


if you are afraid or tentative to actually go to a place and canvass, take the leap and trust that the Holy Spirit will provide you with the confidence and strength—he will give you what you need!”

Mission Journeys has 14 trips planned for the next four months. The ministry aims to facilitate 60 trips during its second year of operation beginning on July 1. To learn more about Mission Journeys—including how you and your church can get involved—visit [wels.net/missionjourneys](http://wels.net/missionjourneys). 

## Huebner added to line-up for WELS Night

**W**ELS First Vice President Rev. James Huebner will throw out the ceremonial first pitch for the Milwaukee Brewers’ game against the San Francisco Giants on Fri., July 12, 2019. Game time is 7:10 p.m. “What a thrill to throw out the first pitch, and all the more because those of us who are big Brewers fans are so excited for this season,” says Huebner, pastor at Grace, Milwaukee.

The popular WELS Night T-shirts are available to order for \$6, and for the first time, in both youth and adult sizes. Imagine thousands of WELS members wearing the brightly colored T-shirt, creating a sea of blue at the sixth annual WELS Night at Miller Park.

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 128–131 for \$21/ticket, Loge Outfield Box sections 229–232 for \$17/ticket, or Terrace Reserved sections 436–437 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](mailto:greg.souza@brewers.com).

Tickets can be purchased at [brewers.com/wels](http://brewers.com/wels). T-shirts can be ordered at [welsnight2019.orderpromos.com](http://welsnight2019.orderpromos.com). 

**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)

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# TOGETHER



April 2, 2019

## Welcome home!

**T**here are approximately 155,000 WELS individuals who come to church only one or two times per year. Some have not set foot in church in years. They are drifting toward becoming what we call a “back-door loss,” members who slip away from churches.

WELS Congregational Services is planning the Welcome Home initiative for this fall. Congregational Services will provide congregations with resources, training, and encouragement to try to regain those people. We want to welcome them back to their church home.

Congregational Services Coordinator Rev. Jonathan Hein describes the effort:

“Congregations are encouraged to pick a date—October 20 or October 27—as Welcome Home Sunday. This Sunday is ‘pitched’ to all members as an ‘everyone in attendance’ type Sunday. ‘We want a service where 100 percent of our members are there! Let’s pack the place.’ That way it does not seem to someone who has been absent that they are being singled out. ‘It’s great to have Joe back! He hasn’t been in church in 14 months!’ This is simply a day for everyone to attend.

“Worship that Sunday will focus on the blessings . . . the need . . . for the Christian family. Christians simply are not wired to exist as rugged individuals. We need one another.

“Resources will suggest ways to make that Sunday special: a fellowship meal, fall festival, activities for kids, etc. The goal is to get 100 percent of your members there, including those who rarely come to church, maybe who have not been in church in years.”

Many features of this initiative will help congregations to plan and carry it out, including online elder training and resources that help congregations track member attendance. There are also plans for a November sermon series in the weeks that follow Welcome Home Sunday. The prayer is that we not only get returning members to come back for Welcome Home Sunday, but through continuing efforts, we retain them in the fold.

You can find additional information about the Welcome Home initiative as well as the “10 for 10” stewardship program also planned for the fall at [welscongregationalservices.net](http://welscongregationalservices.net). Resources will be available at that site in June.

Serving in Christ,  
President Mark Schroeder 



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

## WELS CEF offering limited-time special rates

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Increasing requests for loans from WELS Home Mission churches and mission-minded congregations is prompting WELS Church Extension Fund (WELS CEF) to offer special rates for new investors. WELS CEF makes loans below or at market rates for WELS churches that are either new and building for the first time or established congregations with a new mission-focused initiative.

WELS CEF funds these loans through WELS congregations' and members' investments in WELS CEF products. With the need for funds increasing, WELS CEF, through this special offer, is seeking to raise approximately \$12 million in investments. "If you are not an investor in WELS CEF, this is a great opportunity to support ministry. If you are already an investor, this is a great opportunity to increase your support of ministry by increasing your investments," says Mr. Scott Page, director of WELS CEF.

For a limited time, WELS CEF is offering a four percent interest rate on a minimum investment of \$5,000 in either a 56-month-term loan certificate or a 60-month-term IRA certificate. WELS CEF's investment certificates pay and compound interest quarterly. The four percent interest rate applies only to new money investments.

"We're offering a great interest rate for new investments," says Page. "Congregations are eager to grow,

and now's the time to fund that need."

Investing in WELS CEF is not only a smart way to manage personal finances, but it also supports the mission of the church. Rev. Keith Free, administrator for WELS Home Missions, says, "The continued investments of more WELS members and congregation gives WELS CEF additional funds to support missions and mission-minded congregations."

View rates online at [wels.net/cef](http://wels.net/cef). New IRA investors should contact WELS CEF at 866-511-7793 for investment materials. Investors can also manage their accounts and investments online. 

## Mission Journeys offers support and inspiration

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In February 2019, Ascension, Escondido, Calif., welcomed a group of 11 volunteers from Resurrection and Life, Rochester, Minn. Together, they went door-to-door in the neighborhoods of Escondido and San Marcos as an outreach effort for Ascension. This collaboration was made possible through WELS Mission Journeys, the official synod program for short-term mission trips.

Rev. Jeffrey Duquaine, Ascension's pastor, calls it "a wonderful event of God's providence."

As a small congregation near San Diego, Calif., Ascension was struggling. Its previous pastor had resigned, and its school had closed.

Due to the dwindling number of active members, the congregation had considered shutting the church's doors completely.

Upon beginning his ministry at Ascension in January 2018, Duquaine knew he and the congregation needed to plant the seed of God's Word in the surrounding communities. Duquaine looked for support from Praise and Proclaim Ministries, a WELS parasynodical ministry that trains Christians in sharing their faith confidently and effectively.

Through Praise and Proclaim, Duquaine and the congregation learned about Mission Journeys. Mission Journeys connected Ascension with the volunteers from Resurrection and Life, and the groups joined together in Escondido for a weekend of canvassing.

"The timing worked out for the team from Rochester to join us for our event," Duquaine explains. "It didn't take long at all for us to make a connection as brothers and sisters in Christ."

After training together, the Ascension and Resurrection and Life groups visited nearly 1,000 homes, encouraging people to attend a Neighborhood Safety Night at Ascension. They took every opportunity they could to share the gospel.

Duquaine was overjoyed to see his members find strength and encouragement as they spoke to others about their Savior.

"Presenting the gospel to people while we trained and while we

canvassed gave the Holy Spirit plenty of opportunity to work," Duquaine says. "The fruit of faith growth that I felt was observable was the confidence people showed in sharing their faith with strangers. There were people who were incredibly nervous and afraid to participate, and it was amazing to see them succeed."

Ascension saw several people members met during their canvassing efforts attend the Neighborhood Safety Night. Duquaine continues to see results in unexpected ways. "Since that weekend of canvassing, I have had three more people in contact about various aspects of our ministry," he explains. "It seems like when we trust God and go to work reaching out, he brings people in through the side door was well."

Outreach efforts have just begun for Ascension. "It wasn't a one-and-done event, but it was a time for us to pivot toward becoming a true mission group who keeps inviting people to learn about Jesus," Duquaine explains. "That has been our view for the future."

Ascension is currently planning more events, special mailings, and digital tactics. Mission Journeys helped the congregation take that first step.

Duquaine urges other congregations seeking support for their outreach efforts to consider partnering with Mission Journeys. "Do it! Definitely! It is great for the Mission Journeys group and the host congregation," he says. "Even