessing.”

Next year, a fourth retreat will be added for those celebrating 35 years in the ministry. The 2018 retreats will take place in San Antonio from April 18–20 for the graduating classes of 1983, 1993, 2008, and 2015. 

### Did you know...

**WELS has a Facebook page?**  
[facebook.com/welslutherans](http://facebook.com/welslutherans)

**WELS has Twitter?**  
[twitter.com/welstweets](http://twitter.com/welstweets)

**WELS has Instagram?**  
[instagram.com/welslutherans](http://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.

## Assignment days approach

The next two weeks will bring two high points of the year at both Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. At both of our schools, students will graduate and receive their degrees. Probably even more notable, at both schools candidates for the public ministry in WELS will receive their first calls on Assignment Day.

At Martin Luther College, students enrolled in the pastor track will graduate from college, well prepared to continue their training for the pastoral ministry at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Students graduating from the teacher and staff ministry programs will present themselves for assignment. By doing so, these graduates express their willingness to go wherever the Lord of the church sends them through calls issued through the synod’s Assignment Committee.

At Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, graduates will be assigned to their first calls in the pastoral ministry, while those who have completed two years of the seminary will be assigned as vicars.

At both schools, it appears that there are fewer candidates than needed to fill requests. It’s the double responsibility of the Assignment Committee to assign candidates to places of the greatest need and to places where the skills and abilities of the candidates can best be used.

In the coming week, we will be praying fervently. We will thank God for providing well-trained and willing workers for his harvest field. We will be asking God to send his Holy Spirit to guide the decisions of the Assignment Committee. And we will be praying that God would give these new workers strength, wisdom, and courage as they answer his call.

Both assignment services can be viewed live online. Find times and livestream links at [wels.net/events](http://wels.net/events).

Serving in Christ,  
President Mark Schroeder 



To sign up for the e-mail version, visit [wels.net/together](http://wels.net/together).

## A day to recognize Martin Luther College

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**M**artin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn., will be hosting its annual MLC Day on Wed., May 3. MLC Day is an online, social media-driven event for WELS members to show their support for the ministerial training college and its students who are entering the ministry as pastors, teachers, missionaries, or staff ministers.

WELS members are encouraged to use social media to share their encouragement, prayers, and offerings. Watch the MLC Day Facebook page at [facebook.com/mlcwels](https://facebook.com/mlcwels) all day to see videos and messages of support. Visit [mlcday.com](https://mlcday.com) to learn more.

This year monetary offerings will be going to support the congregational partner grant program, a new program allowing congregations to further support sons and daughters of the congregation who are studying at MLC. The Congregational Partner Grant Program started as a pilot project during the 2016–17 school year. Through the program, congregations could give grants up to \$1,000 to freshmen at MLC; MLC then matched the grant, doubling the assistance given to students. More than 78 congregations participated, supporting 108 incoming first-year students—more than half of the freshmen class.

For the 2017–18 school year, the Congregational Partner Grant Program will also include sophomores. The hope is that

eventually it will be open for all students—just another way to help reduce their debt upon graduation.

This year MLC hopes to fund 100 Congregational Partner Grants for MLC students at \$1,000 a student. A donor is matching the first \$50,000 in donations dollar for dollar.

Making that personal connection to students is an important reason the grant program was started, according to Rev. Mike Otterstatter, vice president of mission advancement at MLC. “It’s one thing to give to worker training; it’s a whole other thing to give to worker training and have it connected to a face and a name of a kid whom maybe you saw baptized as an infant and grow up over the past 18 years. It just makes it so personal.”

Watch for the May *WELS Connection* to see how this program impacts students. Learn more at [mlc-wels.edu/go/cpgf](https://mlc-wels.edu/go/cpgf). 

## 2017 Book of Reports and Memorials online

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**T**he 2017 *Book of Reports and Memorials* (BORAM) is now available online. This book summarizes the activities of each area of ministry over the last year, contains the proposed ministry financial plan for the next biennium, and shares the memorials submitted for consideration. The information in BORAM will help guide the 400 delegates to WELS’ 64th biennial convention, which is being held at Luther Preparatory School,

Watertown, Wis., July 31–Aug. 3, under the theme “Our Great Heritage.”

Some items to note in this year’s BORAM:

- The Commission on Inter-Church Relations recommends that convention delegates declare fellowship with the East Asia Lutheran Synod, the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia, and the South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission in Hong Kong.
- The Synodical Council is proposing a new long-range plan entitled “Our Great Heritage” that will extend to 2025 (the 175th anniversary of the synod).
- The ministry financial plan maintains the current level of ministry in all areas and provides funding for a director of discipleship who will oversee the Commission on Youth and Family Ministry and the Commission on Adult Discipleship as well as an additional Christian giving counselor in the second year of the biennium.
- Five memorials are currently being presented to the delegates, including a memorial asking delegates to allow Lutheran Schools to collect an annual school support fee based on enrollment to help Lutheran Schools carry out its ministry.

In addition to the areas of ministry, some special synod committees also submitted reports for this year’s BORAM, including the Compensation Review Committee, which began a comprehensive

examination of the synod’s compensation guidelines in 2015.

As Rev. Earle Treptow, chairman of the Compensation Review Committee, explains, “In the early stages of the project, the committee envisioned a radical reworking of the current guidelines. The more the committee wrestled with the issues, however, the more it recognized the excellent work that had been done in putting together the current compensation guidelines. The problem has been that calling bodies haven’t consistently applied the guidelines. Recognizing that the inconsistency in applying the guidelines stemmed in large part from a lack of understanding of the compensation guidelines, the committee worked to repackage the compensation guidelines in such a way that calling bodies would find them easier to apply.”

One major accomplishment of the committee was the creation of an online calculator to help calling bodies determine called worker compensation. A trial version of the calculator, which was developed by WELS Technology, is available at [wels.net/cwcompcalc](https://wels.net/cwcompcalc).

“Because the proposed compensation guidelines are primarily a repackaging of what is currently in place, with only slight modifications, the financial impact on the work we do together as a synod should be minimal,” adds Treptow.

Any changes in the compensation guidelines need the approval of the 2017 synod convention.