

that apply to the entire synod. Delegates of the Michigan and Minnesota Districts elected new presidents to replace retiring pastors Rev. John Seifert and Rev. Charles Degner, respectively. Rev. Snowden (Gene) Sims is now leading the Michigan District, and Rev. Dennis Klatt is president of the Minnesota District. Both men will join the other district presidents as well as the synod president and two synod vice presidents to form WELS' Conference of Presidents, which maintains the synod's doctrine and practice and is responsible for funding the synod budget.

Three districts celebrated 100th anniversaries—the Southeastern Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Pacific Northwest Districts. The anniversary celebrations were reflected in the districts' worship services, essays, and fellowship activities.

Synod leaders presented ministry updates regarding WELS' schools, committees, and areas of ministry. Rev. Jonathan Hein as well as other representatives from WELS Congregational Services presented on the current state of the synod and how WELS members and congregations can serve their communities with the gospel. Delegates to the Dakota-Montana and Northern Wisconsin District conventions heard Hein's presentation titled "God's country—a vision for 21st-century rural ministry in WELS" that encouraged delegates to reach out with Christ's love to

their communities intentionally and strategically. Rev. Jason Liebenow, a pastor of a tri-parish near Florence, Wis., called the presentation "a life-changer."

District convention delegates also were treated to a sneak peek of the new WELS evangelism movie. Titled *To the Ends of the Earth*, the movie follows the apostle Paul's visit to the city of Philippi, recorded in Acts 16. It shows how Paul connected with people from all walks of life, demonstrating that the good news of Jesus is for all people. This is the fourth and final movie in the award-winning series that includes *Road to Emmaus*; *Come Follow Me*; and *My Son, My Savior*. *To the Ends of the Earth* will be released on Sept. 1. Visit wels.net/totheendsoftheearth.

More district convention news and photos will be shared in the August issue of *Forward in Christ* magazine. ☩

Did you know...
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facebook.com/welslutherans

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twitter.com/welstweets

WELS has Instagram?
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TOGETHER



June 19, 2018

New district presidents for Michigan and Minnesota Districts

The last of the 12 district conventions concluded last week. Pastors, teachers, staff ministers, and lay delegates met to review reports on the work we have been doing together as a synod, to discuss plans for future synodical efforts, and to provide input from the districts for the 2019 synod convention.

Two of the districts elected new district presidents. Rev. John Seifert, who has served as the president of the Michigan District, is retiring later this summer. He has served as the Michigan District president since 1994 and was the longest serving member of the Conference of Presidents. Rev. Snowden Sims, serving at St. Paul's, Columbus, Ohio, was elected to succeed Seifert and has already begun to serve as district president. Rev. Charles Degner has served since 2008 as president of the Minnesota District and has also announced his retirement. Rev. Dennis Klatt, serving at Holy Trinity, New Hope, Minn., was elected to succeed him and has also begun his work as the Minnesota District president.

We thank God for the faithful service of Seifert and Degner, and we ask for his gracious blessings on Sims and Klatt.

100th anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

2018 marks the 100th anniversary of our sister synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS). The ELS traces its history back to 1853, when the first Norwegian Synod was organized in the midwestern United States. In 1917 the Norwegian Synod merged with two other Norwegian groups. A small group of pastors and congregations were opposed to the merger for doctrinal reasons; they met to form a new church body that was called the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church. The name was later changed to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

The ELS comprises approximately 20,000 baptized members with approximately 150 congregations. The ELS operates Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Seminary in Mankato, Minn.

We join our ELS brothers and sisters in thanking God for his blessings on our sister synod.

Serving in Christ,
President Mark Schroeder ☩



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

WELS teens gathering for biennial rally

The 2018 WELS International Youth Rally will host over 2,000 WELS teens at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) in Bowling Green, Ohio, for four days of entertainment and fellowship from June 26-29, 2018. This is the largest gathering of WELS members for any regular event.

Attendees will attend worship, workshops, devotions, a comedy show, and a live concert performance by the Christian band Koiné. They will also have the opportunity to participate in activities like swimming, ice-skating, rock climbing, basketball, volleyball, and more.

