


“The hundreds of WELS members wearing their bright blue WELS shirts really stood out in the near-capacity crowd, and it was great to greet them as I passed them in the concourse,” says Mr. Lee Hitter, WELS communications director. “Many of them suggested dates for me to consider when I schedule next year’s seventh annual WELS Night event.” 

Did you know...

WELS has a Facebook page?
facebook.com/welslutherans

WELS has Twitter?
twitter.com/welstweets

WELS has Instagram?
instagram.com/welslutherans

Synod convention begins July 29

The 65th biennial convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod will be held at Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn., July 29–Aug. 1. The convention will be attended by over 400 voting and advisory delegates. Approximately half of the delegates are lay, with the other half being pastors, teachers, and staff ministers.

The opening service for the convention will be held Mon., July 29, at 6:30 p.m., in the Chapel of the Christ at MLC. The convention opens on Tuesday morning after the presentation of the flags by the Lutheran Women’s Missionary Society.

The first order of business is the election for synod president, to be followed as soon as possible by the election for the synod second vice president. Tuesday morning will also include an overview of the mission opportunity in Vietnam, a presentation of the synod’s ministry financial plan, and the report of the synod president.


After the election for president and second vice president is concluded, elections for other offices will take place whenever possible on the schedule.

Along with reports from all areas of the synod’s ministry, the convention will act on a recommendation for a formal declaration of fellowship with the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ–Kenya, and with a public affirmation of our synod’s fellowship with Christian Lutheran Evangelical Church in Taiwan, formally a WELS mission but now an independent synod.

Floor committees will prepare reports and resolutions dealing with all areas of ministry and support services. More than 20 memorials have been submitted for consideration. (Memorials are requests from individuals, congregations, or groups for convention action.) These memorials have been assigned to floor committees, which will then make recommendations to the plenary convention. In addition, numerous proposed changes to the synod’s bylaws will be considered by the convention.

Closing worship is scheduled to take place on Thursday afternoon and will include the installation of the newly elected officers.

The majority of the convention will be streamed live. The livestream can be found at wels.net/2019synodconvention.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

First Taste of Missions a success

On July 13, more than 400 WELS members gathered for the first Taste of Missions hosted by WELS Missions. Held at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., the event gave WELS members an opportunity to hear firsthand from WELS home and world missionaries, sample food from around the world, visit mission displays, and participate in a worship service during which three new world missionaries were commissioned.

“It was really wonderful to be able to meet and talk with so many people involved with missions as well as people who are so passionate about missions,” says Mr. Mark Blauert, school chaplain at Wisconsin Lutheran School, Racine, Wis. “The commissioning service was powerful and such a wonderful way to end the event. It was great to be able to see three missionaries being sent off to begin their ministries.”

The three missionaries who were commissioned include Rev. Bounkeo Lor, who is serving as the coordinator of Hmong Asia Ministry and is focusing on training the leaders of the Hmong Fellowship Church in Vietnam; Rev. Abram Degner, who is joining the Latin America missions team and will be serving as a missionary based in Paraguay; and Rev. Dan Witte, who is joining the One Africa Team and will be serving as a theological educator based in Zambia.

Witte’s wife, Debbie, says, “The overwhelming encouragement and

sense of support Dan and I got from that day has really served as a ‘booster shot’ for our resolve to embark on this new ministry opportunity.”

Mr. Sean Young, director of WELS Missions Operations, notes, “We wanted to invite our entire family in Christ for an opportunity to learn more about the exciting mission opportunities they’re supporting, and it was so encouraging to see how well received it was. Experiences like these remind our missionaries that their synod cares for them and is praying for them and at the same time puts a face and a name to those prayers for WELS members. We can’t wait to build on the success of this year’s event for the 2020 Taste of Missions.”

To learn more about WELS Missions, visit wels.net/missions. 

New seminary planned for Indonesia

Groundbreaking for a new seminary facility for Gereja Lutheran Indonesia (GLI), WELS’ sister church in Indonesia, took place in May. This will replace the current seminary, which is on the island of Java.

“It is one of many steps in the process of indigenization and coming of age as a daughter denomination of WELS and a member church of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference,” says Prof. Gregory Bey, professor at Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Lutheran (STTL), GLI’s seminary. “It gives GLI a sense of stability and permanence.”

The new location will offer other advantages, including space for the students and professors to live on campus. Currently students commute back and forth from the dorm to the seminary classrooms, and the professors rent places to live. “A new campus will allow for one location with all the facilities in one place,” says Bey. The local community and its government officials also have approved this new building project.

Bey says that they pray construction will be completed in the next two years.

The new campus will be located close to one of GLI’s oldest congregations, which started nearly 30 years ago. “Initially the small band of believers met as a ‘house church’ as in the days of the apostles,” says Bey. “Eventually, nearby land was purchased, then a worship facility was erected, and finally a small ‘pastor’ or parsonage was added.” One of the sons of the congregation even served the church as its called worker. Having this congregation nearby will allow students to have a place for worship while they are away from home and a support group of like-minded Christians. It also will give them opportunities to gain practical ministry experience.

WELS first established a seminary to train Indonesian called workers in the mid-1980s. Classes were temporarily suspended in the mid-1990s for various reasons, but the seminary was reopened in 1998. Now almost all the classes are taught by national pastors, with Bey being the only

full-time foreign professor. Currently seven students are enrolled, and three new students will potentially start in August.

WELS declared fellowship with the GLI in 2003. Twenty-five national pastors serve 1,239 people in 6 congregations and 23 preaching stations. This includes four pastors who teach full-time in the seminary.

Learn more about the work in Indonesia at wels.net/missions. 

WELS Night a hit

Despite watching a Brewers defeat, more than 2,400 WELS members enjoyed a beautiful summer evening of baseball and fellowship for the sixth annual WELS Night at Miller Park. Several WELS members took part in the game festivities including WELS First Vice President Rev. Jim Huebner throwing out the ceremonial first pitch. “Preaching to a crowd like that would have been less nerve-wracking than throwing a baseball, but it was fun nonetheless,” he says. “It was an honor to wear a WELS Night T-shirt and meet some of the kind and helpful Brewers staff.”

Wisconsin Lutheran High School recent graduate Fernanda Rocha did a beautiful job of leading the 41,000 fans in singing our national anthem.

During the fourth inning, eight-year-old Addison Bauer from Good News, Mt. Horeb, Wis., was invited to announce the Brewers batting lineup as the junior announcer.