

Dodge-Washington OWLS. This was the first convention directed by new convention chairman Mr. Werner Lemke.

For a decade, the OWLS have used their offerings to support the WELS European Civilian chaplaincy, which serves military personnel and WELS civilians in Europe. This year, the OWLS presented Military Services with a check for \$50,000 for work in Europe. The convention offering and proceeds from a silent auction were directed for next year's gift to the work of the chaplain in Europe as well.

For four years, the OWLS have provided scholarships to Martin Luther College students. This year, Lailah Thabatah, Heidi Moldenhauer, Tristan Pankow, and Hannah Rundgren received scholarships.


With the convention in Pewaukee this year, attendees were given the opportunity to tour the WELS visitors' center at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry (CMM), along with a tour of the CMM to learn more about WELS ministry. They were also treated to several presentations about Lutheran traditions and WELS ministry.

Rev. Jim Behringer, director of the WELS Commission on Special Ministries, says, "All the presenters were excellent. Rev. Aaron Christie's presentation on Luther's principles that led to the Lutheran fine arts tradition today was full of

interesting examples. The OWLS were moved to hear a presentation by former European Civilian Chaplain Josh Martin and his wife, who received OWLS support during their nine years overseas. Seminary Professor Brad Wordell amazed the audience with the opportunities the Lord is giving us to train pastors around the world through the Pastoral Studies Institute, and Rev. Tony Schultz had the OWLS chuckling with recognition as he talked about opportunities to talk about Jesus."

This year, the convention elected a new OWLS president, Pastor Em. Norman Schell from Omaha, Neb. Schell has been involved with the convention for years helping with the technology needs.

Next year's convention will be at the Osthoff Resort in Elkhart, Wis., under the theme "Finish Your Race." All WELS members are invited, even those who aren't part of an OWLS chapter.

Learn more about the OWLS and all the ministries under the WELS Commission on Special Ministries at [wels.net/special-ministries](http://wels.net/special-ministries). 

# TOGETHER



October 17, 2017

## Conference of Presidents holds its fall meeting

The Conference of Presidents (COP) met Oct. 10-13 at the Center for Mission and Ministry, Waukesha, Wis., for its regular fall meeting. Included in the discussions and decisions:

- The COP noted with thanks to God that Congregation Mission Offerings are up 1.6% over last year (\$231,000). As congregations begin planning for next year, a video communication from each district president will encourage and guide congregations in that process.
- Last year the COP determined that pastors teaching at Lutheran high schools and prep schools fall under the same calling guidelines that restrict the calling of teachers (Nov. 1 through the first week of June, with two calls possible during that time). The COP clarified this policy by determining that pastors serving in primarily administrative roles (presidents/principals, deans, etc.) at the schools can be called at any time.
- The COP extended divine calls to Rev. Jerry Ewings to serve as a Christian giving counselor and to Rev. Mark Gabb to serve as the director of the Commission on Evangelism.
- The COP appointed Rev. Doug Tomhave to serve as the chairman of the Commission on Evangelism.
- Earlier this year the COP established a standing committee to work with WELS parasynodical organizations. This committee is in the process of determining its specific role and establishing the procedures it will follow. The purpose of the committee is to foster good communication and cooperation between the synod and WELS parasynodical organizations. The committee reported that it had begun its work and will continue to develop its goals and policies.
- The COP concurred with the request of Northwestern Publishing House to conduct a review of the Evangelical Heritage Version (EHV) as soon as the complete translation is available. This review will be similar to reviews of the New International Version, the English Standard Version, and the Christian Standard Bible, which have already been done.
- The COP continues to monitor closely the pastoral vacancy rate and how the calling process can best serve the needs of congregations and workers in a time of a shortage of pastors.



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- The COP discussed the workload of district presidents who serve in the large districts. The COP asked the synod president to investigate various options to provide needed assistance.
- The COP discussed how the certification process for teachers can be improved and, if possible, streamlined. The COP asked Martin Luther College to review certification requirements for all teachers and to bring its proposals to the January meeting of the COP.
- The COP will ask the Synodical Council to establish an ad hoc committee to study future options for the WELS Pension Plan. No change in the plan is anticipated in the near future, but the COP agreed that such a study would be beneficial for future decisions.
- The COP is encouraging all congregations to designate one Sunday in November as a Mission and Ministry Sunday to encourage greater awareness of, and support for, the work we do together as a synod. In the future, congregations will be encouraged to plan a Mission and Ministry Sunday for October.
- The COP asked for the appointment of a special committee to discuss possible alternative models for congregational constitutions and bylaws.
- The COP approved a request from Martin Luther College (MLC) for permission to conduct an appeal for MLC's Congregational Partner Grant Program (CPGP). The CPGP gives congregations the opportunity to provide direct financial support for students at MLC preparing for the public ministry of WELS.

Serving with you in Christ,  
President Mark Schroeder 

## New set of "theses" highlights the basic teachings of Lutheranism

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**A**s part of its triennial convention in Grimma, Germany, this past summer, the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) approved a new set of Ninety-five theses to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

While Luther's theses focused on the abuse of indulgences in the church at the time, *Ninety-Five Theses for the 21st Century* has a different theme. "It's really the basic teachings


of the Lutheran faith organized according to the Small Catechism," says Rev. Thomas Nass, professor at Martin Luther College and one of the men leading the development of the theses. "I think it's what every Lutheran layperson should know."

Fifteen pastors from sister churches around the world put together the document. "It's something that the churches of our fellowship have done together to show how they're

united in the Lutheran faith," says Nass.

Mr. Greg Vandermause, production studio manager at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn., produced a video of leaders from our sister church bodies reading these contemporary statements of faith at the CELC convention in Grimma. Hymns written by Martin Luther are interspersed between the readings. The video can be viewed online.

"We pray that you are encouraged in the faith that has been passed down and that you find joy in seeing how that faith is shared by many around the world," says Nass.

Purchase a print copy of the booklet at [nph.net](http://nph.net). Watch the October *WELS Connection* to learn more about the CELC convention in Germany. Learn more about the CELC at [celc.info](http://celc.info). 

## New form makes connecting college students with churches easier

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**W**ELS Campus Ministry is introducing a new student management system. It is now live for pastors and college students.


With this new system, pastors and churches can now manage student lists online. This includes viewing, sorting, editing, adding, and deleting student profiles as well as managing a student's free subscription to *Forward in Christ* and *Meditations*. Pastors can access the form via their My WELS Cloud account.

For college students, the form is available at [wels.net/campus-ministry](http://wels.net/campus-ministry).

The new form will enable students to easily manage their campus ministry profiles, including updating addresses, expected graduation date, subscription preferences, and more. Students will need an e-mail address to register and will be given a pin number for their personal log-in. By registering, students will also be able to stay in contact with their campus pastor.

Currently, about 460 WELS pastors serve one or more campuses, and nearly 6,000 students are signed up with WELS Campus Ministry.

WELS Campus Ministry Chairman Rev. Charlie Vannieuwenhoven says, "The only way for our pastors to know the WELS students who are attending the university they serve is if their name is submitted with WELS Campus Ministry. This information allows the pastor not only to know which WELS students are attending the university he serves, but it gives him the information he needs to make contact with the student to invite them to worship or any other activities and to share with the student what's happening with the campus ministry."

Learn more at [wels.net/campus-ministry](http://wels.net/campus-ministry). 

## OWLS are "filled with the gospel"

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**T**he Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors (OWLS) met in Pewaukee, Wis., Oct. 10-12, under the theme "Filled with the gospel." About 175 members from around the United States attended.

The convention was hosted by the