The theme for this year's rally is "Never Alone," based on the message of Matthew 28:20: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Member of the rally committee, Rev. John Boggs, believes this is a relatable and meaningful message for WELS youth: "Our kids live in an increasingly crazy world where they always have people around them and access to others via technology, yet they can feel as if they have no one to turn to," he said. Boggs says he hopes attendees cherish the message that God is with them even when they are troubled by the chaos of the world.

The keynote speaker for Wednesday is Rev. Dustin Blumer, who will discuss building courage through faith. Blumer currently serves at Amazing Love, Frankfort, Ill., a church he was called to establish ten years ago.

The keynote speakers for Thursday are Steve and Sarah Schroeder, who will talk about how God's presence eases all of life's worries. Steve and Sarah will share how their faith has supported them throughout Steve's military career.

"WELS youth are not just the future of the synod; they are the here-and-now and need our focus, our love, and training in God's precious Word," Boggs says.

WELS Director of Discipleship Rev. Donn Dobberstein echoes this perspective, saying, "We need to equip and encourage young people as much as possible. We have the opportunity and responsibility to hand the baton of the gospel to the next generation."

Follow the rally as it happens at [facebook.com/WELSYouthRally](https://www.facebook.com/WELSYouthRally); on Instagram [@WELSLutherans](https://www.instagram.com/WELSLutherans); and on Twitter [@WELStweets](https://twitter.com/WELStweets), using [#WELSYouthRally2018](https://twitter.com/WELSYouthRally2018). 🌐

WELS Night ticket deadline approaches

The Milwaukee Brewers are hosting the fifth annual WELS Night at Miller Park, and you are invited. The deadline to purchase tickets is one month away, Fri., July 20. Thousands of WELS members are expected for the Milwaukee Brewers' game against the Colorado Rockies on Fri., Aug. 3, 2018. Game time is 7:10 p.m.

For the second year, WELS Night t-shirts are available to order for five dollars. Imagine thousands of

WELS members wearing this brightly colored t-shirt, creating a sea of blue at Miller Park.

WELS pitching ace Rev. Joel Voss from Centerville, Ohio, will throw out the ceremonial first pitch during pre-game festivities. Voss is a parish pastor at Resurrection in Centerville and WELS' second vice president.

The Brewers are again offering WELS members up to 50 percent off the price of tickets. Seating will be along the third base line this year and in a block for WELS members. The pricing is Field Outfield Box sections 126 – 131 for \$21/ticket, Loge Outfield Box sections 228 – 232 for \$17/ticket, or Terrace Reserved sections 433 – 437 for \$9/ticket. The ticket service fee will be waived for groups of 20-plus if you contact Greg Souza at 414-902-4492 or greg.souza@brewers.com.

Tickets can be purchased at [brewers.com/wels](https://www.brewers.com/wels). T-shirts can be ordered at [co-store.com/WELSNight](https://www.co-store.com/WELSNight). 🌐

New WELS app available

WELS released a brand-new version of the WELS Mobile app. There are several changes, including the name. It is now called the WELS App. The new WELS App is available at <https://wels.app>. It can no longer be found in the Apple, Google, or Amazon app stores; those versions are being retired in July.

The WELS App offers a quick and easy way to get wels.net-based devotions, news, and synod information from your mobile device. Daily devotions,

Bible readings, weekly worship helps, military and teen devotions are just a sampling of the Bible-based content available for your regular spiritual growth and encouragement. Also included are call reports, WELS Yearbook data, videos, and wels.net Q&A content.

New features in the WELS App include favoriting, sharing, and expanded content. More new features are in the works, including bookmarks; notifications when new devotions, news, or call reports are available; user configurable text size; offline access to devotional and Yearbook content; and availability as an app in the Windows Store.

Video tutorials are available. One of the more important features demonstrated in these videos is how to add the app to your device's home screen. View the videos at wels.app/training-videos. Watch for more videos as features are added to the app.

Thanks for giving the WELS App a try and telling others about it. Enjoy the experience and the beautiful messages it carries. Remember to simply visit wels.app on your mobile device.

Submitted by Mr. Martin Spriggs, the WELS App developer and WELS' chief technology officer 🌐

Delegates gather for district conventions

Each of WELS' 12 districts met in convention this June, considering local ministry topics along with issues