

TOGETHER

April 2, 2024

God-given workers for his harvest field

The number of vacancies for pastor, teacher, and staff minister positions continues to present a real challenge for congregations throughout our synod. At the direction of last summer's synod convention, a special task force has been formed to study the issue of enrollment at our synodical schools and bring recommendations regarding how we can encourage more young people to prepare for the public ministry.

Thankfully, we are approaching the month of May when some relief will be provided for the vacancy situation. The Conference of Presidents will be meeting as the synod's Assignment Committee to assign teacher and staff minister candidates from Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn., and to assign pastoral candidates at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS), Mequon, Wis., to their first calls.

This year at MLC, 145 candidates will be available for assignment. Some of those will be teachers who will be assigned to their first calls; others who were assigned for one year last year will either be permanently assigned to the call in which they are now serving or be re-assigned to new locations. Thirty-seven of the candidates are restricted in where they can serve due to marriage or other circumstances. Many of these will be assigned in May; others will receive assignments in the weeks and months after call day.

At WLS, 27 men will be assigned as pastors. Most of those will serve in parishes; several will be assigned to one-year calls in one of our ministerial education schools as tutors. The Assignment Committee, with the input of the seminary, will also assign 40 men as vicars in congregations throughout our synod. Many of those will be assigned as "Vicars in Mission" to home mission congregations.

Assignment days at MLC and WLS are joyful days—joyful for the young men and women who learn where God will have them serve in the ministry and joyful for the members of the synod who see God keeping his promise to send workers into his harvest field. Keep giving thanks to God for these gifts to his church and keep praying that God will provide even more workers in the years to come.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

Spring 2024 Home Missions' milestones

A number of home mission congregations have experienced major milestones so far in 2024.

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N.C., in 2021. The June 2023 WELS Connection showed Refuge in the early stages of development where the core group began to plan its ministry and look for opportunities to share Jesus with the community. Through many prayers, extensive planning, and outreach, God blessed the efforts, and Refuge launched public worship on Jan. 21 at a coworking space in downtown Durham.

New mission start, Idaho Falls, Idaho
On Sat., Feb. 10, Rev. Paul Krueger was installed as the home missionary for a new mission start in Idaho Falls, Idaho. Members of the core group traveled to Cross of Christ in Boise to participate in the installation service. This new mission was one of the first new missions approved as part of the 100 Missions in 10 Years initiative.

CrossView, Windsor, Colo.

On March 3, CrossView Church in Windsor, Colo., launched its public worship. This home mission plant was approved in 2022 and welcomed more than 85 guests to its opening worship service.

Home Missionary Stephen Koelpin arrived in January 2023 to work with the core group and prepare for the official launch. CrossView received a donated trailer from a home mission church in Arizona and items for its portable church from the nearby home mission church in Castle Rock, Colo. After renting a local elementary school to host worship, the group held four preview services starting in January 2024 in preparation for the launch. Learn more about what the core group in Windsor did to prepare to start

its church in this special video: wels100in10.net/lightindarkness.

Living Hope, Chattanooga, Tenn.

On March 24, Living Hope in Chattanooga, Tenn., celebrated the grand reopening of its newly renovated facility. Living Hope began as a new home mission in May 2017 and has worshiped in a movie theater, hotel conference room, and a university campus church since then. Thanks to over \$350,000 in matching land and facility grants and a loan from WELS Church Extension Fund, the congregation purchased its current facility in December 2021. Now, the newly renovated space is complete and equipped to serve the congregation and community.

New start and enhancement requests received

WELS Home Missions has received requests to start 16 new home mission churches and support 17 enhancements at existing congregations across North America.

Each request will be thoroughly reviewed by a dedicated team of Board for Home Missions (BHM) members. The entire BHM will meet April 18-19 to review and evaluate the requests. The approved requests will be the second round of home mission churches approved toward the synod's goal of starting 100 new missions and enhancing 75 existing ministries in the next 10 years.

Learn more about the first year of approvals and how you can get involved at wels100in10.net.

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