

TOGETHER



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attending the training extends beyond what they learn in sessions. He says, "The primary reason for being here isn't just to learn but to connect with the other principal and director apprentices."

The leadership candidates went through a book study on growth mindset and fixed mindset and how to continue developing their leadership gifts, along with the practical aspects of becoming a principal by getting credentials from MLC.

Mrs. Linda Baumann, a third and fourth grade teacher at Trinity, Jenera, Ohio, has been teaching for 22 years and serves as a mentor to teachers new in the field. She says, "It is valuable to go through the process of ministry development planning to help teachers of all levels of experience improve their instruction for the benefit of the students they serve."

CLS Associate Director Mr. Tom Plitzuweit says the program started to help meet the need for WELS principals in the schools. "There are people out there who have the gifts, and sometimes they need a little bit of encouragement to get into the principalship, and we know that strong schools need strong leaders. The challenge is finding these individuals and encouraging them to use their gifts for positions of leadership in their schools," he says. CLS Director Mr. Jim Rademan will address the

synod in convention this August on the critical need for well-trained school leaders.

In addition to leadership training, CLS also has an active and nationally recognized accreditation process called WELSSA. In June, Plitzuweit was elected as the vice president of the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA). This is a two-year term, which will be followed by a two-year term serving as president of NCPSA. As part of the NCPSA, any WELS school accredited through WELSSA can receive state, regional, and national accreditation as an educational institution. ☪

Worldwide fellowship gathers in Germany

Every three years, pastors and leaders from around the world, representing two dozen Lutheran church bodies in fellowship with WELS, gather for a meeting of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC). Celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, the most recent convention was held in historic Grimma, Germany (near Leipzig and Wittenberg), from June 29 through July 2. The convention was hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church (ELFK) of Germany. Participants gathered in the Gymnasium St. Augustine, a school founded in a former monastery in 1550 to train scholars for the Lutheran church as well as for government service.

The participants heard essays highlighting the Lutheran Reformation, the Reformed Reformation, the Radical Reformation, and the Catholic Reformation, written by pastors Holger Weiss, Samuel Choi, Julio Ascarrunz, and Dr. Timothy Schmeling, respectively. Highlights of the convention included requests for membership from three additional church bodies in Hong Kong, Ethiopia, and east Asia.

The convention approved the "Ninety-five Theses for the Twenty-First Century," a new document prepared to clearly state the basics of the Christian faith for use in congregations and for outreach. The convention also had the opportunity to view the new film *A Return to Grace: Luther's Life and Legacy*.

A closing communion service was held in the Augustinian church next to the school. The walls of this famous structure, in which Martin Luther frequently preached during his travels, echoed with the sound of the congregation singing "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" and many other Reformation-era hymns. Convention participants and guests, as well as many members of the ELFK, celebrated their bond of fellowship as they heard the Word of God preached and received the body and blood of their Savior in the Lord's Supper. Following the service, the ELFK served a meal for everyone as participants slowly said farewell to each other.

Along with a number of other WELS representatives, I had the privilege of attending this meeting. One of the purposes of the meeting is to provide encouragement to smaller confessional churches around the world as



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they face unique challenges in their cultures. But, as always, it was the WELS representatives who came away encouraged. We marveled at the firm commitment and the faithful witness of our fellow Lutherans around the world, and we joined in thanking God for the continuing spread of his saving message.

The next CELC convention is scheduled for 2020 in Seoul, Korea. Learn about the CELC at celc.info.

Serving in Christ,
President Mark Schroeder

A look ahead to the 64th synod convention

WELS' 64th biennial convention is being held at Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., July 31–Aug. 3, under the theme "Our Great Heritage." Live coverage of plenary meetings, missionary presentations, and the opening worship service will be streamed at wels.net/2017synodconvention.

"The biennial synod convention provides the opportunity for grassroots input and decision-making when it comes to the work that we do together as a synod," explains Rev. Mark Schroeder, WELS president. "The convention helps set the priorities for the synod's areas of ministry in the coming years."

More than 400 delegates—including pastors, male teachers, male staff ministers, and laymen—representing congregations across the synod come

together to adopt a ministry financial plan (or budget), which describes in detail how WELS will use the financial resources God provides to carry out his work.

"The proposed ministry financial plan keeps WELS on solid financial ground," says Mr. Todd Poppe, WELS chief financial officer, "but projected near-flat Congregation Mission Offerings when costs are increasing 3.5 percent could challenge WELS' ability to maintain ministries beyond the 2017–19 biennium."

Other topics that delegates will consider include the

- recommendations of the Compensation Review Committee, which was tasked by delegates of the 2015 synod convention with providing a thorough review of the WELS Compensation Guidelines for called workers;
- declaration of fellowship with three foreign church bodies endorsed by the WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations;
- proposal of a new WELS long-range plan that extends from 2018–25; and
- presentation of the results of a demographic study of WELS completed by the WELS Commission on Congregational Counseling.


Areas of ministry will present updates about their work, and delegates will meet with their assigned floor committees to consider the reports that pertain to their area of

ministry. Floor committees then write resolutions on the topics that they feel should be addressed and present their resolutions to all the delegates. Delegates discuss and vote on these convention resolutions, helping set the stage for work that will take place over the next biennium.

Elections for the synod's first vice president and secretary as well as board members for synod commissions, boards, and committees will also take place.

With the theme "Our Great Heritage," convention organizers have focused many aspects of the convention around the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, including the opening and closing worship services, devotions, and essay. Delegates will also view the film *A Return to Grace: Luther's Life and Legacy*.

All pre-convention information is available at wels.net/2017synodconvention. View the convention agenda and election nominee biographies. Read the *2017 Book of Reports and Memorials*. During the convention, news articles, video updates, and convention photos will be posted throughout the day at wels.net/2017synodconvention. Each evening, an issue of "Together" will be delivered to subscribers as a wrap-up of the day's events and a look ahead to the next day. WELS' Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages also will be active each day.

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Cultivating future school leaders

Participants in the Commission on Lutheran Schools' (CLS) Apprenticeship Mentoring and Principal program met at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry, Waukesha, Wis., June 20–22, to expand and hone their school leadership skills and repertoire.

About two dozen WELS educators attended between the principal and director apprentices and the leadership candidates. The apprentices are teachers who graduated from the WELS college of ministry, Martin Luther College (MLC) in New Ulm, Minn., within the last two years. As apprentices, they are getting additional training and mentoring having been assigned by the Assignment Committee as principals and early childhood directors. The leadership candidates are more seasoned teachers who have demonstrated the gifts for school leadership positions and participate in the leadership program to prepare for future principal roles.

The attendees participated in a module on school culture and climate presented by Cindi Holman, WELS Early Childhood Ministry national coordinator, and her husband, Mr. Jim Holman, director of Education at Wisconsin Lutheran College.

Mr. James Otto, a principal apprentice serving at St. Matthew, Stoddard, Wis., says the value of